Myth, Memory, and the Machine: Technology and Existence from *Homo Faber* to *Ypsilon Minus*

by

Daniel Quintero Plata

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Dissertation Committee:

Martin Klebes, Chair

Jeffrey Librett, Core Member

Michael Stern, Core Member

Daniela Vallega-Neu, Institutional Representative

University of Oregon

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Myth, Memory, and the Machine: Technology and Existence from *Homo Faber* to *Ypsilon Minus*

This dissertation reads Max Frisch's *Homo Faber. Ein Bericht* (1957) and Herbert W. Franke's *Ypsilon Minus* (1976) as marking two moments in a single transformation: the transition from technology as mechanical extension of the human body to technology as computational administration of human life. Against the common understanding in which technological reason abolishes myth, this study argues that technological rationality is itself a mythic formation of a particular and modern kind, one that conceals its own mythic character.

The first chapter traces the late emergence of technology as a philosophical problem and drawing on Heidegger's account of *enframing* and standing-reserve, the Frankfurt School's critique of instrumental reason, Blumenberg's understanding of myth, and Stiegler's account of technics and memory.

The second chapter reads *Homo Faber* as the record of a technocratic subject's systematic disavowal of myth, affect, and symbolic meaning. Walter Faber does not merely fail to inhabit the non-rational dimensions of his existence; he refuses them while remaining structured by them. The novel's disclosive moments are moments of mechanical failure, in which the suppressed past forces its way into a life organized to exclude it.

The third chapter turns to Franke's *Ordnungsstaat*, where a central computer governs a population through its data and the gaps that opened in Faber's world have been closed by design.

Myth is no longer privately disavowed but publicly manufactured as an instrument of government, and memory is administered as infrastructure rather than lived as recollection.

An afterword carries the argument into the present, where the conditions the novels extrapolated have become infrastructure. The two novels together suggest that neither myth nor memory weakens along this path; both are transformed, and the study asks at what cost.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 11

Chapter 1: Technology, Myth, and Enframing from the Mechanical to the Computational Age 18

1. The Emergence of Technology as a Philosophical Problem 18
2. The Ontological Turn: Heidegger and the Essence of Technology 26
3. Instrumental Reason and the Administered World 33
4. Myth as the Work of Distance: Blumenberg 38
5. Technics, Memory, and the Pharmakon 44
6. The Cybernetic Threshold and the Computational Age 47

Chapter 2: *Homo Faber*: Technology, Myth, and the Disavowal of Existence 62

1. Introduction 62
2. The Report and Its Two Times 66
3. Situating the Novel in Scholarship 70
4. Faber as a Technocratic Subject 76
5. Technologically Conditioned Attunement: The Opening Scene 80
6. The Desert and the Exclusion from *Erlebnis* 82
7. The Guatemalan Detour: Encountering the Pre-Modern 87
8. The Disavowal of Myth: Oedipus, Fate, and the Cybernetic 92
9. The Body, Time, and the Collapse of the Technical Self 109

10. From Mechanical to Computational Technology 114

Chapter 3: *Ypsilon Minus* and the Computational *Ge-stell* 120

1. *Ypsilon Minus* and the Machine That Governs 120

2. The Genesis of the *Ordnungsstaat* 124

3. The Computational *Ge-stell*: Language, Memory, and the Pharmakon 131

4. Documents as Forms: The System Narrating the Subject 140

5. The Subject as Data Profile 148

6. The Administration of Interiority 157

7. From Mechanical Gaps to Computational Closure 164

Afterword: From Fiction to Infrastructure 170

Bibliography 183

Introduction

Max Frisch's *Homo Faber. Ein Bericht* (1957) and Herbert W. Franke's *Ypsilon Minus* (1976) are the two novels this dissertation reads. These postwar novels function as representations of two crucial moments along the trajectory of technological discourse in the second half of the twentieth century. The novels differ in genre, in decade, and in literary ambition. *Homo Faber*, by the Swiss writer Max Frisch, is a canonical work of modern fiction; its narrator, Walter Faber, is an engineer who travels the world installing technical infrastructure and who recounts, in the form of a report, the journey on which his calculating worldview comes apart. *Ypsilon Minus*, by the Austrian Herbert W. Franke, a central figure of German-language science fiction, is set in an administrative state in which a central computer governs the population through their data; its protagonist, Ben Erman, is a researcher whom that state assigns, without telling him why, to investigate himself. Read together, the two novels trace a transition in how technology is represented: it shifts from being depicted as an extension of the human body to enabling the administration of human life, or, in the vocabulary this analysis will develop, from mechanical extension to computational administration.

Three foundational terms delineate the transformation of that transition. The machine is the axis: the movement from the turbines, cameras, and typewriters of Faber's world to the central computer of Franke's is the movement charted in this dissertation. Myth and memory are the channels that run along it, and these elements are for this study not ornaments of the story but its substance. Technological rationality, I will argue, does not stand opposed to myth; it is a mythic formation of a peculiar and modern kind, one that conceals its own mythic character, and what changes between 1957 and 1976 is the form of that concealment, from the private self-description of an engineer who denies that anything mythic organizes his life to the public self-description of

a state that manufactures its origin story as an instrument of government. Memory undergoes a parallel transformation, moving from the technical supports that still serve the one who remembers, Faber's camera and typewriter, to an administered archive in which remembering itself has been taken over by the apparatus. The chapters will argue that neither myth nor memory weakens, let alone disappears, along this path. How they are transformed, and what the cost of this transformation is, will be the central question motivating my analysis in what follows.

The postwar decades produced no shortage of literary assessments of the long human coexistence with technology, and a study of the technological imagination might have been built from several of them: Jünger's *Gläserne Bienen* (1957), Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker* (1962), or Musil's unfinished *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* preceding them both. Each of these three works is a major engagement with the theme, and yet none is chosen here as a primary text. The reason is methodological rather than evaluative. This dissertation does not argue that technological rationality is depicted as mythic; it argues that technological rationality is a mythic formation that conceals its own mythic character, and a concealment of that kind cannot be observed from the narrative exterior. A drama can put a technocrat on stage and let the audience judge him; a novel narrated in the third person, however ironic that narrative voice may be conceived, can diagnose him from above. Neither can make the reader watch the disavowal happen in the subject's own language, without his consent. That requires a text narrated by the technocratic subject, in a form he himself has chosen and controls, in which the telling betrays what the teller means to suppress. Frisch's *Homo Faber*, a *Bericht* that promises technical documentation and delivers something close to confession, is such a text. *Ypsilon Minus* later carries the same requirement into the administered future, where the narration is no longer about an individual but the order itself: the novel is threaded with the state's own documents, memoranda, definitions, and announcements,

so that the reader watches a society describe itself in the language of its self-concealment. The report of the engineer and the documents of the state are the two forms in which this study's object, a concealment performed in language, becomes observable at all. Frisch and Franke are taken up together, then, because they mark the two ends of a transformation the alternatives register only from one side.

This already indicates how the study proposes to understand the relation between the novels and the philosophical material it gathers. The philosophical texts assembled in the first chapter describe the technological condition as concept and as structure; the novels depict it as lived existence, as mood, as the texture of a life organized around calculation or administration, and they become, above all, the points at which that organization fails: the moments of breakdown, detour, and belated recognition that are this study's deepest concern and that a purely conceptual analysis tends to foreclose. The novels are therefore not treated as illustrations of philosophical theses but as arguments in their own right, carried out in the medium of literary form, and as participants in a shared inquiry into technological rationality and its relation to myth, which philosophy conducts in the medium of conceptual analysis. The report form of *Homo Faber* argues; the embedded documents of *Ypsilon Minus* argue; and my analysis treats them as such.

That inquiry into technological rationality and myth was not confined to the German-language tradition through which the first chapter moves. In 1967, between the publication dates of the two novels, the American phenomenologist Don Ihde closed an essay titled "Rationality and Myth" by naming as an enigma the question this study takes as its own: what a critical age holds to be literally significant, and whether what it so holds "is actually the myth of the 20th century" (Ihde, 17). Ihde could leave the question open because the account he had given, in which mythic and rational clarity stand as polar types taken from the side of rationality, provided no position

from which a rationality could be observed in the act of mythologizing; the two novels, one written a decade before his essay and one a decade after it, provide exactly that position, and what philosophy could pose only as an enigma literature stages as a report and a file of documents.

Martin Heidegger's thought will play a central role in the framework of this dissertation. The question he posed at mid-century, the question concerning the essence of technology, is the question both novels pose independently of him: not whether particular machines serve or harm the human, but what manner of world the technical as such brings into being, and how that world comes to govern the way anything is permitted to appear or be disclosed. The first chapter gives that question its full articulation and its history; Heidegger's account of *Ge-stell*, of a revealing that sets upon the world and conceals itself as a revealing, will supply the structure this entire study tracks through its transformations, and that the two novels will be read as staging that structure in two different technological registers, one in the register of an individual existence, the other in the register of a social order. Whether either novel also preserves, or pointedly denies, the turning Heidegger holds open, the saving power that grows where the danger is, is a question to which the readings eventually return.

That claim invites a misunderstanding, and one methodological caution should be entered against it at the outset. There is no evidence that Frisch read Heidegger, and the reading advanced in the second chapter claims none; nor does the reading of Franke depend on his acquaintance with the philosophers through whom his novel will be read. The justification is not biographical but historical and structural. Frisch's novel and Heidegger's technology essay are very nearly contemporaneous; they respond to the same cultural situation, the same postwar *Streit um die Technik*; and their convergence is itself the justification, since it suggests that a philosopher and a novelist working independently within the same historical condition arrived at intersecting

diagnoses of it. The same holds, two decades later, for Franke and the theorists of the administered world. That neither author can be shown to have read the thinkers beside whom he is placed is, as the literary chapters argue in full, not a weakness of the method but its strength, for the convergence of independent diagnoses is stronger evidence of a shared historical condition than any demonstrable influence could be.

A related caution concerns the present. It would be easy, and it would be false, to make the protagonists of the novels that this dissertation analyses, Walter Faber and Ben Erman, a prophet of the smartphone and an allegory of the algorithm, respectively. This study resists the temptation to let the present colonize the readings. The close readings remain historically disciplined, attentive to what these texts could and could not have known; the aim is not anachronism but genealogy, to show that the conceptual structure the novels expose is the same structure, transformed, that organizes the technological present. For that reason, the confrontation with the present is not scattered through the chapters but gathered where it belongs: the afterword will return deliberately to the world in which this dissertation was written, and the chapters, freed of that burden, can read their novels as what they are, documents of 1957 and 1976 whose reach into the present must be demonstrated and not assumed.

The first chapter assembles the conceptual vocabulary the readings require and gives the question of technology its history: the late emergence of technology as a philosophical problem, the ontological reframing of that problem by Heidegger, its critical-theoretical reframing by the Frankfurt School, the philosophy of myth that supplies this study's central and most differentiating category, and the account of technical memory that links myth to media, before the chapter crosses, in its final movement, the cybernetic threshold into the computational age. The second chapter reads *Homo Faber. Ein Bericht* as the self-portrait of the mechanical *Ge-stell* in an individual life:

a subject organized by the myth of calculability who disavows that anything organizes him from without, and whose suppressed remainder returns, catastrophically, through the gaps his mechanical world cannot close. The third chapter reads *Ypsilon Minus* as the completion of what the second could only trace in its incompleteness: an order that has socialized and automated the work at myth, administered memory itself, and closed, by design, the gaps through which anything could return. Each novel is illuminated by the other. Faber read forward becomes the prehistory of Ben Erman, and Ben Erman read backward reveals what was already latent in Faber; the bridge between them will be built explicitly in the second chapter, and the third chapter's final section measures the distance crossed. The contribution of the whole is therefore neither a new reading of Frisch alone nor a recovery of Franke alone, though it offers both. It is the construction of a frame in which each illuminates the other and in which both are shown to belong to the history of a single problem: the scholarship on *Homo Faber* is extensive but has not read the novel as one station in the trajectory reconstructed here, and the scholarship on *Ypsilon Minus* is sparse and has not read the novel philosophically at all; the chapters engage both bodies of work in their proper places.

A final word, and a first gesture toward the end. To read Walter Faber and Ben Erman now is to read forward as well as backward: to recognize, in two figures of the mechanical and the early computational age, the characteristics of a problem that the contemporary discourse on artificial intelligence, surveillance, and the data economy has inherited without always recognizing its depth. This introduction will say no more about that inheritance, discussed in the afterword, precisely so that the readings can establish it rather than presume it. The reader may now turn to the first chapter, which begins, as this study believes the question of technology itself began, long before there was a name under which to think it.

Chapter 1: Technology, Myth, and Enframing from the Mechanical to the Computational Age

1. The Emergence of Technology as a Philosophical Problem

On the morning of 1 November 1755, a great earthquake, followed by a sea-wave and three days of fire, destroyed Lisbon. The Portuguese city was among the wealthiest cities in Europe, and tens of thousands died, many of them killed at Mass on the feast of All Saints. Voltaire answered it with a poem that refused every consolation, denying that any benevolent order could be read in such indiscriminate destruction that left the human creature with nothing but terror before a senseless power of nature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau replied in a long letter of 18 August 1756, in one of the probably most important philosophical exchanges of the Enlightenment and took issue with Voltaire's despair, and in the course of it he made a striking observation. Nature, he wrote, had not built the city: "it was hardly nature that brought together twenty thousand houses of six or seven stories there," and had the inhabitants been "more evenly dispersed and less densely housed, the losses would have been fewer or perhaps none at all" (Rousseau, *Lettre à Voltaire*). The dead of Lisbon, on Rousseau's account, were doomed not so much by the natural order of things but by the way in which human beings had arranged their world, by the way they had built, come together, and bound their lives to their possessions.

This letter is notable both for what Rousseau says and does not say in it. He identifies a cause that is neither divine nor simply natural but rather human-made: the constructed environment, the density of the city, the whole material organization of civilized life. And yet he does not name that cause *technology*. Arguably technology has always been there, decisively shaping who lived and who died, before there was a name under which to think it. This is the situation from which the present study departs. For most of the history of Western thought the

technical operated in just this way, present, consequential, world-shaping, without being isolated as a distinct object of philosophical reflection. The question this chapter pursues is therefore not whether particular machines have served or harmed the human, but what manner of world the technical as such brings into being, and how that world comes to govern the way in which anything is permitted to appear at all. I argue that what is at work in the technical is not the absence of myth but its modern, self-concealing continuation; the task of this first chapter is to assemble the philosophical resources that claim requires.

Technology became an explicit and central problem for philosophy late, and this lateness is itself telling. This is not to say that ancient philosophy ignored the questions of technology altogether. Plato already subjected a particular form of technology, namely writing, to a critique in the *Phaedrus*, and Greek thought made use of the term *technê*, a rich and diverse concept of skilled making and the arts. But the technical was reflected upon as a collection of particular arts, ranked below contemplative knowledge, rather than as a unified phenomenon posing a question in its own right. Technology as such, as a general condition of human existence and a central object of philosophical reflection, became a thematic concern only when machine technology had expanded to a scale that made it impossible to overlook. For most of the history of Western thought, the making of artifacts was assigned to the lower registers of human activity, to *technê* as distinct from *epistêmê*, to the productive arts as distinct from the contemplative life, and it attracted little philosophical attention as a question in its own right.

The first signs of a different attitude appear in the eighteenth century, and they appear, significantly, not as celebration but as critique. The figure in whom this shift first becomes visible is the same Rousseau we already encountered in his exchange with Voltaire over the Lisbon earthquake. In 1750 the Academy of Dijon proposed the prize question of whether the restoration

of the sciences and the arts had tended to purify or to corrupt morals; Rousseau won the prize with a *Discourse* that answered, against the confidence of his age, that it had weakened them: "our souls have become corrupted," he wrote, "in proportion as our sciences and our arts have advanced toward perfection" (Rousseau, 5). To read this claim as an early statement about technology, however, is to mistake what Rousseau meant by "the sciences and the arts." He did not mean machines, tools, or technical procedures; he meant the whole apparatus of learned and refined culture, the cultivation of the arts, and his charge against it was moral rather than instrumental. The sciences and arts, in his account, are born of human vices and return to feed them; they replace the rough transparency of natural virtue with the studied appearances of a society in which everyone performs and no one is known. What corrupts, for Rousseau, is not a class of devices but the form of life that refinement produces.

This places the technical, for Rousseau, within a larger account of culture as the medium of the human being's self-corruption. Ernst Cassirer's essay on Rousseau pushed against a long tradition that had found in his work only an array of contradictions and insisted instead on the underlying unity of his thought. The decisive move Cassirer reconstructs is Rousseau's location of the source of evil. Confronted with the old problem of theodicy, i.e. how a world made by a benevolent God can contain so much suffering, Rousseau refuses both the appeal to original sin and the appeal to a flaw in nature, and locates the source of human misery instead in society, which is to say in a human making for which human beings are themselves responsible. As Cassirer reads him: if corruption is the work of society and not of God or of an unalterable nature, then man must become his own savior and, in the ethical sense, his own creator, for the same freedom that allowed him to deform his condition allows him, in principle, to repair it (Cassirer, *Question,* 76). The "sciences and arts" of the First Discourse are one moment of this single vision: they name the

cultural form through which a creature good by nature works upon itself until it is something other, and worse, than nature made it, the mechanism, on Cassirer's reading, being the corruption of natural self-love (*amour de soi*) into the comparative vanity (*amour propre*) that can only be fed by another's regard.

It is against this background that Rousseau's silence on the technical becomes visible, and the silence has a cause that can be named precisely. Because his question is moral and cultural, the technical is never filtered out for him as a power in its own right; it remains dissolved within "the arts," one aspect of the cultivated life whose moral effects he judges, rather than a distinct mode of relating to the world. The clearest illustration lies in his own practice. Rousseau was not an outsider to the great intellectual enterprise of his century but a contributor to it: at the invitation of his friend Diderot he wrote articles on music and politics for the *Encyclopédie*, and in 1755 he supplied its article "Économie politique." The *Encyclopédie* was, more than any other work of the age, the project that lifted the mechanical arts into the light of philosophy. Yet Rousseau's own contributions to it concern music and the moral organization of politics; even within the very work that did the most to foreground the technical, his attention held to the aesthetic and the moral. His inattention to technology is therefore not ignorance but the shadow created by his frame: a thinker for whom the danger of culture is a danger of refinement will not see in the machine anything but one more refinement, and will pass over precisely what a later philosophy will isolate as the heart of the matter.

That Rousseau could be at once a contributor to the *Encyclopédie* and the most adamant critic of the "sciences and arts" should warn against treating the Enlightenment as a single doctrine to be affirmed or denied. It was not a unified program but a field of contending positions, and Rousseau occupies it as its internal dissident, working alongside the very men whose confidence

in progress he set out to criticize. To invoke "the Enlightenment," as this study has reason to do, is therefore always to name a contested terrain rather than a settled epoch or movement, and Rousseau is the proof that its sharpest critics were often its own participants.

There is a further consequence, and it bears directly on the architecture of this chapter. If Rousseau folds the technical into culture, the response of the present study is not to pull it back apart but to insist that the entanglement is real: technology is itself a form of culture, a mode of the human being's relation to its world,[1] and not a separate domain of mere instruments standing outside the life of meaning. What Rousseau lacks is not the insight that the human is shaped by what it makes but any reason to single out the technical, among all the works of culture, as the one whose manner of world-shaping would come to overrun the rest. The history this chapter traces is in large part the history of that singling-out: the slow differentiation of the technical from the general life of culture into a distinct and finally a dominant mode of disclosing the world. Rousseau stands at the threshold of that history, at the moment when the question of culture's power over the human has been posed but the technical has not yet been named within it. What was for him one danger among the dangers of refinement will become, by the end of the trajectory this study follows, the form to which every other is subordinated.

It was Oswald Spengler who, writing in 1931, retrospectively dated the emergence of the technology question and located its absence in precisely the period Rousseau represents. Spengler

[1] In the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* Cassirer conceives the human as the being that never meets reality directly but always through forms it has itself produced; language, myth, religion, art, and science, each a way of giving the world shape and sense. The symbolic forms are, in his account, not modes in which an independent reality manifests itself to consciousness but "roads by which the spirit proceeds towards its objectivization" (Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* 1: 78); culture, so understood, is not an ornament added to a prior relation to the world but is exactly that relation. The present study takes up this conception: the same power to live through self-produced forms that Cassirer reads as the progressive liberation of the human spirit reappears, by the end of the trajectory traced here, as the means by which a single form, in this case the technical, comes to monopolize the disclosure of the world. Cassirer himself extended the symbolic-forms doctrine, in his 1930 essay "Form und Technik," to include technology as a symbolic form in its own right.

observed that the problem of technology and its relation to culture and history "taucht erst im 19. Jahrhundert auf" (Spengler, 1). This marks the nineteenth century as the moment when machine technology, expanding to a vast scale in its factory cities, railways, and steamships, finally forced the question to be posed[2]. The discipline that answered the question which Spengler dates to the nineteenth century took shape only in the second half of it, and it did so first among engineers rather than among academic philosophers. As Carl Mitcham has documented in the most careful account of this tradition, the engineering lineage holds clear historical priority in the explicit use of the phrase "philosophy of technology" (Mitcham, 19). It was Ernst Kapp who coined the term "Philosophie der Technik," and whose *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik* of 1877 developed the conception of tool and machine as *Organprojektion*, the projection of the human organs into external form: the hammer as an extension of the fist, the optical instrument as an extension of the eye, the railway and telegraph as the projected vascular and nervous systems of an enlarged social body (Mitcham, 23). In Kapp's conception the technical is not a threat to the human but a mirror of it: in the tool the human first comes to know its own organs from the outside, so that the philosophy of technology begins as a philosophy of self-recognition. This optimistic register, technology as the medium of human self-knowledge, is the position against which the critical tradition examined below will define itself; the trajectory of this chapter is in large part the dismantling of Kapp's confidence that in its machines humanity meets only an enlarged image of itself.[3]

[2] Spengler is invoked here only for that dating, and as a symptom of the interwar tendency to depict technology in heroic and tragic mythical terms, the very mythologization this study analyzes rather than endorses; his racialized and social-Darwinist philosophy of history is not adopted.

[3] The line from Kapp ran by way of the Russian engineer-theorist Pyotr K. Engelmeier, who transmitted and popularized the organ-projection thesis and through whom it reached Dessauer (Mitcham, 26)

In *Streit um die Technik* (1956) Friedrich Dessauer mounted the most sustained philosophical rehabilitation of technical invention in the postwar German context. To the three Kantian critiques of knowing, moral doing, and aesthetic feeling, he proposed to add a fourth, a critique of technological making. Where Kant had held that knowledge remains confined to appearances and never reaches the thing in itself, Dessauer argued that invention does establish positive contact with a noumenal order: in the act of technical creation the engineer reaches, through what Dessauer calls an "innere Bearbeitung", a "fourth realm" of preestablished solutions latent in the very structure of reality (Mitcham, 32). The engineer who realizes a technical form does not, on this account, merely manipulate matter but discloses possibilities already inscribed in the order of the world.

This casting of technology as a mode of access to being itself is the mark of how the engineering tradition has by that point come to understand itself, and it appeared in the same decade as the works this study reads against it. The optimism of the fourth realm did not, however, survive the century that produced it intact. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 had already materialized long-standing anxieties about the human engagement with technical power, transforming what had been a theoretical dispute into an undeniable historical reality,[4] and the systems of surveillance, mass production, and administration that accompanied postwar reconstruction placed Dessauer's confidence under a pressure it could not bear. The German-language discourse of the period named this contest directly. It called it the *Streit um die Technik*, the dispute over technology, and the philosophical works this chapter now turns to are interventions in it (Schmitz, 32).

[4] Organized scientific responses soon followed: the Russell–Einstein Manifesto (1955), which warned of the threat nuclear weapons posed to the survival of humanity and called on scientists to confront it, and, in the German context, the Göttinger Erklärung (1957), in which eighteen leading physicists publicly refused to participate in any development of nuclear weapons for the Federal Republic.

The dispute was not confined to the German-speaking world. Two further figures of mid-century philosophy of technology belong here, each broadening the argument beyond the German tradition. Jacques Ellul, writing in France, advanced in *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle* (*The Technological Society*) of 1954 the thesis that "technique has become autonomous; it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and which has renounced all tradition" (Ellul, 14). It was no longer a set of tools subordinate to human ends, but a self-augmenting environment with its own immanent logic, absorbing politics, art, and the human itself into the single imperative of efficiency. Ellul's technique is thus a milieu rather than a machine, and his claim is sociological rather than ontological: it differs both from Heidegger's account of technology as a mode of revealing, as we will see in Horkheimer's account of the formation of the subject and so it supplies a third term to the framework.

Lewis Mumford, writing in the United States, supplies the historical depth the argument needs. His concept of the megamachine, developed across the two-volume *Mythos der Maschine*, names the organization of human beings, rather than mechanical parts, into a vast technical apparatus held together by bureaucratic, military, and religious discipline: an invisible machine composed entirely of human components, assembled and directed by the god-king. He locates its origin not in the industrial age but in the great labor armies of the pyramid age, so that the machine appears as a social form before it is ever a mechanical one (Mumford, 219–21). What matters here is that the megamachine is from the outset sustained by myth, by a mythology of divine kingship and cosmic order, so that power and myth appear together at the very origin of large-scale technical organization; a point this chapter returns to once the analysis of myth is in place.

2. The Ontological Turn: Heidegger and the Essence of Technology

The decisive philosophical reframing of the technology question in the twentieth century is Martin Heidegger's, and it is decisive because it shifts the question from the social and the moral to the ontological. Where the *Streit um die Technik* had asked whether technology was good or bad for the human, whether it fulfilled or degraded human potential, Heidegger's lecture "*Die Frage nach der Technik*," published in 1954, sets aside that entire register and inquires instead into the essence of technology, insisting from the outset that this essence is itself nothing technological (GA, 7, 7). This displacement is more radical than it first appears. To ask what is good or bad for the human is already to presuppose that we know what technology is, so that only its value remains in question; Heidegger's question takes distance from that presupposition and asks how technology prevails before any evaluation of it can begin, and therefore how it has already determined what the relation of the human to the world was by the time the question of value is raised at all.

The lecture's opening move is to separate two questions that ordinary thinking runs together: what technology is, and what its essence is. The current definitions of technology, Heidegger argues, are entirely correct. The first is instrumental and defines technology as a means to an end; the second is anthropological and understands technology as a human activity, the making and using of such means. The two belong together, since to establish ends and to assemble the means of reaching them is itself a human doing, and in this way there is no disputing that technology is, in the ordinary sense, a human instrumentality (GA, 7, 9). Heidegger's claim is not that these definitions are wrong but that their very correctness is what prevents them from reaching the truth. That which is correct, *das Richtige*, rests upon something accurate in whatever lies before it; that which is true, *das Wahre*, opens onto that which first lets what lies before us be present at all (GA, 7, 9). As Babette Babich argues, the instrumental and anthropological conceptions miss

the essence precisely because they belong to the order of calculation, and calculation, on Heidegger's account, excludes the very questioning through which the essence could be reached (Babich, 7). To define technology instrumentally is to remain within the sphere of means and ends, among the things technology produces and the purposes it serves, and never to ask how it is that, within the reign of technology, anything shows up as a means, an end, a resource, or a purpose in the first place. As Hubert Dreyfus puts it in his commentary on the lecture, the instrumental and anthropological definition is correct exactly as far as it goes, which is precisely why it cannot reach the essence; pressed to that level, modern technology shows itself to be "something completely different" (Dreyfus, *Heidegger on Gaining,* 100).

That the essence of technology should be sought at the level of disclosure rather than of equipment has, moreover, a longer history in Heidegger's own thought than his lecture alone suggests. It shows that the technical was a question for Heidegger already before he named the *Ge-stell*. Already in *Sein und Zeit* the analysis of the ready-to-hand, *das Zuhandene*, had displaced the present-at-hand object, *das Vorhandene*, from its traditional priority: things are encountered first not as neutral objects standing before a subject but as equipment absorbed into a referential whole of purposes, and the detached object of theoretical inspection is a derivative and alternative mode of this prior involvement. As Dreyfus argues in "Between Technē and Technology," the account of equipment in *Sein und Zeit* is for just this reason ambiguously poised between two possibilities: read one way it opposes the technological understanding of being, since it refuses to build the world up out of value-free objects; read another way it prepares that understanding, since it already grasps entities in terms of their functional assignment and so anticipates the reduction of the world to a system of interlocking usefulness that the later thought will name *Bestand* (Dreyfus, *Between Technē*, 25-26). The point is not that *Sein und Zeit* is secretly a philosophy of technology

but that the question of the essence of technology grows out of Heidegger's oldest concern, the meaning of the being of what we encounter, so that the lecture originally given in 1953 takes on as a core a line of questioning rather than opening a new one.

This is why, for Heidegger, the essence of technology is nothing technological. The essence is not a more fundamental machine, nor a master technique, nor the sum of all devices; it is not itself anything that could be built, used, or switched off. It is, instead, a way in which beings are disclosed, a manner of revealing, *Entbergen*, that pre-scribes in advance how the world is allowed to appear. Richard Rojcewicz draws out what is concealed in that term: *Entbergen* names an active human reception of a disclosure that is not itself a human making, the "disclosive looking" by which what lies hidden is brought into the open (Rojcewicz, 55), so that technology, understood in this way, is not a mere means but a mode of *disclosive looking* that belongs to the realm of truth (Rojcewicz, 56). To seek the essence among technological things is therefore to look in precisely the wrong place, as one would do who hoped to find the essence of the tree in some particular tree rather than in that which lets every tree be a tree. The instrumental and anthropological definitions remain caught within the technological precisely because they treat technology as one more being among beings, an instrument in human hands, and so pass over the prior event in which the technological mode of disclosure has already claimed both the instrument and the one who uses it.

The name Heidegger gives to the essence of modern technology is *das Ge-stell*, translated as *enframing*, and the world that *enframing* discloses is a world of *Bestand*, standing-reserve (GA, 7, 17). What *Bestand* names becomes clear only by contrast with what it displaces. The older philosophical world was a world of objects, *Gegenstände*, things that stand against a subject, possessing their own standing and resisting the one who confronts them. Under *enframing*, beings surrender precisely this standing-against. They are revealed neither as objects in that sense nor as

things in the older, gathered sense, but as resources on call: stockpiled, orderable, interchangeable, held in readiness for a further ordering whose only end is more ordering. The specific sense of the term is best fixed by three features it always carries at once. Standing-reserve is, first, defined wholly by its availability, its capacity to be summoned, and not by any standing of its own; second, it is interchangeable, a mere instance of a type that can be replaced by any equivalent unit without remainder; and third, it has no terminus, since what is ordered is ordered only for the sake of further ordering, so that the chain never arrives at a thing valued for itself. The mark of standing-reserve is thus availability without autonomy. The airliner waiting on the runway, to take Heidegger's kind of example, is not an object set over against us but a flexible component within the system of transportation, on call to deliver passengers who are themselves, in turn, ordered as the resource the system requires (Dreyfus, *Heidegger on Gaining,* 100). Heidegger presses the point to its limit: whatever stands by in the mode of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as an object, and in the same movement the human who orders the real is itself drawn into the standing-reserve, so that subject and object alike are absorbed into the pure relational character of ordering (ibid). This is the decisive difference the term is meant to carry. To encounter a river, a forest, or a person as *Bestand* is not to use an object but to have ceased to encounter an object at all; the entity has been reduced in advance to its availability, its capacity to be called up, measured, and redistributed, and every other way it might have shown itself has been foreclosed before the encounter begins.

Heidegger's most famous example is the hydroelectric plant on the Rhine. Where the old wooden bridge let the river be the river, gathering the landscape around itself, the power station sets the river up as a supplier of hydraulic pressure, and the Rhine becomes something ordered, a stock of energy on call, until, in a further turn Heidegger marks with some irony, it becomes an orderable object of inspection for the vacation industry that has arranged the tour (GA, 7, 16–17).

The point is not that the power station is ugly or harmful, though it may be both, but that under *das Ge-stell* the river can show itself only as standing-reserve, that the mode of revealing has narrowed it to a single channel. This is the heart of Heidegger's diagnosis and the reason it is indispensable to this study: the danger of technology lies not in any particular machine or process but in the tendency of *enframing* to drive out every other way of revealing, to monopolize disclosure so completely that the poetic, the symbolic, and the mythic modes of letting the world appear are foreclosed in such a way that their very foreclosure goes unnoticed (GA, 7, 28). It is this last idea, the concealment of the foreclosure, that will be decisive when the argument turns to myth, for it names the precise mechanism by which a mode of disclosure can conceal itself as no mode at all, as the plain face of the real.

Two features of this account require emphasis here. The first is that *enframing* is a destining, a *Geschick*, into which the human is claimed rather than a tool the human freely takes up; the human does not decide to *enframe* the world but finds itself already addressed by the demand that everything be set in order. This is why the technological condition cannot be escaped by a mere change of attitude or a more humane application of the same instruments. But *Geschick* must not be misheard as fate in the fatalistic sense, as though *enframing* were a doom mechanically imposed. Heidegger is emphatic that a destining is never a compulsion that locks the human into blind conformity; it is, rather, what first opens a realm in which the human can stand and respond, and so it is the very ground of the possibility of a free relation to technology (GA, 7, 26). Michael Zimmerman draws out the same structure from the side of the human response, quoting the counsel Heidegger gave in his 1955 memorial address, published as *Gelassenheit*: we may say "yes" to the unavoidable use of technical things and at the same time say "no," "insofar as we do not permit them to claim us exclusively and thus to warp, confuse, and finally lay waste to our essence"

(Zimmerman, 219). To be claimed is precisely not to be determined: the human can consent to the use of technical things while refusing them exclusive claim over its essence, and in that reservation a free comportment survives. This is the pivot on which the whole account turns. Because the human is claimed, or challenged-forth, by *enframing* rather than choosing it, the danger is total, reaching to the roots of how anything whatever can appear; but for the same reason the danger is not the last word, since to be challenged by a mode of revealing is also to be capable of recognizing it as a mode of revealing, and in that recognition a freer relation first becomes possible.

The second feature is that Heidegger does not end in despair, and the reason he does not is bound up with a reading of Hölderlin that repays close attention, since the wordplay it turns on is deliberate. He closes the lecture by citing the lines "Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst / Das Rettende auch": where the danger is, there grows also that which saves. The claim is not that a remedy appears alongside the danger, or in spite of it, but that what saves grows from the very same ground as what threatens. He hears in *das Rettende*, the saving, not the ordinary sense of being snatched from harm but an older one: *retten* means to restore something into its essence, to bring it for the first time into its proper appearing: ""Retten" ist: einholen ins Wesen, um so das Wesen erst zu seinem eigentlichen Scheinen zu bringen" (GA 7, 29). And he finds at work within the essence of *enframing*, considered as a destining of revealing, *das Gewährende*, the granting, so that the very sending that endangers by narrowing disclosure to ordering is also a granting of disclosure, and therefore preserves within itself the possibility of a turn: "Das Gewährende, das so oder so in die Entbergung schickt, ist als solches das Rettende" (GA 7, 33). The supreme danger, on this account, is not that machines may harm us but that *enframing* so completely monopolizes disclosure that we take its mode of revealing for reality as such, forgetting that it is a mode of revealing at all; the danger is the concealment of *enframing's* character as *enframing*. Yet precisely here the turn

becomes possible, and it becomes possible without having to step outside the danger, for the saving is not imported from some region untouched by technology. To see das *Ge-stell* as *das Ge-stell*, to recognize the ordering of the world into standing-reserve as one destining of revealing rather than the plain nature of things, is already to cease being totally absorbed by it, and so the moment in which the danger is grasped as danger is the same moment in which what saves first comes to presence (Dreyfus, *Heidegger on Gaining,* 103). The saving power is not an alternative to *enframing* supplied from without but the recovery, from within the technological age itself, of an awareness that *enframing* is a mode of disclosure and not disclosure as such. This is why Heidegger locates the turning not in any human program for mastering technology, which would only extend the will to ordering, but in a change in the essence of revealing itself, named most directly in the companion lecture "Die Kehre," where the danger, precisely as the danger, is the site at which the saving power arises (GA 79, 72).

The saving power is thus not the abolition of technology but the recovery of a more authentic relation to revealing, and Heidegger finds this way in art. He returns to the Greek *technê*, which named not only craftsmanship, the manufacture of equipment, but also the bringing-forth of the fine arts and of poetry: a single word for two ways of letting something come to presence (GA 7, 35). That the same term once held both is, for Heidegger, the memory of a time before disclosure had narrowed to ordering, and a sign that another relation remains possible: alongside the calculative thinking that sets the world in order as resource, a meditative thinking, *besinnliches Denken,* that does not refuse technology but ceases to be enslaved by it. It is essential to Heidegger's argument, which Zimmerman is right to mention, that this turn to art is not an aestheticism or a flight into the museum, since the artwork is invoked not as a beautiful object but as another manner of revealing, one that lets a world come to stand rather than reducing what

appears to stock on call (Zimmerman, 231). Art and meditative thinking do not undo *enframing*; they hold open, against its monopoly, the memory that revealing exceeds ordering, and it is this memory, rather than any technical or political mastery, that Heidegger conceives as the beginning of a free relation to the technological world.

Heidegger's account faces in three directions within this study. It looks back to the engineering optimism of the previous section: where Friedrich Dessauer had found in technical invention a positive contact with a noumenal order, a fourth realm of solutions latent in the structure of reality, Heidegger finds in the same gesture the narrowing down of disclosure, so that the two thinkers argue, in the same postwar decade, opposite verdicts on what technology does to our access to being. It looks sideways to the Frankfurt School, examined next, whose analysis of instrumental reason proceeds from different premises, social and historical rather than ontological, nevertheless it converges with Heidegger's on the diagnosis of a reason that has become pure domination, a convergence the following section will illustrate. And it looks forward to the cybernetic threshold, where *enframing* acquires an instrument more overreaching than any Heidegger described, the computational ordering of the world as information, to which this chapter returns in its final section.

3. Instrumental Reason and the Administered World

If Heidegger reframes the technology question ontologically, the Frankfurt School reframes it as a question of social domination and of the fate of reason itself, and the two reframings, though they proceed from different philosophical premises, prove complementary for the purposes of this study. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, written in American exile during the war and published in 1947, proposes that enlightenment and myth are not opposites

but secretly continuous. Myth was already enlightenment, an early attempt to master a terrifying nature by naming and ordering it; and enlightenment, in its relentless drive to dominate nature through calculation and abstraction, reverts to myth, hardening into a new mythology of facts and a new fate from which there is no escape (Horkheimer and Adorno, 27). The word 'dialectic' here does not name a method of reconciliation, but the reversal by which a principle carried to its extreme turns into its opposite. Enlightenment is dialectical in exactly this sense: the demythologizing structure that set out to dissolve every myth, pressing the domination of nature to its limit, converts into a second mythology of its own, a limited universe of mere facticity as closed and as inescapable as the fate the myths had once personified. What began as liberation from blind necessity returns as a new necessity, before which the disenchanted subject stands as powerless as he stood before the unanswerable questions that only the gods and myths could bear themselves.

Reason, which was to liberate humanity from fear, becomes an instrument of domination turned against both external nature and the inner nature of the subject, and the price of mastery is the self-alienation of those who master. As Adorno and Horkheimer claim "je weiter aber der Prozeß der Selbsterhaltung durch bürgerliche Arbeitsteilung geleistet wird, um so mehr erzwingt er die Selbstentäußerung der Individuen, die sich an Leib und Seele nach der technischen Apparatur zu formen haben" (30). The human who would dominate nature must first dominate nature within himself, and in doing so becomes a thing among things.

Horkheimer developed the diagnosis of reason most sharply in his own *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft*, where he distinguishes objective reason of the older philosophical tradition, which concerned itself with the rationality of ends, from subjective or instrumental reason that has come to dominate, which concerns itself only with the adequacy of means to ends

that are themselves simply taken as given. Instrumental reason, in Horkheimer's account, "hat es wesentlich mit Mitteln und Zwecken zu tun"; it attends to the fitting of procedures to goals while it "legt der Frage wenig Bedeutung bei, ob die Ziele als solche vernünftig sind" (Horkheimer, 15). Instrumental reason in this sense is indifferent to its bearer: the same rationality can organize the inner life of a single subject or be built into the procedures of an institution, and this difference of scale, between a domination lived as individual character and a domination set into the architecture of a social order, is one to which the argument will have occasion to return.

The two diagnoses, by Heidegger and by Horkheimer and Adorno, proceed from different premises and must not be collapsed into one. For Heidegger the reduction of the world to standing-reserve is an event in the history of being, a destining of revealing that no social interest commands and no class secures; for Horkheimer and Adorno a parallel impoverishment, one they describe without Heidegger's concept of *Bestand* and which cannot therefore be strictly the same as his, is the work of a determinate social history, the commodity form, the division of labor and the long compulsion of self-preservation, and it speaks to relations of domination. Adorno indeed regarded Heideggerian language as a mystification that draws the social up into the pseudo-profundity of Being, a charge he pressed most directly in *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (1964).[5] Heidegger would have found in the Frankfurt critique only a more sophisticated humanism, still bound to the subject it hopes to emancipate. Reading them together is therefore not to suggest a hidden agreement but to observe the convergence of a result, and that convergence is exactly what makes each indispensable to the other. Heidegger supplies the ontological form of the condition, the narrowing of disclosure that forecloses every mode of revealing but the calculative, while leaving the social

[5] Adorno, *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit: Zur deutschen Ideologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1964); also in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 6. Adorno's charge is that the jargon lends socially and historically conditioned realities the false dignity of the ontological, transfiguring the ontic into a semblance of Being.

content of that narrowing in shadow; the Frankfurt School supplies precisely that content, technology as ideology, a historically produced order that presents its domination as natural necessity and forms the very subject who consents to it. The difference is clearest at the point of agency. As Andrew Feenberg observes, Heidegger's account rests on an ontological understanding of being whose only strategy before technology is to bound it rather than to reform it (Feenberg, 162-163). The impoverishment of the world thus arrives as a quasi-anonymous destiny, an essence with neither an author nor a beneficiary. Feenberg himself ranks Adorno and Horkheimer with Heidegger among these substantive critics of technology as such; what that grouping passes over, and what matters here, is a difference not of reform but of location. Where Heidegger leaves domination authorless, Horkheimer and Adorno locate it in a nameable social history, and so leave it, at least in principle, as something that can be answered for. Taken alone, then, Heidegger risks a politics-blind fatalism in which domination has no one to answer for it; taken alone, the Frankfurt School risks remaining inside the instrumental self-understanding it sets out to criticize. Held together, they articulate a connection on which this study will build: the technological foreclosure of the world is at once an ontological narrowing of what can appear and a social relation of domination that conceals itself as the simple way things are.

Herbert Marcuse carries the Frankfurt School analysis to the point where instrumental reason and political rule become indistinguishable, and it is this convergence that the present argument requires. What Heidegger diagnoses ontologically, the monopolization of disclosure by a single mode of revealing that forecloses every alternative, Marcuse traces as a social and psychological reality: in an advanced industrial society the foreclosure does not appear as foreclosure. Rather, it appears as satisfaction. In *One-Dimensional Man* he argued that advanced industrial societies achieve a new and more total form of control precisely by delivering the goods,

by satisfying needs it has itself produced, so that technological rationality becomes political rationality and the very capacity for oppositional, two-dimensional thinking is progressively flattened into a one-dimensional affirmation of the existing order. As Marcuse puts it: "technological rationality reveals its political character as it becomes the great vehicle of better domination, creating a truly totalitarian universe in which society and nature, mind and body are kept in a state of permanent mobilization for the defense of this universe" (Marcuse, 20). Domination in such a society does not appear as domination; it appears as comfort, efficiency, and reasonableness, and its instrument is not terror but administration. This is the decisive turn for the present argument: a power that secures itself by satisfying the needs it has itself produced makes its own order appear not merely tolerable but desirable, so that a rationality which has become the unquestioned shape of the reasonable leaves no standpoint from which it might be refused. Domination, in Marcuse's account, completes itself not as constraint but as contentment.

That a total administration should present itself as contentment, even as a sort of deliverance, is the point where the argument must turn from domination to myth. The *Dialektik der Aufklärung* had already connected myth and enlightenment, enlightenment reverting to the very mythology it set out to dissolve, but it did so in order to merge them in a form of complicity in domination. The section that follows takes up Hans Blumenberg's reconceptualization, according to which the labor by which an overwhelming reality is made bearable is not reason but its permanent and constitutive achievement. It is against the Frankfurt School's thought, as much as in continuation of it, that myth will be reclaimed as the existential function that technological rationality does not abolish but instead inherits.

4. Myth as the Work of Distance: Blumenberg

At the center of this study stands a category that neither Heidegger nor the Frankfurt School offer, and it is to Hans Blumenberg's philosophy of myth that this dissertation owes its most original conceptual instrument. The *Dialektik der Aufklärung* had already linked myth and reason, but it did so in order to expose their complicity in domination, treating myth largely as the prehistory and the recurrent shadow of enlightenment, the dark double that reason had supposedly overcome and to which it secretly reverted. Blumenberg's *Arbeit am Mythos* (1979) reconceives myth more fundamentally, not as the opposite of reason nor merely as its dark double, but as a permanent human achievement, an ongoing labor by which human beings establish a livable distance from a reality that would otherwise overwhelm them. The decisive reorientation, as Robert Wallace has shown, is that myth should be understood "primarily in relation to what it comes after and serves to overcome" rather than as a preliminary substitute for logos or science (Wallace, 94). What this means is that the standard narrative, in which myth belongs to a pre-rational stage of human development and is progressively displaced as reason matures, has the direction of the question exactly backwards. That narrative defines myth by its destination, by that to which it will eventually surrender, and in doing so it can only ever read myth's persistence within modernity as failure, as the return of what should have been left behind. Blumenberg's reversal redefines myth by its origin: by the pressure to which it responds, the overwhelming and ungovernable character of a reality that human beings have never been able simply to inhabit. Once myth is understood this way, i.e. as a response to a permanent condition rather than as a stage in a sequence, its persistence within modernity ceases to be a pariah requiring explanation and becomes instead a structural necessity. Modernity does not overcome the absolutism of reality; it develops new and more powerful instruments for managing it. And those instruments, however far they appear to

have transformed from gods, stories and powerful figures of archaic myth, are continuous with myth at the level of function: they establish distance, they convert the anonymous into the orderable, they render the threatening familiar. Where Horkheimer and Adorno read the persistence of myth within enlightened modernity as regression, Blumenberg reads it as the sign that what myth responds to has not disappeared, and that reason, in all its forms including the technological, has always been myth's continuation rather than its successor.

This reversal bears directly on the relation between Blumenberg and Heidegger that organizes the present chapter, and it is worth making the disagreement explicit, since the two thinkers are otherwise easily assimilated. As Angus Nicholls observes, Blumenberg argues, contra the position of Heidegger in "Die Frage nach der Technik," that technology always already belongs to the human life-world rather than constituting a later mode of *enframing* that obstructs, *verstellt*, a more original relation to Being (Nicholls, 22). Heidegger is indispensable for the ontological description of the narrowing, the reduction of what can appear to orderable standing-reserve; but his account is shadowed by the intimation of a prior, more authentic disclosure that *enframing* covers over, as though there had once been a garden of *unenframed* presence from which the technological age is a fall.[6] Blumenberg denies precisely this. There is no pre-technical relation to a world that technology later distorts, because the human is a creature of deficiency that has never

[6] A critique of Heidegger's nostalgia can be found in Don Ihde's *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*, Ihde takes as his governing thesis, announced in that subtitle, that the human has never occupied a pre-technological condition at all, so that the dream of a non-technological existence counts only to a nostalgia for an innocence that never was; and in *Heidegger's Technologies*, he traces Heidegger's preference for craft and handwork relations over modern ones to a residual "techno-romanticism" that cannot, in the end, be philosophically justified. Ihde's objection converges with Blumenberg's on the decisive point: there is no earlier condition to which one might return, no gathering of an unprovoked nature that modern technology has spoiled, and so the opposition between an authentic and an *enframed* disclosure cannot bear the weight Heidegger places upon it. Where Blumenberg denies the pre-technical garden on the anthropological ground that the human has never possessed an unmediated relation to reality, Ihde denies it phenomenologically. I follow Ihde in this deflation of the nostalgia, but not in the further inference he draws from it, that the residual techno-romanticism discredits Heidegger's diagnosis as such. The narrowing Heidegger describes remains phenomenologically accurate once the myth of a prior garden is set aside, and it is that diagnosis, not the pathos of loss in which he couches it, that this chapter retains.

possessed an unmediated relation to reality at all; the technical is one of the forms in which an exposed and under-equipped being makes an overwhelming reality bearable, coeval with culture rather than a later corruption of it. Retaining Heidegger's diagnosis of the narrowing while refusing his nostalgia for what preceded it is what allows this chapter to describe technological rationality as myth-work without treating it as the loss of an original truth.

Hans Blumenberg's foundational concept is the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit*: "Er bedeutet, daß der Mensch die Bedingungen seiner Existenz annähernd nicht in der Hand hatte und, was wichtiger ist, schlechthin nicht in seiner Hand glaubte" (Blumenberg, 9). The human being, on Blumenberg's account, is constitutively exposed to a reality it cannot master and, crucially, cannot even believe it can master. This is not a merely historical condition that civilization has since overcome; it is the permanent anthropological horizon against which all human cultural production takes place. Myth, on this account, is the first and most elementary response to that pressure, and its primordial gesture is the giving of names. As Blumenberg writes, "Es ist ein einzigartiges Paradigma der ›Arbeit am Mythos‹, die begonnen haben mag mit dem Apotropaion der Namengebung" (Blumenberg, 22): by naming the anonymous power, mythic consciousness achieves its first *Distanzgewinn*, converting a relation of pure exposure into one of at least minimal engagement. The named power is a being with a face, a history, a character that can be anticipated and, in time, negotiated. Distance is not an escape but the minimum condition of human viability.

What grounds this account philosophically is a philosophical anthropology: a view of human existence as one structured by exposure, in which the creature that lacks the instinctual closure of other animals is opened onto a reality it cannot master and yet must inhabit. As Betzler observes, the *Mängelwesen*,[7] the creature of deficiency that has lost its hold on reality and its

[7] Arnold Gehlen's *Mängelwesen*, literally the "creature of deficiencies" is an idea that Gehlen inherits from Herder and develops in *Der Mensch: Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (1940). It turns on a contrast between animal

orientation in an age without God or metaphysics is the fixed starting and vanishing point of Blumenberg's entire philosophical undertaking, whose question is always the same: how does the intrusive power of the real world present itself, and what forms of *Bewältigung* and *Distanzleistung* does the human being actually accomplish (Betzler, 456). As Vida Pavesich has shown, this premise positions Blumenberg precisely in the gap between Heideggerian groundlessness and the Cassirerian confidence that symbolic form progressively liberates the human spirit[8]: he presses a prior question that both leave unasked. namely, why do human beings produce symbolic forms at all?, and locates the answer not in the richness of the human spirit but in its constitutive insufficiency (Pavesich, 423). The absolutism of reality is therefore not anxiety in the existential-ontological sense Heidegger intended but an anthropological fact: the organism cannot confront reality directly and must work, in every historical period and by every available means, to make that reality livable.

Horkheimer and Adorno had already seen that myth and enlightenment are secretly continuous, that the demythologizing drive of instrumental reason conceals its own mythic

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and human. An animal is instinctually closed: nature equips it with a fixed repertoire of responses fitted to a particular environment. The human being is instinctually open and therefore overexposed. It takes in far more stimuli than instinct can organize and has no inborn equipment to respond to them directly. For Gehlen this biological deficit is not a defect to be lamented but precisely what makes culture necessary: institutions, language, custom, and ritual are the compensatory structures through which an underequipped creature stabilizes itself and gains a basis for action rather than mere reaction. Blumenberg takes over this mechanism but detaches it from Gehlen's cultural conservatism from what Blumenberg himself called Gehlen's "absolutism of institutions," the demand that established institutions be preserved largely at all costs. What he keeps is the underlying logic: that symbolic forms such as myth and metaphor are not ornaments of an already secure existence but prostheses for a creature that could not survive without them (Pavesich 428–29).

[8] For Cassirer, symbolic forms are not copies of a ready-made reality but acts of spirit: "Every authentic function of the human spirit… does not merely copy but rather embodies an original, formative power", so that language, myth, art, and cognition "are not different modes in which an independent reality manifests itself to the human spirit but roads by which the spirit proceeds towards its objectivization, i.e., its self-revelation" (Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1: 78). The progression through these forms is itself a movement of liberation: the products of culture are "multiple efforts, all directed toward the one goal of transforming the passive world of mere impressions, in which the spirit seems at first imprisoned, into a world that is pure expression of the human spirit" (1: 80-81). It is this confidence, that in producing its forms spirit progressively frees itself, which Blumenberg neither shares nor simply denies but undercuts, by asking why the human being is driven to produce such forms at all and locating the answer not in the spirit's richness but in its exposure to an unmastered reality.

structure. But their analysis leaves myth in the position of a symptom: what returns in the form of a second mythology is the failure of enlightenment to achieve what it promised, the proof that domination persists even under the sign of liberation. Blumenberg accepts the continuity of myth and reason but reframes its significance entirely. If myth is not regression but anthropological necessity, then what the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* diagnoses as the regression of enlightenment into myth can be read instead as the persistence of a constitutive human need that no form of reason can eliminate. The *Arbeit am Mythos* does not stop; it undergoes a change of medium. And this is precisely the point where Blumenberg becomes indispensable to the present study. Lewis Mumford had already shown, from the side of material history, that myth and technical organization are not opposed but codependent: the megamachine, the great labor apparatus of the pyramid age, was from the outset sustained by a mythology of divine kingship and cosmic order, so that power and myth are bound together at the very origin of large-scale technical organization (Mumford, 219). Blumenberg supplies the theoretical ground for what Mumford demonstrates historically: myth is not the antithesis of organization but its condition of possibility, the form in which an overwhelming demand on human beings is rendered livable and even desirable.

The consequence of this reconceptualization for the present study is decisive, and it must be stated carefully to avoid a misreading that the argument does not intend. If myth is the work of gaining distance from the absolutism of reality, then myth is not something the technological subject has left behind; it is something the technological subject continues to perform, by other means and under other names. But the claim is structural not teleological or functional. It is not that technological rationality serves the same purpose as myth, as though there were a pre-given human need for which myth and technology are successive solutions. It is rather that both myth and technological rationality are forms of *Bewältigung,* i.e. a form of working through and coping

with, a constitutive exposure to reality that never ceases to impose itself on the individual. The reduction of the world to calculable standing-reserve, the conversion of an overwhelming and contingent reality into a field of manageable quantities, exhibits the same structural logic that Blumenberg identifies in mythic naming: it establishes distance, it converts the anonymous into the orderable, it renders the threatening familiar by subjecting it to a grammar of human control. Both are responses to the same *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit*, but they are responses that arise from and belong to historically specific conditions, and the differences between them, the differences of medium, of scale, of the kind of distance they establish, are as important as their structural kinship. Technological rationality is not the absence of mythic consciousness but its modern, self-concealing continuation: the self-concealment is essential, because unlike archaic myth, which knows itself as myth, technological rationality presents its mode of ordering the world as simply the way things are, as transparent description rather than as the work of a particular and contestable disclosure.

This is why the category of myth occupies the position it does in the structure of this dissertation. The opening of this chapter identified two existential functions that persist across the passage from the mechanical to the computational: myth, understood as the work of gaining distance from an overwhelming reality, and memory, understood as the technical exteriorization through which the human is constituted and transformed. Blumenberg's understanding of myth establishes the theoretical content of the first of these functions. It shows that the persistence of myth is not a residue of irrationality within an otherwise enlightened modernity but a structural feature of human existence that modernity inherits, transforms, and above all conceals. The concealment is itself philosophically significant: it is what makes technological rationality a form of *Arbeit am Mythos* in the specific sense that it is myth that does not know itself as myth, myth

that has naturalized its own mode of disclosure to the point where the disclosure itself becomes invisible. As Pavesich analysis of Blumenberg's ideas argues, the defining characteristic of his account of the human is that existence is always already organized by institutions, stabilized cultural forms and that screen out the absolutism of reality and make oriented action possible (Pavesich, 431). Technological rationality is such an institution, and the question this chapter has been building toward is what happens to human existence when that institution monopolizes the entire field of disclosure, when the screening out of the absolutism of reality becomes so total that no other mode of appearing retains its foundation.

5. Technics, Memory, and the Pharmakon

If the previous section established myth as the first of the two existential functions that persist across the passage from the mechanical to the computational, this section turns to the second. That passage cannot be understood as a mere succession of devices, a movement from engines to computers; it is a transformation in the way the human stores, transmits, and is constituted by its own past, and it therefore cannot be thought without a philosophy of technical memory. Memory is the second rail on which this chapter's spine runs: alongside the work of distance that Blumenberg names myth, there is the work of exteriorization through which the human inherits and hands on what it has learned.

A philosophy of technical memory reaches back to Plato and forward to the data center, and this thread begins with the anthropology of technical exteriorization. André Leroi-Gourhan, in his paleontological account of human evolution, argued that the human is constituted from the beginning by a process of exteriorization; the freeing of the hand from locomotion and of the face from prehension is correlated with the externalization of function into tools, and with it the

externalization of memory into objects and, eventually, into graphic and symbolic supports (Leroi-Gourhan, 246 - 249). The human does not first exist and then make tools; the human and the technical emerge together, and what is exteriorized into the tool is not only force but memory, the eroded experience of a species that transmits its acquisitions otherwise than through the genes.

Bernard Stiegler radicalizes this insights into the claim that organizes this chapter's account of technical memory. For Stiegler the human is the being whose evolution proceeds not genetically but through what he calls "the pursuit of the evolution of the living by other means than life" (Stiegler, *Technics and Time* 1, 135), that is, through the conservation and accumulation of past experience in technical objects. These persist across generations independently of biological inheritance in a dynamic that Stiegler terms *epiphylogenesis*, "the conservation, accumulation, and sedimentation of successive *epigeneses*, mutually articulated" (Stiegler, *Technics and Time* 1 140). Memory, on this account, is from the very beginning also *hypomnesis,* recollection mediated and supported by external technical supports, by *hypomnemata*; and the human relation to any given technical epoch is determined by the way that epoch articulates *hypomnesis* with anamnesis, the living, embodied act of remembering, and by whether the technical milieu supports that living act or displaces it (Stiegler, "Memory" 65-66). Additionally, Stiegler argues that the technical invents the human as much as the human invents the technical, meaning that there is no 'who' prior to and independent of its 'what,' and that therefore no human essence exists prior to its technical supports to which one might appeal as a baseline; the form of the human is at stake in every transformation of its technical memory (Stiegler, *Technics and Time* 1, 137).

It is essential that the memory question is carried backward as well as forward, given that the displacement of living memory by its technical supports is not a recent anxiety but the oldest of the philosophical worries about technology, and Stiegler reads it directly through Plato. That

Stiegler returns to the *Phaedrus* allows this chapter to maintain antiquity and the data center within a single frame: the pharmakon is a textual ongoing precedent running across twenty-four centuries, from the first technology of exteriorized memory to the last. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates recounts the Egyptian myth of the god Theuth, who presents the king Thamus with the invention of writing as a remedy, a pharmakon, for memory and wisdom. Thamus refuses the gift, judging that writing will produce not memory but its mere semblance: those who acquire it will cease to exercise the living faculty of recollection, putting their trust instead in external signs, and will thus possess the reputation of wisdom without its reality (Plato, 274c–275b). Writing, the very technology of exteriorized memory, is here both redemy and poison, for the Greek pharmakon names both at once. The Platonic scene is the deep origin of the entire problematic: the fear that a technology of memory will undermine the living act it claims to serve, that hypomnesis will overrun anamnesis, is already fully articulated at the threshold of Western philosophy.

Read backward, the contemporary anxiety about the externalization of memory into devices and databases is revealed to be the most ancient of the worries about technology, so that nothing in the present condition is without precedent at the level of structure. Read forward, the Platonic scene acquires an urgency it could not have had in antiquity, because what was for Plato a matter of the individual soul's relation to its own recollection becomes a matter of the wholesale administration of collective memory by systems whose storage capacities and powers of correlation exceed anything a culture of writing could approach. Stiegler's value for this study is that he holds both directions together, refusing both the nostalgia that would condemn all externalized memory as loss, since there is no human memory that was ever purely interior, and the untroubled assumption that would treat the latest mnemotechnology as a neutral extension of older supports.

The phrase marks a distinction Stiegler draws sharply. A mnemotechnique supports individual memory while remaining subordinate to the subject who uses it; a mnemotechnology is a large-scale technological system that orders memories according to its own logics and thereby displaces the agency of the remembering subject. Which of the two prevails is not resolved at the level of philosophy; it is decided historically, by a particular technical event. What that event is, and what gives the latest mnemotechnology its powers of storage and correlation no culture of writing could approach, the next section names directly. It is the emergence of cybernetics, and with it the threshold at which memory ceases to be a support the subject uses and becomes a system that administers the subject.

6. The Cybernetic Threshold and the Computational Age

The cybernetic threshold names the passage from the mechanical relation to technology to a computational one that is effected by the emergence of cybernetics in the postwar world. Norbert Wiener gave the field its name in 1948, coining the term from the Greek *kybernētēs*, steersman, to cover what his subtitle calls control and communication in the animal and the machine (Wiener, *Cybernetics* 11).[9] Its conceptual core was the recognition that control is a matter of information: that a message becomes legible only against the background noise that corrupts it, that information can be measured as a decision between equally probable alternatives, and that the amount of information in a system is the measure of its organization, relating to entropy as the negative does to the positive (Wiener, *Cybernetics* 10–11). Cybernetics dissolved the older opposition between

[9] Wiener himself dates the first significant treatment of feedback to Maxwell's 1868 paper on governors, the steering figure arriving a second time, from within the mechanical age (Wiener, *Cybernetics* 11; Maxwell, *Proc. Roy. Soc.* 16 [1868]: 270–83).

the mechanical and the organic by redescribing both as systems that process information, and in doing so it furnished the conceptual schema for a technology that no longer merely extends the human body, as Kapp's organ projection had it, but models and administers human conduct itself. Its concepts migrated quickly beyond engineering into the social and political sciences: already by 1963, Karl Deutsch's *The Nerves of Government* had applied the cybernetic model directly to the state, treating government itself, in the title of his central chapter, as a process of steering (Deutsch, esp. chs. 9 and 11).

The cybernetic threshold is thus the precise point at which Heidegger's *enframing* acquires access to a new and more total instrument: where the mechanical *Ge-stell* still depended on a human subject who must actively maintain his technological relation to a world that resisted him, the cybernetic *Ge-stell* can be installed as an executable program, a self-running order that closes the gaps the mechanical order left open. The conceptual novelty of cybernetics, and the reason it marks a genuine threshold rather than a mere increase in technical power, lies in its treatment of the human. In *The Human Use of Human Beings* Wiener states the parallel directly as his thesis: "the operation of the living individual and the operation of some of the newer communication machines are precisely parallel" (Wiener*, Human Use,* 15). Both, he goes on, gather information from the world at low energy levels through sensory receptors, transform it internally rather than taking it in its totality, act upon the world, and report the performed action, not merely the intended one, back to a central regulatory apparatus. Once the human is redescribed in this way, the distinction between governing a population and steering a machine begins to dissolve, and the older political vocabulary of consent, law, and sovereignty gives way to a vocabulary of information, control, and optimization.

Wiener saw the danger and named it on the same page, which is what makes him the decisive witness rather than merely the decisive theorist. Directly after stating the parallel, he describes the kind of society he does not want: one in which every order descends and none returns, where human beings are reduced to effectors serving a supposedly higher nervous organism. The book, he says, is a protest against precisely this inhuman use of human beings (Wiener, *Human Use*, 15–16). The title itself is a normative formula, not a description: there is a human use of human beings, and the book undertakes to distinguish it from the other kind. But the terms in which Wiener articulates his disagreement with what he sees unfolding are worth a closer look. What is wrong with chaining a man to an oar, Wiener explains, is that such work asks only a vanishing fraction of his brain capacity. The wrong is that less is asked of him than his full status calls for, which Wiener names "a degradation and a waste" (Wiener, *Human Use,* 16). What the mechanization of man wastes, in other words, is a resource, and the measure of the wrong is the unused remainder. A being whose misuse is measured as underemployed capacity has already been disclosed as stock, and the protest against his reduction is spoken in the idiom of the reduction it opposes. This is not hypocrisy, and it is not a failure of nerve: Wiener's alarm is real, and in the same passage he reaches for a vocabulary of moral worth and of growing into one's full stature, a vocabulary that owes nothing to cybernetics. It is instead the first and clearest instance of what this chapter has been calling self-concealment: once a new science acquires a language general enough to describe the human, no objection to that description can be raised from outside it.

The redescription was not a neutral choice of notation. It was a decision about what counts as being. Information, in Wiener's account, measures organization, and entropy measures its opposite: as he puts it, "the one is simply the negative of the other" (Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 11). Life, on this view, is a local island of decreasing entropy. As Wiener puts it, "we ourselves

constitute such an island of decreasing entropy," and we live among countless others like it (Wiener, Human Use, 24–25). The cost is small: the growth of a tree or a human being is bought with only a moderate transfer of solar energy. Wiener insists that what he is offering remains a description and does not yet constitute a decision about what counts as being; he keeps the cosmic scale of value separate from the human one. Whether that insistence holds is the question this section pursues. Feedback is the mechanism that keeps such islands going: a system that measures the gap between its actual and its intended state, and corrects itself accordingly, needs no outside overseer, because the overseer is already folded into the loop. This one figure absorbs a great deal of the older philosophical architecture. Purpose, banished from nature by seventeenth-century mechanistic science, returns as the set-point of a servomechanism. Judgment becomes error-correction. Learning becomes the adjustment of internal states under the pressure of measured outcomes. The loop, not the lever, is the basic form of the computational age, and it makes no difference what material the loop runs in. Flesh, vacuum tube, bureaucracy: whatever can register a difference and act upon it can serve as a component within it. That indifference is what let cybernetics develop so quickly, from the wartime engineering of gun-laying servomechanisms into physiology, psychiatry, economics, and the theory of the state. It is also what makes the cybernetic threshold a threshold in the strict sense of this chapter: it offers not a new tool to be used inside an existing world, but a new answer to the question of how a world as a whole is constituted.

Heidegger himself registered the event with complete clarity. In the 1966 conversation with *Der Spiegel*, asked what now occupies the place that philosophy once held, he answered in a single word: cybernetics (Heidegger, *Spiegel-Gespräch*, 209). The remark condenses the argument of his late essay on the end of philosophy. There Heidegger describes the release of the sciences into their independence as the very completion of metaphysics, a process that "sieht aus wie die bloße

Auflösung der Philosophie und ist in Wahrheit gerade ihre Vollendung" (Heidegger, *Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens,* GA 14, 71), and he names the new fundamental science by which the sciences so released will henceforth be "bestimmt und gesteuert": cybernetics, "die Theorie der Steuerung des möglichen Planens und Einrichtens menschlicher Arbeit" (GA 14, 72). Read from within the trajectory of this chapter, the verdict is precise rather than merely polemical. If *enframing* names the mode of revealing in which everything appears in advance as orderable stock, then cybernetics is the moment at which that mode of revealing acquires a science of itself: a general theory of ordering as such, applicable to any domain because it has abstracted from every domain. The mechanical *Ge-stell* still had to be described from outside, by a thinking that could ask what it concealed; the cybernetic *Ge-stell* describes itself, in its own vocabulary, and finds nothing concealed there at all. That self-description is the deepest form of the self-concealment this study tracks, for a mode of disclosure that has redescribed disclosure itself as information transfer no longer possesses a language in which its own contingency could be expressed.

Having established the islands of decreasing entropy, Wiener turns on the idea of progress and dismantles it as unexamined cultural event. He calls it an emotional euphoria peculiar to the American, raised to be shielded from any awareness of death and doom, who cries when he learns that Santa Claus is a myth and who spends the rest of his life chasing a substitute for it, an endless ascent to Bigger and Better Things (Wiener, *Human Use,* 26–27). His critical lens then widens: belief in progress, Wiener observes, occupies only a small part of recorded history and breaks sharply with the religious traditions before it. Neither Catholicism, Protestantism, nor Judaism regard the world as a good place where lasting happiness can be expected, and Islam and Buddhism are no more hospitable to the idea (Wiener, *Human Use,* 27–29). This is demythologization delivered with the confidence of a science that believes it has no myths of its own, and it is the

earliest statement of a self-presentation the German reception would later adopt. But on this same page, just before he mocks Santa Claus, Wiener had already reached for a myth of his own. We are, he writes, "shipwrecked passengers on a doomed planet," and though we shall go down, let it be in a manner "worthy of our dignity" (Wiener, *Human Use*, 26). The figure is not decoration. It does exactly what Blumenberg says myth does: it takes what appears overwhelming (here it is entropy, the absolutism of reality in its thermodynamic form) and gives it a name, a shape, a posture with which we may face it. Wiener cannot recognize this as being myth, having just told the reader why myth should be rejected. Progress is Santa Claus; shipwreck is realism. What the cybernetic vocabulary cannot articulate, coming from the man who coined it, is that the story it tells about its own wisdom is still a story.

The migration of these concepts into the German-speaking world, which matters for the literary corpus of the later chapters, was rapid and enthusiastic. Wiener's popular book appeared in German as *Mensch und Menschmaschine* in 1952, and over the following two decades cybernetics was adopted in the Federal Republic as something more than a research program: it became a public philosophy. Karl Steinbuch's *Automat und Mensch* of 1961 presented human intelligence itself as an information-processing system and argued that the traditional humanistic vocabulary of mind and soul would have to yield to the technical one, while Max Bense's information aesthetics undertook to reformulate even the beautiful as a measurable improbability of signs: for Bense, works of art are, at bottom, "Objekte in einem relativ unwahrscheinlichen Zustand," an aesthetic condition made recognizable through the same numerical indices, the same statistical measure of information, used across the sciences (Bense, 45). What is significant in this reception is its tone. Where the interwar German discourse had cast technology in a tragic and heroic register, the cybernetic discourse of the sixties presented itself as sober, quantitative, and

post-ideological, a science finally free of myth; the chapters that follow will have occasion to test that self-presentation, for it is exactly the self-presentation of the administered worlds the two novels construct. Here it suffices to note that by the time the concepts of steering, feedback, and program had entered ordinary German usage, the redescription of the human as a component had ceased to be a speculative thesis and had become a working assumption of planning, pedagogy, and administration.

The fact that Heidegger's ontological account of *enframing* should merge with a political account of power of the kind Michel Foucault developed in his analyses of discipline and biopower is not a mistake but a passage the two analyses invite, and it has been theorized directly. Hubert Dreyfus, departing from Heidegger's history of being beside Foucault's genealogy of power, notes that being, in the early Heidegger, is "that on the basis of which beings are already understood," and that the clearing exercises what Heidegger calls an "unobtrusive governance," a *Walten* that both opens and delimits what can show up at all (Dreyfus, *Being and Power*, 31). Foucault's power, Dreyfus argues, occupies a structurally parallel position: it is "not an institution, and not a structure," but rather "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society," and like the clearing it is productive rather than merely repressive, governing in advance which people and things may show up as and what it makes sense to do (Dreyfus, *Being and Power*, 32). One might say, paraphrasing Heidegger, that power is "that on the basis of which human beings already understand each other" (Dreyfus, *Being and Power*, 33). The parallel must not be pressed into an identity: Heidegger attends to how things are disclosed and Foucault to how selves are constituted, and their political conclusions diverge sharply. But the homology of function is exact enough to pursue what follows. If *enframing* names the mode of disclosure in which everything is set in order as standing-reserve, then the disciplinary and control mechanisms

this section now traces are the social institutions through which that ordering is actually installed in bodies and populations, and the passage from the one to the other is a passage between two descriptions of a single condition.

This dissolution can be tracked with particular clarity through the history of theories of power, where the mid-century transformation of the human into a governable information-system has a precise counterpart. In *Surveiller et punir* (1975), Michel Foucault described the form of power proper to the modern era as disciplinary power: a power that does not seize the body by force from above, as sovereign power had, but trains, sorts, and normalizes it from within a network of institutions (the prison, the clinic, the school, the barracks, the factory), each of which encloses bodies in space, partitions and ranks them, subjects them to timetables and examinations, and measures them against a norm. Discipline produces the modern individual as something at once known and corrected, a case to be documented and a body to be optimized. Its architectural emblem is the panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's design for a ring of cells around a central tower from which an unseen observer might at any moment be watching. The panopticon's defining effect is not the act of observation itself but the internalization of its possibility:

> he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 202)

What is easily missed in this account, and what matters most for the present chapter, is that discipline is through and through a technology of memory. The examination, Foucault asserts, places the individual in a network of writing: registers, dossiers, case files, marks, and records, a

whole apparatus of documentation by which each body is doubled in an archive that knows it, compares it, and carries its past forward into every future assessment (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 189). The disciplinary individual is in this exact sense a mnemotechnical artifact, the correlate of a filing system, and the norm against which he is measured is nothing but the statistical sediment of countless recorded cases. Read alongside Stiegler, the point acquires its full weight: if the human has always been constituted through exteriorized memory, then discipline marks the moment at which the institutions of the state seize that exteriorization for themselves, so that the records in which a life is held cease to be the possession of the one who lived it and become instruments for his correction. The step from the dossier to the database, from the file that must be fetched to the profile that updates itself, is then not a change of kind but the completion, by cybernetic means, of a capture that discipline had begun with pen and paper.

In a brief and prescient essay of 1990, Gilles Deleuze argued that the disciplinary societies Foucault had described were already giving way to what he called societies of control, in which the enclosures dissolve and power operates instead through continuous modulation: not the confinement of the individual within a series of discrete institutions but the perpetual tracking of a dividual, a data-profile, across open and uninterrupted networks, by means of codes and passwords that grant or deny access in real time (Deleuze, 5). Each of the disciplinary sites survives, but in fluid form: the factory gives way to the corporation, which no longer assembles a workforce in a single hall but modulates salaries and souls in continuous competition; the school gives way to perpetual training, which never releases its subject into an achieved adulthood; the wall gives way to the password, and confinement to the trace (Deleuze, 5). The shift Deleuze names, from the mold to the modulation, from the enclosure to the continuous network, marks the difference between a disciplinary order and an order of control, and it is precisely the shift that the

cybernetic redescription of the human first made thinkable (Deleuze, 4). A power that steers by feedback has no need of walls, because it no longer needs to hold anyone still in order to know him.

The temporal structure of control deserves particular emphasis, because it is here that the computational order most clearly exceeds the disciplinary one. Discipline corrected retrospectively: the examination compared a recorded past against a norm and prescribed an exercise. Control anticipates: the profile exists in order to predict, and the prediction exists in order to intervene before the deviation occurs. A power that acts on the future in this way no longer requires the categories of guilt and correction at all; it requires only probabilities and thresholds, and the human being it addresses is no longer a moral subject with a biography but a distribution of risks. A power that promises to neutralize the future before it arrives is making the oldest promise there is: the promise that the unforeseeable will not come. This structure is the one already found at work in Wiener's shipwreck, now transposed from the consolation of a man to the operation of a state: the overwhelming is met by being given a shape in which it can be borne. What has changed is the shape. Where myth gave the absolutism of reality a name and a story, the computational order gives it a probability and a set-point, and this is not a weaker version of the same gesture but a more complete one, because a figure can be recognized as a figure while a threshold cannot. Wiener could not see his shipwreck as a myth, but the reader may. A distribution over outcomes offers no such surface. It does not present itself as a story at all and therefore withholds the one purchase from which its contingency might be said. The continuity with myth is structural; the concealment is what the new form adds.

Once this anticipatory logic passes out of the hands of the state and into those of the market, it takes an economic form Shoshana Zuboff has named: the *rendition* of human experience into

behavioral surplus, data extracted around a transaction rather than required by it and refined into predictions sold on markets in behavioral futures (Zuboff, 96). The kinship with *Bestand* is not an analogy imposed from outside but a structural identity, what standing-reserve names at the level of ontology, rendition names at the level of economic practice: the reduction of a being to its availability for further processing, with no terminus but further processing. The fuller anatomy of this order, and of the transparency that is its subjective face, belongs to the present rather than to this genealogy, and I return to both in the Afterword.

Byung-Chul Han's *Transparenzgesellschaft* supplies the subjective complement to Zuboff's economic one, naming a disposition rather than an apparatus. Han stages his account explicitly against the panopticon: disciplinary power required an architecture of coercion, an observer set apart from the observed and a wall between the two, while the transparency society Han diagnoses needs neither wall nor observer, since the subject exposes itself willingly and even eagerly, having learned to experience visibility itself as value, as relevance, as self-realization (Han, 46)What Han terms the *Positivgesellschaft,* a society of positivity from which every form of negativity, secrecy, distance, the withheld, has been leveled away, is organized not around what must be extracted from a resistant subject but around what the subject now offers before being asked. The inwardness Stiegler locates in anamnesis, and that Foucault's dossier once had to extract by force from a body that resisted, is here surrendered unprompted, as the coin of belonging.

The disposition all this machinery presupposes had in fact been named before any of it matured. Günther Anders, writing in 1956, at the very moment cybernetics was entering German thought, already supplied the phenomenology of what it is like to stand on the human side of the threshold. He belongs in this chapter's account because he identifies the subjective posture the

self-running order requires: a human being who experiences its own natality, its unrepeatable and unmanufactured origin, as a deficiency, and who aspires to the reliability of the component. Where Heidegger describes the claim that *enframing* lays upon the human from the side of being, Anders describes it from the side of feeling, and what he finds is that the claim has already been internalized as an ideal. The antiquated human of the cybernetic age does not need to be forced into the loop; he volunteers, because beside the machine he has learned to regard himself as the obsolete model.

What this history of power makes visible is that the order of control is not imposed from without by a tyrant but emerges from within the technological condition itself, as the institutional realization of a tendency already latent in instrumental reason and given its instrument, at last, by cybernetics. The control society does not sustain itself by terror; it sustains itself, as Marcuse already saw, by delivering satisfaction. The one-dimensional society is one in which "the people recognize themselves in their commodities" (Marcuse, 9) in which domination extends itself precisely by meeting the needs it has itself organized, so that the form in which a total administration makes itself not merely tolerable but desirable is the form of a myth: the manufactured promise of a paradise regained, of a world relieved at last of contingency, danger, and decision. In Blumenberg's terms, the promise is a work of distance in the strict sense, a *Distanzgewinn* against the absolutism of reality; what distinguishes it from every earlier such work is that it promises to make the distance total and final, to abolish not this or that terror but contingency as such. A myth that promised less could be lived with, criticized, retold; a myth that promises the end of the conditions that make myth necessary can only be believed or exposed.

There is a name for the structure this produces, and it belongs to the Blumenberg reception itself. Extending Blumenberg's reading of the Prometheus myth, Angus Nicholls speaks of an

absolutism of technology that comes to occupy, in the technological age, the position once held by the absolutism of reality: the overwhelming power before which the human must win its distance is no longer an unnamed nature but the technical order itself (Nicholls, 175). This is the precise torsion the present chapter has been tracking. The computational order is at once the most powerful instrument of distance ever assembled, the myth-work by which contingency is converted into manageable probability, and, in the same movement, a new absolutism in its own right, a power that overhangs the human as implacably as the archaic terrors it was built to dispel. The subject who is converted as behavioral surplus, steered by feedback, and antiquated before its own devices confronts in the technical order the very absolutism that technical order promised to abolish. Myth-work and the absolutism it labors against, held apart at the archaic origin, close into a single circuit at the computational end.

Nicholls finds the figure of this reversal already drawn in science fiction, in the HAL 9000 of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where "the absolutism of the gods has been replaced by the absolutism of technology" and the significance of the tale lies in a single human being's power to survive a threat that science itself has produced (Nicholls, 178). It is no accident that the structure this chapter has reconstructed philosophically should find its sharpest expression in narrative, for it is to two such narratives, the administered worlds of *Homo Faber* and *Ypsilon Minus*, that the chapters that follow now turn.

The chapter thus closes where its history of technology began. At the outset, with Mumford, power and myth appeared bound together at the very origin of large-scale technical organization: the megamachine of the pyramid age was held together by a mythology of divine kingship and cosmic order. The trajectory traced here does not leave that binding behind; it completes it. What the archaic megamachine accomplished through the myth of the god-king, the

computational order accomplishes through the myth of a frictionless paradise, and it does so with an instrument the god-kings could not have imagined, a mnemotechnology that administers not only labor but memory and the interior life itself. Myth and memory, the two functions this chapter has followed across the passage from mechanical extension to computational administration, do not weaken as that passage proceeds; they reach their most total form precisely at its computational end.

Chapter 2: *Homo Faber*: Technology, Myth, and the Disavowal of Existence

1. Introduction

The publication of Max Frisch's *Homo Faber. Ein Bericht* in 1957 locates the novel in a decisive moment in the cultural history of technology. The discussion of technology's effects on the human had started to gain power since industrialization, but it was precisely the decades prior to the publication of Frisch's novel that had transformed the nature of the question concerning technology in ways that impacted philosophy, literature, and public discourse profoundly. The detonation of the first atomic bomb over a populated city in 1945 had materialized long-standing anxieties about human engagement with technological development, transforming what had been a theoretical dispute into an undeniable historical reality. As Walter Schmitz asserts, *Homo Faber* participates directly in what the German-language discourse of the epoch called the "Streit um die Technik" (Schmitz, 32), a debate centered on the question whether technology was to be understood as the fulfillment of human potential or as its progressive demise.

The philosophical genealogy of this dispute, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *First Discourse* through Oswald Spengler, Ernst Kapp's *Organprojektion*, and Friedrich Dessauer's "fourth realm" to its collapse under the demonstrated destructiveness of technical power, was charted in Chapter 1. The reading of Frisch'seminal novel in this chapter takes its departure from the mid-century moment in that development, contemporaneous with *Homo Faber*, at which the optimistic self-understanding of technical making could no longer hold.

That Frisch should have produced one the period's most influential literary works of the technological mind was not accidental. He trained and practiced as an architect, running his own Zürich office ("Max Frisch Dipl. Architekt, S.I.A. Zürich") beginning in 1944 before turning

decisively to literature (Kilcher, 44–45).[10] His work returns repeatedly to the modern person who, equipped with technical mastery, fails to inhabit his own existence, all the way to Herr Geiser in his late prose text *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän*. This thematic dedication reaches back remarkably far. In his *Matura* essay of 1930, written at the age of eighteen and titled "Licht- und Schattenseiten der modernen Technik," Frisch had already framed technology not as a practical matter but as an existential and affective one: "Vom Standpunkt des Glückes aus beurteilt ist die Technik abzulehnen," he wrote, arguing that it removes mechanical labor and grants time, which the modern person fills with thought, and thought, pursued clearly enough, brings in only "die bodenlose Stumpfsinnigkeit unseres Daseins."[11] The essay is read more closely in the following section; what matters here is the continuity it discloses. The existential framing of technology that *Homo Faber* would elaborate three decades later was for Frisch not a recent discovery but rather a long-standing concern.

One of the most important philosophical works that entered the technological discussion was Martin Heidegger's "Die Frage nach der Technik" (1954), just three years before Frisch's novel was published. Heidegger's contribution was not primarily a social critique of technology's effects on humans but an ontological inquiry into its essence: the mode of revealing through which modern technology discloses the world. His central concept, *das Ge-stell* (Enframing), names the tendency to order all things as *Bestand* (standing-reserve): objects become available, manipulable,

[10] On Frisch's career as an architect, see Andreas B. Kilcher, *Max Frisch* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), pp. 43–45. In spring 1944 Frisch opened the office "MAX FRISCH, DIPL. ARCHITEKT, S.I.A. ZÜRICH"; his largest commission was the Schwimmbad Letzigraben (1947–1949). In early 1955 he handed the office over to his associate Hannes Trösch and resolved to give up his career as a practicing architect in favor of that of a writer. Kilcher stresses, however, that this was "keineswegs das Ende der Architektur für Frisch" (p. 45): from the early 1950s onward his interest shifted from the practice of architecture to its theory and politics.

[11] Max Frisch, "Licht- und Schattenseiten der modernen Technik," German essay, Matura examination 1930 (7aR), manuscript, 8 leaves, Max Frisch-Archiv, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Sig. C-S-I.4. — Cited from the author's own transcription.

quantifiable. Heidegger's criticism was directed not at any particular machine or process but at what he names the danger (*die Gefahr)* of *Enframing*: its tendency to obscure and drive out (v*erstellen*) every other mode of revealing, and finally to conceal the essence of revealing as such. What *Ge-stell* threatens is that its challenging-forth becomes the sole way the world is disclosed, displacing the poetic bringing-forth (*poiēsis*) Heidegger opposes to it and the symbolic and mythic disclosures that Hans Blumenberg's philosophy of myth will bring into view, disclosures that *Enframing* does not simply abolish but, as a later reading of Roland Barthes will show, reoccupies and preserves within its own technical vocabulary.

Frisch's own perception of this dissonance was recorded in his *Tagebuch 1946–1949*, where he confessed the involuntary realization that flight had placed him, the human, at an "inhuman distance" from the landscape below, one that made him feel potentially capable of dropping bombs on populated areas, a distance, as Sharp observes, that "the imagination seems incapable of narrowing" (Sharp, 558). It must be acknowledged at the outset that there is no evidence that Frisch read Heidegger, and the present reading claims none. The justification for reading Homo Faber through "Die Frage nach der Technik" is not biographical but historical and structural. Heidegger's essay appeared in 1954, Frisch's novel in 1957; the two texts are very nearly contemporaneous, and they respond to the same cultural situation, the early postwar coming-to-terms, in Switzerland and the young Federal Republic similarly, with a technological civilization whose destructive capacity had just been demonstrated. Reading the novel through the essay does therefore mean not to posit a relation of influence but to register that a philosopher and a novelist, working independently within the same *Streit um die Technik*, arrived at common diagnoses of a single historical condition. The shared diagnose is itself the warrant: it suggests that

Faber is not a *sui generis* invention but the literary outcome of a problem being posed, at that moment, across philosophy and literature at once.

This chapter argues that *Homo Faber. Ein Bericht* stages the technocratic subject's systematic disavowal of myth, affect, and symbolic meaning. This disavowal is not simply depicted as an absence but rather as an active and structurally motivated suppression of those forms of engaging with the protagonist's *Dasein*[12]. Walter Faber, the protagonist of this novel, does not merely fail to engage with, and navigate, the world through non-rational dimensions of experience; he refuses them while being unknowingly structured by them. Throughout the novel, Faber deals with encounters of landscape, the pre-modern, art, love, and mortality. In this existential navigation, Frisch creates a figure who reveals that technological rationality does not replace myth but is itself a mythic response to existential anxiety; a way of maintaining the terror of contingent existence at a distance, one that collapses when the very mythic structures it suppresses return with fatal force. This chapter traces this argument through a close analysis of the novel's key scenes.

Why this novel, and not another of the postwar decades' literary engagements with technology? The question deserves an explicit answer, because the answer is methodological rather than canonical. *Homo Faber* is not selected as the "best" technology novel of its decade but as the only one on which this chapter's argument could be tested at all. The thesis concerns a disavowal, and a disavowal is a structure that cannot be observed from outside. A novel that presents a technocrat as observed from the outside can certainly diagnose him: it can inform the reader that his worldview is a defense and that the defense is failing. Only a narration by the technocratic subject, however, can enact the disavowal itself, without the narrator's consent, as a performance the reader watches as it unfolds. *Homo Faber* is that text. It is a *Bericht*: the technocratic subject

[12] *Dasein* is Heidegger's term for the entity that we ourselves are, whose being is at issue for it; it is left untranslated throughout to preserve its technical sense in *Sein und Zeit*.

files his own report, in his own genre, and the report convicts him. Frisch located the novel's center exactly there: "die Sprache ist also hier der eigentliche Tatort" (Frisch, in Schmitz 17). Because the disavowal lives in Faber's own language, the chapter's principal evidence is syntactic: the diction, qualifications, and self-corrections through which his report betrays what it refuses to say. The close readings that follow (sections 6 and 8) turn on exactly such moments, a mythic word summoned and instantly disowned, a fear raised only to be overruled. No third-person treatment could offer this evidence, because the evidence is the narration. Faber occupies the one position the argument requires: the technocratic subject as such; competent, successful, articulate, and organized down to his last sentence by what he cannot admit. The choice also determines the strength of the test. A disavowal thesis demonstrated on a caricature would demonstrate nothing. Frisch constructs the strongest technocrat available, the novel gives the technological worldview its best voice, and the collapse of that voice is therefore evidential rather than merely rhetorical.

By looking at the case of this novel specifically, the argument concerns not technology alone but the return of disavowed myth through the technical: fate manufactured by a razor, a daimon named on a landing gear. Hence, it requires a text in which the technological subject and the mythic pattern are not juxtaposed but structurally identical, and *Homo Faber* is, as Manfred Leber has demonstrated and as section 8 will show, the one major postwar technology novel built as a tragedy in the strict sense: not a novel that references Oedipus, but one whose recognition, reversal, and self-fulfilling oracle are executed entirely in the machinery of mid-century technics.

2. The Report and Its Two Times

Homo Faber is a document before it is a narrative, and a reader who does not pay close attention to the conditions under which it is filed will misread every page of it. It arrives in two parts. The

first, titled *Erste Station*, closes on a line in a bureaucratic register: "Geschrieben in Caracas, 21. Juni bis 8. Juli" (Frisch,191). The second, *Zweite Station*, opens in the same register: "Athen, Krankenhaus Beginn der Aufzeichnungen 19. Juli" (191) and breaks off in mid-sentence at "08.05 Uhr - sie kommen" as they are about to bring the protagonist of the novel the operating room. Both datelines fall after the events they record. Nothing in the *Bericht* is written from inside the experience it reports: the whole of it is composed by a man who already knows how it ends. This is the condition under which every sentence of Walter Faber's instrumental idiom has to be read, several of these moments are named here in advance and read closely later; at this stage they are offered only as the recurring form the report takes, with their analysis added later; their form is the reason this chapter's governing term is *disavowal* and not *error*.

The report is filed by Walter Faber, a Swiss engineer in his 50s working for UNESCO, who assembles turbines in countries populated by what he designates as *unterentwickelte Völker*. The novel beings in New York: in a flight to Caracas, hours late, during a snowstorm where the stationary aircraft awaits on the runway while the vibration of the engines running uneasy the highly rational Faber (section 5). Hours later, the machine loses an engine and conducts an emergency landing in the Mexican desert of Tamaulipas (section 6). In the seat beside him is a young German, Herbert Hencke, who is flying to Guatemala to visit his brother, who turns out to be Joachim Hecnke, Faber's former best friend from his student days, who runs a tobacco plantation in Guatemala and hasn't been heard from in some time. Hence, Hebert is travelling down to find him. After this encounter in the airplane and then while waiting to be rescued in the Mexican desert, Faber feels the urge for the first time in his working life to abandon an itinerary and goes with Herbert on a journey through the Mexican-Guatemalan jungle (section 7). They find him hanged, with a length of wire. Neither rupture arrives from outside the technological order.

The engine that fails and the seat in which Faber finds a man returning him to his own past are both furnished by the apparatus he trusts.

What the reader needs at this point the report supplies only in fragments and with delay, which is a fact about the report rather than about the story. Hanna Landsberg, "Münchnerin, Halbjüdin" (Frisch, 56) was Faber's lover in Zurich in the mid-thirties, when he was an assistant professor at the ETH and she studied art history. In 1936, in the very days in which Faber obtained the post that would take him to Baghdad, she told him she was pregnant. His account of that conversation, written twenty years later, needs no commentary beyond its own diction. He asked whether she had seen a doctor insisting even now on the wording: "Wenn du dein Kind haben willst, dann müssen wir natürlich heiraten" (Frisch, 56). Faber's words "dein Kind" and "müssen" are telling. Her charge that he had been frightened to death he goes on contesting: "Ihre Behauptung, ich sei zu Tode erschrocken, bestreite ich noch heute" (Frisch, 5). At the desk in Caracas, with the daughter already buried in Athens, the objection is still being entered. He left for Baghdad satisfied that the matter would be dealt with. It was not. Hanna married Joachim and left him; the child was born; and Hanna afterwards took the name of her second husband, Piper.

Back in New York, and back to Ivy, the American woman he sees and will not marry. Faber does something his report cannot account for: instead of flying, he books a passage by ship. (The cause is trivial, a broken electric razor that he stays home to dismantle, and section 8 shows why that triviality is the point.) On board is a girl of twenty travelling home to her mother in Athens: Elisabeth Piper, whom he calls Sabeth. He crosses with her, follows her through Paris and Avignon, drives with her through Italy into Greece, becomes her lover, and asks her to marry him. She is his daughter. Faber does not know this (at least he does not recognize that he knows), and the long middle of the novel is therefore read under an irony his own prose cannot register and

continually feeds: he lectures her on navigation, entropy, and cybernetics; he explains to her that the machine "erlebt nichts, sie hat keine Angst und keine Hoffnungen, die nur stören" (Frisch, 88); and he defends, with the help of statistics and at length, the rationality of abortion.

The catastrophe comes on the shore below Akrokorinth. Sabeth, asleep on the beach, is bitten by a snake; startled by Faber, who climbs the embankment towards her naked, having been swimming, she backs away from him and falls. She dies in Athens some days later, with Hanna at the bedside, and it is there that Faber is reunited with Hanna and finally learns who Sabeth really is. Here the *Bericht* does the one thing a reading of this novel cannot afford to miss: it narrates the accident twice. In the first telling the snake is the cause and the fall a mere supposition; she lay unconscious, he writes, "bewusstlos infolge ihres Sturzes, vermutete ich," until the bite appears above her breast and certainty is restored: "ich begriff sofort" (Frisch, 151). In the second telling, some thirty pages later and after Athens, everything the first account had left out returns in its entirety: his nakedness, her recoiling from him, the backward fall. "Das war das Unglück" (Frisch, 187).

The *Erste Station* then ends, immediately above the Caracas dateline, in a medical protocol. The venom, it records, was successfully countered by serum; Sabeth died of an undiagnosed fracture of the base of the skull, a "sog. Epidural-Haematom," sustained in her fall over the embankment, and one that surgery, so he has been told, could have remedied without difficulty (Frisch, 191). What killed her was not the snake. It was the injury nobody named. And Faber's own first telling had performed precisely that non-naming, demoting the fall to a *vermutete ich* and promoting the bite to an *ich begriff sofort*. When Frisch says of this novel that "die Sprache ist also hier der eigentliche Tatort" (Frisch, in Schmitz 17), he is not making a remark about style. The report is where the death takes place.

The differential repetition of the *Bericht* do this work in place of an argument, and in doing so they mark the distance between the present reading and the received one. Were Faber's instrumental idiom a belief, a mistaken conviction that the world is as controllable as his machines, the catastrophe would have refuted it, and the report, written afterwards, would be written in some other language. It is not. It is written in his. The man who records his daughter's death in the abbreviations of a protocol, with the same particle, *sog.* ("so-called"), by which he had already defused the "so-called Maxwell demon" of his abandoned physics dissertation, a naming-and-cancelling that section 8 reads in full. He is not a man reporting what he has learned. He is a man performing once more, and now on paper, the operation by which the unbearable is held at a distance. That operation, not the belief and not the ignorance, is the subject of this chapter. It is what permits a triviality to be converted into fate, as a razor is in section 8; it is what permits the word *Dämon*, once spoken in the desert, to be cancelled by the *sog.* that precedes it; and it is what permits the woman waiting in black at the Athens gate, Hanna, whom Faber momentarily sees as an Erinnye, one of the Greek avenging spirits of blood-guilt, to be received as such and then explained away. The chapter follows the operation to the place where it fails. That place is the *Zweite Station*, written from a hospital bed by a man who has at last let the stomach he ignored for two hundred pages be examined, and it is the only part of the report in which the operation stops.

3. Situating the Novel in Scholarship

Scholarly interpretations of *Homo Faber* have frequently emphasized the novel's engagement with the modern technological worldview, even when the history of its reception shows the risks of diverse and sometimes contradictory interpretations. Walter Schmitz, one of the most important and comprehensive commentators on the novel, notes that early criticism reduced it to a moralistic

lesson about the inhumanity of technology, treating it as evidence of "wie inhuman alles Technische doch sei" while overlooking its artistic complexity and sophistication (Schmitz, 7). Reinhard Meurer similarly cautions that the Oedipus allusions should not lead to a reading of *Homo Faber* as "eine epische Kopie der Travestie des antiken Schicksaldramas" (Meurer, 29); for Meurer, such a reading contradicts the novel's structural thematic and originality. Meurer's caution is worth keeping in mind because it marks the very distinction the present reading depends on: the point is not that Frisch retells the Oedipus story, it is not a "copy" of the ancient fate-drama; the oedipal pattern works in the novel as a formal structure rather than a decorative allusion. Faber does not re-enact a myth *he* has created; the retelling is Frisch's, and it works precisely because Faber does not recognize it, he lives, unknowingly, the structure of transgression and recognition that myth names, and his ignorance is not an obstacle to that structure but its tragic condition. It is this structural rather than citational sense of myth (developed through Blumenberg in section 6) that the chapter tracks.

The critical tradition has pointed toward a more nuanced element: the novel's formal dimension as the site of its philosophical argument. Schmitz points out that Frisch himself identifies his *Bericht* form as a symptom of Faber's condition: "die Sprache ist also hier der eigentliche Tatort [...] Wir sehen, wie er sich interpretiert. Wir sehen im Vergleich zu seinen Handlungen, daß er sich falsch interpretiert" (Frisch, in Schmitz, 17). Mona Knapp and Gerhard P. Knapp argue that the novel pursues a "zweifach kritische Wirkungsabsicht" through its language, using the dialectic between technical-scientific discourse and the language of insight and emotion to produce the "Ideologiekritik der fünfziger Jahre" (Knapp & Knapp, 58). The dimension of language subverts Faber's attempts to convince the reader about the veracity of the world he explains, versus what he inadvertently reveals through his writing.

This formal diagnosis can be sharpened into the chapter's guiding claim about ideology. Faber is not merely an individual who holds mistaken beliefs; he is the literary embodiment of a historically specific ideological formation. What Knapp and Knapp call the novel's "Ideologiekritik der fünfziger Jahre" (Knapp & Knapp, 58) is directed at precisely the worldview that takes the reduction of reason to its instrumental form as natural and self-evident. Horkheimer names that reduction exactly: instrumental reason "hat es wesentlich mit Mitteln und Zwecken zu tun, mit der Angemessenheit von Verfahrensweisen an Zielen, die mehr oder minder hingenommen werden," and it "legt der Frage wenig Bedeutung bei, ob die Ziele als solche vernünftig sind" (Horkheimer, 15). Faber's ideology is not a set of opinions but this very foreclosure, the conversion of historically produced social relations into apparent natural necessities experienced as the simple way things are. The *Bericht* form is the literary medium of that foreclosure, the discourse of a subject for whom the question of ends has been settled in advance. To call Faber the embodiment of an ideology is thus to claim that the novel stages, in a single figure, the mid-century moment at which instrumental reason became the unquestioned common sense of a technological civilization.

This is also where the chapter's method comes into view, and it answers a question the argument's form raises. If Walter Faber is the literary embodiment of an ideology, then *Homo Faber* is not merely a novel about instrumental reason but a work of ideology critique conducted in the register of fiction rather than of philosophy. Where Horkheimer and Adorno diagnose the reversion of reason into myth discursively, from without, Frisch stages it from within, lending the ideology a first-person voice and letting the *Bericht* condemn itself: the reader watches the worldview narrate its own undoing. The novel's critical claim is thus inseparable from its form, a claim that calls for a theory of what literature, as distinct from argument, can disclose.

The depth of this framing in Frisch's own development is confirmed by his recently published *Matura* essay of 1930: "Licht- und Schattenseiten der modernen Technik." Written at eighteen and corrected in the hand of his teacher Fritz Hunziker, it already contains in a nuanced form the existential critique of technology that *Homo Faber* would dramatize. Its argument is that technology, by removing mechanical labor, grants a surplus of time which the modern person fills with thought, and thought is responsible only for problems and the recognition of life's emptiness; technology, the young Frisch concludes, is "die Schattenseite unserer Kultur." He valorizes by contrast the unreflective vitality of the pre-modern human, "jene herrlichen urkräftigen, naturechten Menschen, die so frisch und frech ins Leben hineinlebten," and asks whether the reader would not be "wohler" as a "Heidelbergermensch." The essay lacks practical experience for the young Frisch, and its romanticism is exactly the position the mature novel refuses to endorse. Faber's contempt for what he calls "unterentwickelte Völker" is the inverted reflection of the schoolboy's nostalgia for the happy primitive. But the essay establishes that Frisch approached technology from the start as a question of *Glück* and *Dasein* rather than of efficiency, and that the affective register in which *Homo Faber* operates is the deepening of a lifelong examination rather than a thematic novelty. The novel does not satirize a worldview alien to its author; it works through, with the aid of three decades worth of rigor and experience, a problem Frisch had first posed to himself as a schoolboy.

If the 1930 essay shows how early and how deeply this existential framing runs in Frisch, the critical reception has tended to depict Faber's failure in a plainer vocabulary; that of technical control. Hildegard Hain describes him as a technician who fails precisely because he assumes the world is as controllable as his machines: "der Techniker Walter scheitert mit der Auffassung, er selbst und die Welt seien so kontrollierbar wie seine Maschinen" (Hain, 4). Andreas Kilcher asserts

the same intuition, locating the novel's tension in a subject who trusts "allein auf Rationalität und Kalkulierbarkeit" and is met instead with "einer Reihe von Zufällen, die sich schicksalhaft auf seine ganze Existenz auswirken" (Kilcher, 103). These readings are accurate as far as they go, but each diagnoses Faber from outside, namely as an individual who held a mistaken belief about controllability and was corrected by events of his being-in-the-world. What neither asks is the prior question: why the technological worldview should take the form it does, and why, once it fails, it should do so in the particular shape the novel records. That question is where this chapter's argument begins, and it is best approached through the readings that have taken Faber's worldview most seriously as a philosophical structure.

Among these readings the most rigorous is Doris Kiernan's comprehensive Heideggerian interpretation, on which this chapter draws extensively and which therefore requires explicit positioning at the very beginning. Kiernan established, systematically and scene by scene, that Faber's worldview corresponds to Heidegger's analysis of *inauthentic Dasein*, showing how the *Man, Gerede, Neugier, Geworfenheit*, and *Sein zum Tode* each find precise literary realization in the *Bericht*. The present chapter does not dispute this assessment; it rather presupposes it. What it adds lies in two directions that Kiernan's strictly existential-analytic frame leaves unexplored. First, by reading the novel through Blumenberg's philosophy of myth alongside Horkheimer's critical theory, it reconceives Faber's technological rationalism not as the simple absence of mythic consciousness, but as what Blumenberg calls an ongoing *Arbeit am Mythos*, a working-through of existential anxiety that takes the form of its own denial. Second, by attending to the phenomenological texture of Faber's moods, it traces the gradual decomposition of that worldview from within, a dimension that purely ideology-critical readings tend to foreclose. Where Kiernan demonstrates the correspondence between Faber and *inauthentic Dasein*, this chapter asks what

work the technological worldview performs and why it collapses, which requires the supplementary vocabularies of myth and of mood.

Two monographs from the turn of the 1990s bear directly on the argument advanced here, and neither has been absorbed into the Anglophone reception of the novel. Manfred Leber's *Vom modernen Roman zur antiken Tragödie* (1990) reads *Homo Faber* along precisely the axis this chapter follows, from Heidegger's *Ge-stell* into the structure of ancient tragedy, and supplies the philological apparatus that such a comparison requires: a working conception of the *daimon*, taken from the Sophocles lectures of Wolfgang Schadewaldt and Albin Lesky,[13] on which section 8 turns. Where this chapter departs from Leber will become explicit there: he reads the novel's conclusion as a genuine transformation and "ein Zeichen von Hoffnung," a renewed utopia of progress. The reading offered here treats that transformation as real, but as the price of the catastrophe rather than its remission.

Achim Würker's *Technik als Abwehr* (1991) supplies the psychoanalytic vocabulary that the disavowal thesis has so far lacked. Würker distinguishes the novel's *manifest* from its *latent* sense and reconstructs the latter through what he calls *Irritationen*: the disturbances, inconsistencies, and excesses in Faber's own narration. His conclusion can be stated in the terms this chapter will use: the loss of a mimetic relation to external nature turns into a form of *defense* against the mimetic, and this defense fails. Two features of his method deserve emphasis. First, it is textual rather than psychobiographical. Würker explicitly declines to reconstruct Faber's childhood or to psychoanalyse Frisch, since the novel supplies the material for neither, and reads instead the latent structure of the *Bericht* itself. This rules out the standard objection that a psychoanalytic reading of a fictional character mistakes a text for a patient, an objection that would

[13] Hans Diller, Wolfgang Schadewaldt, and Albin Lesky, *Gottheit und Mensch in der Tragödie des Sophokles* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963).

otherwise apply with equal force to the present chapter, which likewise treats disavowal as a belonging to a narrative structure and not as a diagnosis of a person. Second, Würker binds the mimetic explicitly to the maternal and the feminine, which will permit sections 8 and 9 to be read as one argument rather than two.

Disavowal carries the weight on the Freudian concept of *Verleugnung*: not the repression (*Verdrängung*) of a content that is made unconscious, but the simultaneous acknowledgment and denial of something that remains, at some level, known. This is the distinction on which the present reading turns, and it is why the governing term is *disavowal* and not *repression* or *error*. Faber does not fail to know that the razor's dismantling produced the accidental encounter with his daughter, that the sleeping Erinnye is beautiful, that his stomach is failing; he knows each, records each, and disowns each in the same motion, the *sog.* that names the demon and cancels it in one word is *Verleugnung.*. Where *Verdrängung* would place the material beyond reach, *Verleugnung* keeps it available, kept at a distance without being abandoned, which is the condition of its return. Würker's distinction and his account of a defense that fails describe this structure at the level of the *Bericht*; naming it *Verleugnung* specifies the mode of denial at work, and distinguishes this reading from those that treat Faber's rationalism as ignorance or mistaken belief.

4. Faber as a Technocratic Subject

Walter Faber embodies the modern technological mode of being in its fullest sense. As a UNESCO engineer tasked with installing turbines and maintaining technical infrastructure in what Faber calls *unterentwickelte Völker*, his professional identity is inseparable from the ethos of Western technological civilization. From the very beginning of the novel, the reader encounters a mindset shaped at every level by calculation, efficiency, predictability, and functional order. Kiernan

identifies the foundational structure with precision: “Im Falle Homo Fabers ist von Anfang an ersichtlich, daß er sein Leben nicht aus sich selbst heraus lebt, sondern daß er sich an eine Form des ‘Man’, eine von außen angelegte Norm hält. Faber faßt seine Vorstellung von sich selbst in der Aussage: ‘Ich bin Techniker’ zusammen” (Kiernan, 73). This identification with a role rather than a self is the existential core of his condition. Reinhard Meurer argues that Frisch has “beansprucht für die Hauptfigur des Romans und ihr Schicksal exemplarische Geltung” (Meurer, 14): Faber is not simply an individual character but the representative figure of a civilization that has placed technical mastery at the center of its self-understanding.

Heidegger’s analysis of the *Man*, the anonymous public self through which inauthentic Dasein understands itself, is the conceptual framework through which Kiernan reads Faber’s self-presentation. When threatened by any recognition of his *Geworfenheit*, Faber retreats to what “unsereiner” (*Man*) has accomplished and validated. “Jede kleinste Erinnerung an die ‘Geworfenheit’ des Daseins, an die Tatsache, daß er nicht alles und jedes beherrschen kann, wird sofort unterdrückt” (Kiernan, 48). This suppression is not incidental but existentially structural. It structures Faber’s narrative choices, his professional self-presentation, and the very form of his *Bericht*. Despite his name, *Faber*, Latin for the smith or maker, the namesake of the homo faber, “man the maker,” which the title invokes only to withhold, and self-understanding, Walter Faber is, in Frisch’s own words, “ein verhinderter Mensch, der von sich selbst ein Bildnis gemacht hat” (Frisch in Schmitz, 16) The technician is not the truth of Faber but his mask, his defense.

The formal dimension of Faber’s narrative reinforces this identification at every level. The *Bericht* form in which he composes his account is, as Schmitz shows, a *Rollensprache*, shaped by the model of *Protokollaussagen*: Faber expresses the complexities of his journey through precise coordinates, dates, technical description, and measurable phenomena. This is for Knapp und

Knapp a fixation on rational discourse that "sich zusehends als Verdrängungsmechanismus bloßlegt, sowohl der Einsicht als auch der Erlebnisfähigkeit vielfach in den Weg" (57). Kiernan extends this reading through Heidegger's analysis of *Gerede*, idle talk that restrains or closes off rather than opens Being: "'Das Gerede' führt dazu, 'das In-der-Welt-sein nicht so sehr in einem gegliederten Verständnis offenzuhalten, sondern zu verschließen und das innerweltlich Seiende zu verdecken'" (SZ, 169; in Kiernan, 78). When confronted with decisive situations, Faber retreats into meaningless chatter, about statistics, snakebite mortality rates, etc., whose aim is precisely to avoid the opening that genuine speech would require.

Faber's cognitive alignments find their fullest expression in his admiration for the machine. He declares that the robot "erkennt genauer als der Mensch, er weiß mehr von der Zukunft als wir, denn er errechnet sie, er spekuliert nicht und träumt nicht [...] und kann sich nicht irren; der Roboter braucht keine Ahnungen." The machine "erlebt nichts, sie hat keine Angst und keine Hoffnungen, die nur stören" (Frisch, 75). Feelings are not only characteristic of women in the novel for Faber's framework but noise, disturbances to the clean signal of rational calculation. This is the fullest literary expression of what Horkheimer diagnoses as the historical reduction of reason to its instrumental form: "Sie hat es wesentlich mit Mitteln und Zwecken zu tun, mit der Angemessenheit von Verfahrensweisen an Zielen, die mehr oder minder hingenommen werden. Sie legt der Frage wenig Bedeutung bei, ob die Ziele als solche vernünftig sind" (Horkheimer, 15). Faber does not ask whether the ends of his existence are worth pursuing; the question has been answered in advance by the public world of the *Man*.

Faber's ideal is not merely efficiency but a mode of being: he wishes to be an apparatus that undergoes nothing. Günther Anders, writing in the same decade, gives the wish its name. In *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (1956), he diagnoses what he calls *prometheische Scham*: the

"Scham, vor der beschämend hohen Qualität der selbstgemachten Dinge" (Anders, 23). Its fundamental object, Anders specifies, is origin. The ashamed man "schämt sich, geworden, statt gemacht zu sein," ashamed of owing his existence to "dem blinden und unkalkulierten, dem höchst altertümlichen Prozeß der Zeugung und der Geburt" rather than to design (24). Measured against the flawless and wholly calculated product, the human being is what an American air-force instructor, quoted by Anders, called a "faulty construction," eine Fehlkonstruktion (32).

Nothing in the argument requires that Faber feel this shame, and explicitly he does not. Manfred Leber, working from the same comparison, objects that Faber would meet Anders's diagnosis not with shame but with a technician's pride: confronted with Anders's Korea example, Faber would respond "ganz und gar nicht beschämt, sondern mit stolzgeschwellter Technikerbrust" (Leber, 54), since it has always been the human wish to foresee the consequences of a decision reliably, and only a developed technology makes that old wish come true. Leber generalizes the objection: "Auch das Verhältnis des modernen Homo faber zu seiner Technik ist nicht von Scham, sondern immer noch von Stolz bestimmt" (Leber, 55), and he presses it further than a mere denial, arguing that "hinter dem, was vordergründig wie 'prometheische Scham' aussieht, im Grunde nur eine neue und vielleicht sogar eine an Radikalität nie dagewesene Form von prometheischem Anspruch gesehen werden muß" (Leber, 56). The objection is correct at the level of what Faber says. It is dissolved by the distinction Achim Würker offers: explicit pride and latent shame are not alternatives; the first is the form the second takes when it cannot be acknowledged. The pride Faber directs at the machine and the disgust he directs at his own body are one affect, not two. Of the human being as such he writes that it is "als Konstruktion möglich, aber das Material ist verfehlt: Fleisch ist kein Material, sondern ein Fluch" (Frisch, 204), the body is *verfehlt*, faulty, the very word Anders supplied, and faulty precisely insofar as it was born rather

than built. Unshaved, Faber feels himself becoming "etwas wie eine Pflanze" (Frisch, 31), reverting to the organic he cannot master. This is Anders's shame, unacknowledged and therefore displaced to the flesh it concerns. The disavowal of myth traced in section 8 will have exactly this grammar. What Faber affirms and what his *Bericht* performs are systematically at odds, and the argument is located in that gap rather than in his convictions.

If shame displaced to the flesh is one form the disavowal takes, restlessness is another, the same refusal enacted spatially rather than affectively. Kiernan identifies this further dimension in Faber's Heideggerian *Neugier,* the curiosity that is everywhere and nowhere, that sees without understanding, expressed in his permanent air travel and *Aufenthaltslosigkeit*. "Seine ständigen Reisen mit dem Flugzeug, seine 'Aufenthaltslosigkeit', die ihn heute in Paris, morgen in Caracas sein läßt, sind ein direkter Ausdruck seiner Weigerung, in der Welt zu 'wohnen'" (Kiernan, 81). Hanna Landsberg, Faber's former partner and the novel's philosophical counter-figure, articulates the diagnosis with precision: "Technik als Kniff die Welt als Widerstand aus der Welt zu schaffen, beispielsweise durch Tempo zu verdünnen, damit wir sie nicht erleben müssen" (Frisch, 201). Faber's technology of mobility is not merely instrumental. It is an existential strategy of avoidance, the systematic elimination of the proximity through which the world would make its claims felt.

5. Technologically Conditioned Attunement: The Opening Scene

The first pages of *Homo Faber* immediately immerse the reader in a world structured by technological order. Walter Faber begins his *Bericht* by describing the delayed departure of his flight from New York to Caracas. Several possible sources of disturbance present themselves: a snowstorm that has caused the delay, a newspaper whose headline reads "First Pictures of World's Greatest Air Crash in Nevada," and the mechanical vibration of the airplane with its motors

running while the aircraft stands stationary. Faber dismisses the first two from among the possible sources of his unease. What unsettles him, he reports with characteristic precision, is "einzig und allein diese Vibration in der stehenden Maschine mit laufenden Motoren" (Frisch, 6).

Heidegger's analysis of mood and attunement in *Sein und Zeit* provides the conceptual tools for understanding what is at stake here. For Heidegger, moods are not internal psychological states that a subject projects onto a neutral world. They are modes through which *Dasein* is primordially disclosed to itself and to its world: "Die Stimmung hat je schon das In-der-Welt-sein als Ganzes erschlossen und macht ein Sichrichten auf allererst möglich" (SZ, 134–140). Heidegger further distinguishes *Angst* (anxiety) from *Furcht* (fear): fear is always fear of a specific threatening entity, while anxiety has no definite object, it arises from *Dasein's* thrownness into the world as such (SZ, 186). The storm is a potential source of fear, a specific threat. The vibration, by contrast, is not a specific danger: it is the felt presence of technological order as such, suddenly disclosed through its failure to fulfill its purpose. What Faber registers is the first perturbation of his own ontological dependence on technological regularity, not yet anxiety in the full Heideggerian sense, which Heidegger holds to be rare, but the opening of the erosion that will culminate in it.

Kiernan identifies the deeper logic: Faber's anxiety "entspringt einem immer stärker werdenden Gefühl des Nichtzuhauseseins in der Welt" (Kiernan, 153). Matthew Ratcliffe's account of *existential feelings* gives that diagnosis its phenomenological precision. Any experience, he argues, however detached from its particular object, already presupposes "a background orientation, a variable sense of belonging and of reality" (Ratcliffe, 41), not a feeling directed at something within the world, but "a condition of possibility for any specifically directed intentional state" (48). Ordinarily this background is invisible as such: we take the familiar world

for granted, and "the mood that makes it possible remains hidden" (51). It becomes legible only when disturbed, when "what one was previously oblivious to becomes conspicuous in its absence" (52). The world then feels *unheimlich* in precisely the terms Kiernan's *Nichtzuhausesein* understands it, as "not feeling at home in a situation" (51). In normal use the aircraft withdraws into that background as an unnoticed medium; the vibration of the stationary machine forces it forward as a fragile structure on which Faber's orientation depends. For Faber, the background thus made conspicuous is technological reliability itself: the condition against which everything else appear as meaningful, disclosed as a condition only in the moment it fails to hold.

The opening scene reveals what the novel will progressively elaborate: that a mode of being structured entirely by technological reliability is perpetually vulnerable to disruption from what it excludes. What begins here as a shaking does not remain one. The erosion of practical familiarity that Ratcliffe describes will be present through the whole of the *Bericht*: the desert, the jungle at Palenque, the Greek landscape, and reaches its culmination only in the Athens hospital, where the hold on the world fails altogether. The unease is therefore not merely situational; it is the signature affect of a subject whose world has been narrowed to the framework of calculation and predictability, and in which emotion, finitude, and the mythical remind the human that those dimensions are entangled and unavoidable parts of our *Dasein*.

6. The Desert and the Exclusion from *Erlebnis*

Faber's flight to Caracas experiences an engine failure forcing an emergency landing in the Mexican desert of Tamaulipas. For the majority of the passengers present, the desert under moonlight constitutes a genuine *Erlebnis*. Faber refuses this experience. His declaration constitutes one of the novel's most programmatic passages:

> Ich bin Techniker und gewohnt, die Dinge zu sehen, wie sie sind. Ich sehe den Mond über der Wüste von Tamaulipas - klarer als je, mag sein, aber eine errechenbare Masse, die um unseren Planeten kreist, eine Sache der Gravitation, interessant, aber wieso ein Erlebnis? Ich sehe die gezackten Felsen, schwarz vor dem Schein des Mondes; sie sehen aus, mag sein, wie die gezackten Rücken von urweltlichen Tieren, aber ich weiß: Es sind Felsen, Gestein, wahrscheinlich vulkanisch [...] Ich sehe auch keine versteinerten Engel, es tut mir leid; auch keine Dämonen, ich sehe, was ich sehe: die üblichen Formen der Erosion. (Frisch, 24)

The repeated structure "mag sein... aber" acknowledges the experiential potential and immediately excludes it. The moon *could* be sublime; it becomes a calculable mass. The rocks *could* be uncanny; they become geological formations. This is not ignorance on Faber's part but rather an active negation, and it is here that Blumenberg's philosophy of myth provides the most precise analytical instrument available for reading it. Blumenberg's *Arbeit am Mythos* opens with a reconstruction of what he calls the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit*: the primordial human condition defined by the fact that "der Mensch die Bedingungen seiner Existenz annähernd nicht in der Hand hatte und, was wichtiger ist, schlechthin nicht in seiner Hand glaubte" (Blumenberg, 9). "What myth provides is not an explanation of reality but what Blumenberg calls a Bewältigung eines uns entzogenen Zuvor" (22) a mastery, always ongoing, of what precedes and exceeds the subject's grasp, accomplished through *Kunstgriffe*: "die Supposition des Vertrauten für das Unvertraute, der Erklärungen für das Unerklärliche, der Benennungen für das Unnennbare" (11). And crucially: "Welchen Ausgangspunkt man auch wählen würde, die Arbeit am Abbau des Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit hätte immer schon begonnen" (13).

What Faber's desert scene reveals is that his technical reduction performs an identical *Bewältigung* through different means. His geology names the rocks; his physics names the moon; his probability theory names chance. Each substitution is a *Kunstgriff* in Blumenberg's precise sense. As Blumenberg writes, "Welt zu haben, ist immer das Resultat einer Kunst, auch wenn sie in keinem Sinne ein 'Gesamtkunstwerk' sein kann" (13). Faber's rationalism is not the *absence* of the mythic labor Blumenberg describes. It is its modern, self-concealing continuation, what Blumenberg calls a *Distanzgewinn*: a winning of distance from the overwhelming weight of reality (23). The difference between Faber and the mythic consciousness he dismisses is not that one works on reality and the other does not. It is that Faber's *Arbeit* denies its own character as such in the first place. "Ich weigere mich," he writes, "Angst zu haben aus bloßer Fantasie, beziehungsweise fantastisch zu werden aus bloßer Angst, geradezu mythisch" (Frisch, 28). The refusal to become "geradezu mythisch" is itself a mythic gesture: the repelling of what appears overwhelming through an act of naming and categorization, what Blumenberg calls the *Apotropaion* (22). Kiernan describes what Faber experiences in the desert: "Von seiner technischen Schutzwelt im Stich gelassen, erlebt Faber in der Wüste zum ersten Male, wie wenig der Mensch das Seiende beherrscht, und erfährt in den unwillkürlichen Stimmungen, daß die Welt mehr ist als eine 'Tankstelle' zum Verbrauch des Menschen" (Kiernan, 51).

There is nevertheless a crucial detail that complicates Faber's refusal in this situation: he reaches for his camera. He cannot experience the desert affectively; "von Sensation nicht die Spur" (Frisch, 25) but he reaches for the technological instrument that will allow him to capture and contain what he cannot feel. If Blumenberg's *Distanzgewinn* names the achievement of mythic consciousness in its capacity prevent the overwhelming, then Faber's camera is his specific instrument of distancing: it converts the unprocessable immediacy of the desert into an image he

can inspect later, in controlled conditions. He cannot experience the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit*; he photographs it instead.

That Faber photographs what he cannot feel is not an incidental gesture but the exposure of the instrument his whole mode of being requires. Susan Sontag's account of photography names the operation: photographing is "essentially an act of non-intervention" (Sontag, 8), and "a way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it" (Sontag, 6), a refusal carried out by reducing what happens to the photogenic, converting experience into an image and a souvenir. Sontag observes further that the camera develops in tandem with tourism, giving those who travel a means of taking possession of spaces in which they feel insecure: tourists "put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable" (Sontag, 6), and the very act of taking pictures softening the disorientation that travel provokes. No description of Faber in the Tamaulipas desert could be more exact. What Blumenberg calls *Distanzgewinn* is performed by the camera mechanically. It is the modern *Kunstgriff* in its most literal form: a handheld device for holding the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit* at arm's length.

Vilém Flusser sharpens what kind of instrument this is. For Flusser the camera is not a tool but an *apparatus*, and the distinction is categorical: tools and machines work, tearing objects from nature and informing them, whereas apparatuses do not work at all, since their intention is symbolic, not to change the world but to change its meaning (Flusser, 25). The camera is programmed to produce photographs, and each photograph realizes one possibility already contained within its program; the photographer who looks through it out at the world does so not because the world interests him but because he is pursuing that program's unrealized possibilities, and for him "the world is purely a pretext" (26). Flusser calls such a person a *functionary*: one who "control a game over which he has no competence" (28), ordering the apparatus from its exterior,

at input and output, and commanded by it through the impenetrability of its interior. His freedom is "a programmed freedom" (35), the camera does the photographer's will, but the photographer must will what the camera can do. This is the *Ge-stell* in miniature: a device that admits only what its categories are allow to do, translates whatever it is turned toward into a state of things (36), and conceals its own programming by presenting itself not as an image but as a window onto the world (15).

Faber believes he masters the camera as he masters his turbines, and he is not totally wrong; but it is not the hardness of an apparatus that makes it playable (30), and command of a mechanism is not command of a program. The engineer's certainty that he sees through the box is the form his functioning takes.[14] And Flusser's name for the one who takes up the camera is precisely the name Faber cannot afford to lose: the photographer, he writes, is "not *Homo faber* but *Homo ludens*" (27). The man whose entire existence is organized around making does not notice that the instrument in his hand has moved him out of the category of the maker. The reduction of the moonlit desert to an exposure is that program running.

Beneath both operations lies the logic Frisch names elsewhere as the *Bildnis*. As Andreas Kilcher shows, the image, for Frisch, fixes and reduces against the open, imaginative space that narration keeps available, the *Bild* binds and takes captive, reducing the living and incomprehensible to something determined from outside. Faber has already been diagnosed in these terms: Frisch describes him as a *verhinderter Mensch* who has made a *Bildnis* of himself. Barthes describes that gesture from within. The moment he feels himself observed by the lens, he writes, "I transform myself in advance into an image" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 10), and the

[14] Faber is executing a function here but is never, in Flusser's strict sense, a photographer. Flusser defines the photographer as one who "attempts to place, within the image, information that is not predicted within the program of the camera" (84). Faber never attempts this. He is thus the limit case rather than an exception: the pure executor of function, functioning without even the photographer's exploratory play against the box.

transformation is not neutral, since the photograph "creates my body or mortifies it" (11). The asymmetry Barthes then draws is Frisch's exactly: the self is light, divided, dispersed, while the image is heavy, motionless, stubborn. This is the *Bildnis* in the first person: not a picture taken of a man, but a man converting himself, in advance, into something fixed.

One consequence for the framing of this chapter should be drawn out. If myth, in Blumenberg's account, is *Arbeit*, labor performed against the absolutism of reality, then the technical instrument that performs the same labor does not abolish myth but occupies its position. Blumenberg's own term for such a movement is *Umbesetzung*, reoccupation: the modern answer takes over the place of the question it believes it has dissolved. Faber's camera does not free him from the mythic function; it *is* the mythic function, executed in a box of aluminium and glass, and disavowed in the same motion.

7. The Guatemalan Detour: Encountering the Pre-Modern

The emergency landing is followed by the first voluntary breach in Faber's technological routine. In Mexico City, he makes a decision that surprises even himself: "Mein Entschluß, eine Dienstreise einfach zu ändern und einen privaten Umweg über Guatemala zu machen, bloß um einen alten Jugendfreund wiederzusehen, fiel auf dem neuen Flugplatz in Mexico-City, und zwar im letzten Augenblick [...] Ich weiß nicht, was es wirklich war" (Frisch, 37). Kiernan reads this moment through Heidegger's analysis of *Stimmung*: "Bezeichnenderweise ist es eine 'Stimmung' und nicht etwa eine vernunftmäßige Überlegung, die Faber dazu bringt, zum ersten Male in seinem Leben eine Dienstreise zu ändern" (Kiernan, 50). It is a mood, precisely what Faber's worldview classifies as a technical malfunction, that initiates the detour that will lead to Sabeth, the young

woman Faber will meet on a transatlantic trip shortly after, with whom he will fall in love, and eventually discover to be his own daughter by Hanna.

The journey confronts Faber with a series of encounters that progressively destabilize his technological framework. Kiernan notes that when Faber and Herbert, his seatmate on the fateful flight, who turns out to be the brother of Faber's former best friend Joachim and who has traveled to Guatemala to find him, arrive in Palenque, "Die fünf Tage sind gekennzeichnet von einem völligen Zusammenbrechen aller für Walter Faber gewohnter Schutz- und Fluchthandlungen. Wille und Logos verlieren ihre Funktion" (Kiernan, 52). In this total breakdown, Faber sinks into a purely affective state that his worldview has no category for: "sogar zum Filmen war ich zu faul" (Frisch, 40). The camera, his only instrument of pseudo-experience, becomes useless.

Faber meets Marcel in the jungle, an American musician visiting the Mayan ruins of Palenque. Marcel patiently "spannte Pauspapier über die steinernen Reliefs, um dann stundenlang mit einer schwarzen Kreide darüber hinzustreichen, eine irrsinnige Arbeit, bloß um Kopien herzustellen; er behauptete steif und fest, man könne diese Hieroglyphen und Götterhatzen nicht fotografieren, sonst wären sie sofort tot" (Frisch, 48). The contrast with Faber's camera is precise: Marcel argues that photography kills the hieroglyphs, that the mythic inscription requires the hand, the time, the bodily contact of tracing. Kiernan notes that it is Marcel, and not Faber or Herbert, who possesses a "festen Punkt" from which he can inhabit even this extreme environment; it is Marcel who ultimately procures the jeep that allows their escape from the jungle (Kiernan, 53). The man Faber initially dismisses as incomprehensible is the one grounded enough to act.

Faber's explicit contempt for Marcel, and more specifically for aspects that he embodies, and which constitute a counterpart for Faber as he generalizes: "Manchmal ging er mir auf die Nerven wie alle Künstler, die sich für höhere oder tiefere Wesen halten, bloß weil sie nicht wissen,

was Elektrizität ist" (Frisch, 45). His response to the ruins reveals the same blindness: "ich finde ja diese Ruinen sehr primitiv – im Widerspruch zu unserem Ruinen-Freund, der die Maya liebt, gerade weil sie keinerlei Technik hatten, dafür Götter" (50). The formulation reveals gods as an alternative for technology, a deficiency, in Faber's view; a difference. The Guatemala section functions structurally as the chapter's second rupture following the desert as the first. What Faber cannot see is that the Mayan civilization represents not a failure of technology but a different configuration of the relation between the technical, the symbolic, and the mythic. Stiegler's concept of epiphylogenesis offers a fundamental corrective to Faber's implicit assumption that the Maya represent a pre-technological human condition. Stiegler argues that "the human and the tool invent each other" (Stiegler, *Technis and Time 1*, 175) that there is no human existence that precedes technical mediation, because the human is constituted precisely through the process of exteriorization into technical objects. The question is therefore not whether we are technical beings but what kind, and what relationship we maintain with the technical systems that constitute us. Faber's contempt for the Maya: "dafür Götter" is not the superiority of technical civilization over a pre-technical one. It is the incomprehension of one technical configuration before another, one in which the technical served cosmological meaning rather than efficiency.

The Guatemalan detour stages the *Bild/Bildnis* logic as an explicit contrast, and it is worth paying close attention to what Marcel's refusal actually claims. To photograph the hieroglyphs would *kill* them; only the slow, bodily, temporal labor of the hand, a labor nearer to writing than to imaging, leaves them in their own life. Marcel practices what Frisch sets against the fixing image. Faber, for whom Marcel "ging [ihm] auf die Nerven wie alle Künstler," has only the apparatus. And when his defenses collapse in Palenque, the apparatus is the first casualty: he is too lazy even to film. The instrument of distancing becomes useless at the one moment the world

reaches him unmediated, i.e., at the one moment he cannot make a *Bildnis* of what stands before him.

Stiegler corrects the assumption that the Maya are pre-technical; Melanie Rohner's postcolonial reading exposes what that assumption is for. Faber's contempt is not only epistemic but colonial, and the two cannot be kept apart. The peoples among whom he installs turbines are, in his own administrative idiom, *unterentwickelte Völker*, and the phrase belongs to a lineage the novel makes explicit rather than merely reflecting. As Rohner shows, *Homo Faber* repeatedly binds the modern engineer to the figure of the conquistador. It is Marcel who performs the identification, lecturing through the night on the "katastrophalen Scheinsieg des abendländischen Technikers (Cortez als Techniker, weil er Schießpulver hatte!)" over what he calls the indianische Seele (Frisch, 58, Rohner 76). Cortés is a technician because he had gunpowder, which makes the twentieth-century engineer the heir of a project of subjecting nature and *Naturvölker* alike, now equipped with more advanced instruments. Rohner traces the genealogy behind the joke, noting that the conquistador's masculine-imagined undertaking is continued by the engineer, the "tatendurstigen, wagemutigen und tüchtigen neuen Helden der Zivilisation," and that Frisch had already called the Spaniards *Techniker* in the unpublished *Stiller* chapter "Cortez und Montezuma" (Rohner, 77). Faber travels under the mandate of UNESCO to deliver "technische Hilfe für unterentwickelte Völker" (Frisch, 10) and he registers the inhabitants through a colonial repertoire that Rohner enumerates without difficulty: irrational, barbaric, sensual, submissive, indolent, feminine, and "weibisch" (Rohner, 78).

The consequence for this chapter's argument is twofold, and the second part is uncomfortable. Faber's *Ge-stell* does not encounter the Maya as an alternative technical configuration because it cannot: the standing-reserve has a colonial address, and the peoples who

are to be developed are already, in the idiom of his mandate, a *Bestand* awaiting order. But Rohner presses further than this. Having granted that the novel appears to bind its critique of instrumental reason to a critique of the white imperial subject, she argues that "der Roman fällt freilich immer wieder hinter diese Kritik zurück" (Rohner, 78), because Faber's transformation from a bloodless, over-rationalized man into one who can praise *das Leben* is staged upon an opposition it never dismantles: a lifeless, calculating whiteness set against a living, sensual, irrational non-whiteness. Frisch's own letter to Peter Suhrkamp of April 1956 supplies the frame with startling candor, describing Guatemala as a *Gegenwelt* and its inhabitants as "die Indios als Atechniker, die unterentwickelten Völker als dämonische Bedrohung," against the "Narkose der Zivilisation" into which we must flee if we are not to be equal to the *condition humaine* (Frisch to Suhrkamp, 19 April 1956; cited in Rohner 83). The letter is invaluable for the present reading and damaging to it in the same breath. It names the disavowal from the author's side, civilization as narcosis, and it names the demonic as that which narcosis delays. It also reveals that the demonic has an ethnicity, and that the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit* against which Faber's instrumental idiom labors has been given, in the novel's economy, a Central American face. The disavowal therefore operates on two levels at once. Faber disavows the mythic; the text disavows the coloniality of the mythic it restores to him. The second operation is not thematized by the *Bericht* and cannot be, and it marks the limit of what this chapter can claim on the novel's behalf.

A complication must be registered, because it bears on how far the novel underwrites its own critique. Rohner argues that *Homo Faber* does not simply expose Faber's colonial gaze but is caught within it: the opposition on which the narrative of his conversion depends, lifeless, over-rationalised whiteness set against living, sensual non-whiteness, is reinscribed even as it is criticized, so that Faber's belated turn toward *Erlebnis* is arranged along the very ethnic coding it

has to dissolve. For the present argument this is not an embarrassment but a confirmation, and it is taken here in that sense: the disavowal Faber performs is not a private pathology but the self-understanding of an entire civilization, one the novel inhabits closely enough to reproduce its blind spots in the very act of diagnosing them. That the critique cannot fully escape itself from what it criticizes is what it means for a myth to be *worked on from inside*. In any case, the Guatemalan detour is not a interlude but a second site, after the desert, before Greece, at which the mythic and affective material returns to meet Faber, here wearing the face his own culture has assigned to it.

8. The Disavowal of Myth: Oedipus, Fate, and the Cybernetic

If the Guatemalan detour exposed Faber's incomprehension before one important configuration of the technical and the mythic, the novel now turns to the mythic structure that concerns him most directly: the one circling, in an unrecognized form, around his own life. Faber's explicit position on fate and myth is stated with consistent clarity early in the novel: "Ich glaube nicht an Fügung und Schicksal, als Techniker bin ich gewohnt mit den Formeln der Wahrscheinlichkeit zu rechnen [...] ich brauche, um das Unwahrscheinliche als Erfahrungstatsache gelten zu lassen, keinerlei Mystik; Mathematik genügt mir" (Frisch, 24). By translating fate into probability, Faber does not eliminate the uncanny; he domesticates it within a calculative framework that prevents it from making existential claims. This gesture, read through Blumenberg's philosophy of myth, reveals its deepest logic: not the absence of myth but its modern, self-concealing form.

A terminological distinction must be drawn here, since three different things are in play and the argument depends on not confusing them. The first is myth in Blumenberg's sense: not a body of stories but a mode of *Bewältigung*, the labor by which an overwhelming reality is held at a distance. The second is the specific mythological content the novel invokes, Oedipus, the Sphinx,

the Erinyes, the narrative material through which Greek culture performed that labor. The third is what Faber himself means by "Mystik" when he says he needs "keinerlei Mystik": for him the word names everything non-calculable, the irrational as such, which he rejects wholesale. The chapter's claim is emphatically not that Faber is secretly mystical. It is that his rejection of Mystik is itself an instance of myth in Blumenberg's structural sense, a Kunstgriff for distancing the absolutism of reality, and that the mythological content he dismisses is, unknown to him, the accurate description of the fate his disavowal is causing. Faber's error is to hear all three as one thing and reject this grouping.

The disavowal has a name in the novel, and Faber gave it that name himself. His abandoned dissertation was titled *Über die Bedeutung des sogenannten Maxwell'schen Dämons*, (Frisch, 37) and the adjective is the whole argument compressed into a word: *sogenannt*, so-called. Something is named a demon; Faber's science consists in the insistence that the name is a way of speaking. This insistence receives its most remarkable formulation late in the novel, on Faber's final flight: watching the landing gear swing out, he cannot see why such an assembly of tires, tubing, and lubricating oil should behave "wie ein Dämon, der die Piste plötzlich in Wüste verwandelt" (Frisch, 234). He then dismisses his own formulation as "Spintisiererei, die ich natürlich selber nicht ernstnahm," (ibid.) and concludes that he has never in his life encountered a demon, with one exception, the so-called Maxwell demon, "der bekanntlich keiner ist" (Frisch, 234). Five movements are executed at the same time. Faber names his machine a demon; he names it a demon twice; he retracts the naming as senseless speculation he never took seriously; he denies having met any demon at all; and he then produces the single exception, which is the one demon he has met and which he immediately declares not to be one. The sentence is the disavowal in miniature. It does not have to be taken between the lines from Faber's behavior. It is legible in his syntax.

The narrated fact that the exception should be the Maxwell demon is the novel's deepest irony, and Manfred Leber has shown why. Maxwell's thought experiment of 1871 imagined an intelligence stationed at an aperture between two gas-filled chambers, sorting fast molecules from slow, generating a temperature gradient out of equilibrium and thereby an inexhaustible source of energy: a device, that is, for defeating entropy. In 1951 Léon Brillouin closed the question. Any such intelligence must be supplied with more energy for its work of recognition and sorting than it could recover by performing it (Leber, 108). The demon designed to reverse entropy necessarily accelerates it, and Leber's conclusion is stated in exactly those terms: "Der Maxwell'sche Dämon würde also die Zunahme der Entropie, der er entgegenwirken sollte, im Endeffekt nur beschleunigen. Genau damit würde er sich andererseits aber auch genau im Sinne des Daimons einer antiken Tragödie verhalten" (Leber, 108). Structurally this is the exact behaviour of the daimon of Greek tragedy, which Leber, following Schadewaldt and Lesky, characterises as the divine insofar as it works upon a man incomprehensible and for the most part to his ruin. The definition he takes from Schadewaldt is worth having in full: the daimon is "für den Griechen das Göttliche, insofern es sich unergründlich, unbestimmbar, unfaßlich, unerwartet und meist zum Schlimmen an dem Menschen auswirkt" (Schadewaldt, 267; in Leber, 104). It seduces the hero into overconfidence and arrogance; the hero's assertion of mastery produces the opposite of what he intended; and in the failure the limit he had denied becomes visible. Leber compresses the structure into a single sentence: the daimon "verführt den Helden zur Hybris," the dynamic of that hybris consists "in einer Verkehrung seiner Absichten," and what the hero finally accomplishes is "die letztgültige Erkenntnis seiner Nichtigkeit im Verhältnis zum ewigen Walten der göttlich natürlichen Ordnung" (Leber, 107). The Maxwell demon is a demon in the oldest available sense. It promises a closed and masterable order, converts the effort at mastery into the acceleration of

disorder, and so discloses the limit the human cannot cross. Faber's flat verdict that the demon is famously no demon at all is therefore, in Leber's words, "keineswegs haltbar" (Leber, 109).

Faber never arrived at this conclusion, because he abandoned the dissertation before it could arrive. Professor O., the teacher whose skull-like face gives Faber the impression that the man has already died, regrets the unfinished work at their last meeting: "Er findet es schade, dass ich damals meine Dissertation (über den sog. Maxwell'schen Dämon) nicht gemacht habe" (Frisch, 230). The regret is precise, and Leber is right that it should be shared. If Faber had completed the thought, he would have learned, grounded in science and its proper vocabulary, "daß beim Ringen um die Realisierung geschlossener Systeme die gegenläufige Entropieentwicklung prinzipiell unvermeidlich ist, ja, daß sogar jeder Versuch, dem unbequemen Entropieeffekt entgegenzuwirken, ihn im Grunde nur potenzieren kann" (Leber, 110). That is, he would have learned the law governing his own life.

That law has a living exponent in the novel, and Faber sits across a kitchen table from her without recognizing it. Hanna Landsberg, archaeologist, and Faber's counter-figure since the opening pages, treats the very mythological content the terminological distinction named not as ornament or superstition but as fact. Reunited in Athens as their daughter is dying, she rejects his statistics outright, "weil sie an Schicksal glaubt" (Frisch, 168), and speaks of Oedipus, the Sphinx, Athene, and the Erinyen as "Tatsachen für sie" (Frisch, 169), matters that may enter the most serious conversation without first being argued for. Faber, unable to grant this any weight, categorizes it under her professional activity: gods belong to her job, a *déformation professionelle* (Frisch, 169).

This is why Hanna's mythology and Faber's thermodynamics stand in the relation the novel assigns to them. When Faber complains that she spoke of myths as he did of the *Wärmesatz*, a

physical law that every experience only confirms, he intends the comparison as a diagnosis of her superstition. It is instead the most precise expression of this chapter's thesis that the novel supplies. The second law of thermodynamics and the tragic *daimon* are not rival explanations of the world, one modern and the other archaic. They are one structure under two names. Faber does not replace myth with science. He performs the identical *Arbeit am Mythos* in a technical vocabulary and calls the vocabulary the abolition of what it continues. The mythic returns not in spite of his science but from within it, wearing the name he refused to let it keep.

A methodological caution is in order before Horkheimer and Adorno are brought alongside Blumenberg, because the two philosophies of myth this chapter draws on are not natural allies. *Arbeit am Mythos* was written, in part, against the account of myth in the *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Where Horkheimer and Adorno depict a dialectical identity, enlightenment is already myth, and reverts to it, Blumenberg rejects the reversion-thesis as itself a residual myth, and treats myth and reason not as opposites, nor as a fall of one into the other, but as successive forms of a single labor against the *Absolutismus der Wirklichkeit*, neither of which is the pathology of the other. The two frameworks cannot simply be seen as equals. What allows their joint use is not a claim that they are reconcilable in general, but the specific shape of this text. Blumenberg supplies the *mechanism*: the labor of distancing, the *Kunstgriff* and the *Distanzgewinn*, which Faber's calculation continues rather than abolishes. Horkheimer and Adorno supply the *pathology*: what that labor becomes when it turns against itself, when the distancing becomes a *Anpassung ans Tote*, the adaptation to the dead that Faber names as his robot-ideal. *Homo Faber* is a text in which both are legible because it stages the precise moment at which the one becomes the other; the *Bewältigung* Blumenberg describes in the wish to be a machine that "erlebt nichts," into the mimesis of the inert that Adorno diagnoses. The chapter therefore borrows from each only what the novel itself

showcases: Blumenberg's continuity of mythic and technical labor, and Adorno's account of that labor's self-undoing without adopting Blumenberg's insistence that the continuity is positiv or Adorno's that the identity is total.

Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung* illuminates the deeper structure of this self-concealment through their reading of the Odyssey. This returns the chapter to the ideology critique named earlier (section 3): where instrumental reason was to Faber naturalized "common sense," it appears here in its mythic prehistory, so that Faber's *Bericht* and Odysseus become two moments of one dialectic. They argue that the Homeric epic already contains the dialectic of Enlightenment: "der ehrwürdige Kosmos der sinnerfüllten homerischen Welt offenbart sich als Leistung der ordnenden Vernunft, die den Mythos zerstört gerade vermöge der rationalen Ordnung, in der sie ihn spiegelt" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 42). Enlightenment reason does not overcome myth; it mirrors myth in the very act of rationalizing it. The decisive instrument in this process is *List* (cunning): "Das Organ des Selbst, Abenteuer zu bestehen, sich wegzuwerfen, um sich zu behalten, ist die List" (46). Odysseus, like Faber, survives encounters with overwhelming forces not by confronting them directly but by calculating his way through them. And the narrative form they generate is, in Horkheimer and Adorno's formulation, "die Beschreibung der Fluchtbahn des Subjekts vor den mythischen Mächten" (44): the subject's flight-path away from what mythic consciousness would recognize as its fate. This is the *Bericht*, technically precise, emotionally rejecting, and structured by the very evasion it portrays.

The most dialectically precise formulation in Horkheimer and Adorno leads directly into Faber's robot ideal: "Die Ratio, welche die Mimesis verdrängt, ist nicht bloß deren Gegenteil. Sie ist selber Mimesis: die ans Tote" (53). Reason is not the opposite of mimetic, affective, symbolic engagement with the world but it is mimesis directed at the dead. Faber's admiration for the robot,

his desire to be a machine that "erlebt nichts, sie hat keine Angst und keine Hoffnung, die nur stören" (Frisch, 75), is not the transcendence of the mimetic but its redirection toward the inert, the calculable, the non-living.

Achim Würker's reading approaches this passage from another direction, and it proceeds in two steps. His starting point is Horkheimer and Adorno's own account of civilization's replacement of "organische Anschmiegung" with rational praxis, from which he draws the formulation the argument needs: "eine Abwehr, die scheitert" (Würker, 84), a defense against the mimetic whose price, on Horkheimer and Adorno's own terms, is *Anpassung ans Tote*, adaptation to the dead. Würker's distinctive contribution is that he adds to this borrowed formula rather than the formula itself: he specifies the object the defense is mounted against. The mimetic that technical rationality repels is bound, in *Homo Faber*, to *dem weiblich-Mütterlichen* (Würker, 85), to the fantasy of a union with the woman that satisfies need and destroys identity in the same movement. The defense against the mimetic and the defense against the mother are, in the *Bericht*, one operation. This is what allows the sexual, the colonial, and the mythic axes of Faber's disavowal to be understood as a single structure. By this point the plot has taken the shape of the fate Faber denies. On the transatlantic crossing he has met and fallen in love with the young Sabeth, unaware that she is his own daughter by Hanna, conceived before he left Europe two decades earlier rather than having been aborted as Faber believed. The relationship becomes sexual; only later, reunited with Hanna in Athens, will he grasp what he has done.

Another important scene after returning from the jungle further depicts the entaglement with fate of the protagonist; Faber wants to shave, and his own account of why is the first thing to notice: "Ich hatte das Bedürfnis, mich zu rasieren, nicht weil ich's nötig hatte, sondern einfach so. Um nicht auf Ivy zu warten" (Frisch, 73). The apparatus is dead: "Aber mein Apparat war kaputt;

ich ging von Steckdose zu Steckdose - er summte nicht" (Frisch, 73). There is a second, working razor in the bathroom, and he says so; the shave was never the point. What follows is his purest self-portrait. He cannot let the failure stand, and he supplies the principle himself: "Jeder Apparat kann einmal versagen; es macht mich nur nervös, solange ich nicht weiß, warum" (Frisch, 73). Ivy's single word of commentary, "Technology!", spoken not merely without understanding, as he is accustomed to from women, but with open mockery, changes nothing: "was mich nicht hinderte, das Apparätchen vollkommen zu zerlegen; ich wollte wissen, was los ist" (Frisch, 74). The fault, when he finds it, is a nylon thread.

And the time the dismantling took is exactly the time required for him to be at home when a determinant call comes: "ein immerhin entscheidender Anruf: Mein Schiffplatz nach Europa könne nur gebucht werden, wenn ich sofort, spätestens bis zweiundzwanzig Uhr, mit meinem Pass vorbeikomme" (Frisch, 74). Faber draws the inference himself, and the report gives it a paragraph of its own: "Hätte ich das Apparätchen nicht zerlegt, so hätte mich jener Anruf nicht mehr erreicht, das heißt, meine Schiffreise wäre nicht zustande gekommen, jedenfalls nicht mit dem Schiff, das Sabeth benutzte, und wir wären einander nie auf der Welt begegnet, meine Tochter und ich" (Frisch, 74). The chain is not imposed on the *Bericht* by its reader. It is entered into the *Bericht* by its author.

The catastrophe is not delivered by a fate opposed to the technical. It is manufactured by an act of technical mastery. Leber, who first read the scene along this axis, restores it to the vocabulary of the abandoned dissertation: in taking the razor apart Faber is still acting "im Sinn der Idee des Maxwell'schen Dämons," still believing that "bei entsprechender Informations- und Sortierarbeit alles wieder in seinem Sinn" can be resolved (Leber, 129). What the labor of sorting produces is the reverse of its intention, since "er mit seinem technischen Reparatureifer lediglich

die Voraussetzungen geschaffen hat, sich zu einer anderen Frau rufen zu lassen, mit der er durch natürliche Bande in einem Bezug steht, der enger nicht sein könnte" (Leber, 130). The gesture by which Faber restores order to his closed system, dismantling, knowing, repairing, is the identical gesture by which the excluded arrives. No external agency is required at any point, no goddess, no *Schicksal* in Hanna's sense. The mechanism suffices. And the mechanism has precisely the form the Maxwell demon has already given it: a device that sorts in order to exclude disorder and produces, by that very sorting, the disorder it excludes. Faber's razor is the Maxwell demon at the scale of a life, and the incest is its entropy.

This disavowal reaches its most elaborated form in the abortion argument (Frisch, 105 - 107), where Faber applies instrumental reason to life itself with maximal explicitness. His statistical argument for abortion as rational necessity is simultaneously his unconscious defense against recognizing Sabeth's existence: "Mechanisch-physiologische Zufälle" are precisely what have organized his fate; the fate he dismisses as laughable is the same one he is living. Kiernan argues that this is the formal dimension of this blindness: Faber manipulates the data about Sabeth's age until "die Rechnung aufging, wie [er] wollte" (Frisch, 149, in Kiernan, 75). The irony is precise: Faber is at his most computational when he is most self-deceiving. "Die gewollte Blindheit, mit der Faber sich in seine Schuld stürzt, ein Resultat seiner uneigentlichen Existenz ist, seiner Komplizität mit dem öffentlichen 'Man'" (Kiernan, 77).

The encounter with Sabeth on the ship concretizes this dynamic at the level of perception. Faber first glimpses her from behind, her face is invisible and her appearance categorized by attributes. Once, he gets to talk to her, he proceeds to lecture her on cybernetics, "über Navigation, Radar, Erdkrümmung, Elektrizität, Entropie" (Frisch, 87). He is teaching his own daughter that human beings are machines: arguing, to the person whose existence refutes his entire worldview,

that feelings “nur stören.” Faber in a try to see and explain things clearly, is literally unable to see what is in front of him. It is the conversation with Hanna about myth that makes this blindness philosophically explicit. Faber recalls that Hanna “redete von Mythen, wie unsereiner von Wärmesatz, nämlich wie von einem physikalischen Gesetz, das durch jede Erfahrung nur bestätigt wird, daher in einem geradezu gleichgültigen Ton. Ohne Verwunderung. Oedipus und die Sphinx, auf einer kaputten Vase dargestellt in kindlicher Weise, Athene, die Erinnyen beziehungsweise Eumeniden und wie sie alle heißen, das sind Tatsachen für sie” (Frisch, 169). The woman who understands the mythic structure about to destroy him names it Oedipus, the Sphinx, the Erinyes, until Faber changes the subject to “praktische Sorgen.” He cannot hear what she is saying because his framework has no category for myth as factual, as a mode of truth, this is an inconsistency and confusion for him as he recognizes the intellectual capacities of Hanna. The novel’s oedipal structure is, as Reinhard Meurer insists, not a simple overlay but a formal enactment (Meurer, 28-29).

The disavowal has been traced along a temporal axis in section 6 and, with Rohner, a spatial and racial one in section 7. Its third axis is sexual, and the novel names it in a joke. Driving back from the plantation through the swamps at sunrise, Marcel says it in French: “Tu sais que la mort est femme!” Faber looks at him. “et que la terre est femme!” Faber understood the second, because it looked exactly like that, and he laughed out loud, against his will, “wie über eine Zote” (Frisch, 81). Leber’s account of the moment is severe and telling: the joke is masculine repression brought to completion. The statement, he writes, “muß als Ausdruck vollendeter männlicher Verdrängung verstanden werden,” and it is the laughter that makes the repression legible (Leber, 127). What Faber has been unable to stop registering, namely the dissolution of his own body toward earth, the sweating in the stalled Land Rover, the swamp he sees at dawn as menstrual

blood and sperm, the flat announcement that he wishes to be cremated, is projected, whole, onto the other sex. The evidence is on the page before the joke, in Faber's own diction: the pools of the return journey are "Tümpel von schmutzigem Blut, Monatsblut," swarming with tadpoles "wie ein Gewimmel von Spermatozoen," and he adds, in a parenthesis of his own, "(Ich möchte kremiert werden!)" (Frisch, 80). What the joke disposes of is precisely this: "Die Zote, die Tod und Erde mit Frau identifiziert, projiziert also die eigene, aber uneingestandene Tendenz nach entropischer Totalvermischung einseitig auf das andere Geschlecht" (Leber, 127). Death is not in him; death is a woman. Marcel thereby becomes, in Leber's phrase, "eine Art Daimon, der über Trug zur Wahrheit führt" (Leber, 127): the sentence Faber can receive only as a dirty joke is the sentence that tells him what he is.

Once seen, the axis organizes what has until now appeared as a series of separate contempts. Mona Knapp puts the point with a directness worth adopting, for Faber there is little to distinguish women, *Indios*, Cubans, and Blacks, the young and the old; all belong to the great minority whose category should acknowledge the technician's superiority as silently as they acknowledge their own inferiority. Woman, colonized, and creature are one category for Faber, and it is the category of everything he has expelled from himself, the body, generation, dependency, death. The Guatemalan detour and the Oedipal turn are therefore not two subjects but one, examined at two sites. With Faber's position on fate and myth now explicit, the novel stages its return in a sequence of encounters (Rome, then Greece) in which the mythic he has disowned reaches him through art and landscape before it reaches him through catastrophe.

Italy comes first, and the order matters: before the mythic reaches Faber as fate on the shore below Akrokorinth, it reaches him as art he cannot receive. The encounter is with the aesthetic rather than the catastrophic, a low-stakes rehearsal of the same incapacity, where nothing is yet at

risk but his boredom. Faber can make nothing of museums, and he says so while sitting outside one: “Ich saß draußen auf der Piazza San Marco, während Sabeth aus purem Trotz, glaube ich, das ganze Kloster besichtigte, und trank meinen Campari wie üblich” (Frisch, 128). It is at the Museo Nazionale in Rome, later, that he is unmoved by every statue he confronts, and plants himself in front of one at all only to test Hanna’s claim, reported by Sabeth, that “jeder Mensch könne ein Kunstwerk erleben, bloß der Bildungsspießer nicht” (Frisch, 131). The claim already contains the exception he is about to prove himself to be. His verdict is immediate: “aber Mama, fand ich, irrte sich. Ich langweilte mich bloß” (Frisch, 131). The claim that every human being is capable of experiencing a work of art is dismissed as the naivety of an intellectual woman. What follows immediately destabilizes this dismissal.

In a small side room, without the help of the Bavarian priest who had been guiding the German tour group through the cloister, Faber discovers a stone relief that captures him entirely: “Kopf einer schlafenden Erinnye. Das war meine Entdeckung [...] Hier fand ich: Großartig, ganz großartig, beeindruckend, famos, tiefbeeindruckend. Es war ein steinerner Mädchenkopf, so gelegt, dass man drauf blickt wie auf das Gesicht einer schlafenden Frau, wenn man sich auf die Ellbogen stützt” (Frisch, 132). The numerous positive characterizations of the piece of art; *großartig, beeindruckend, famos, tiefbeeindruckend,* are themselves significant. The series does not describe the relief; it escalates before it, each term reaching for more force than the last, until *beeindruckend* is not replaced but simply intensified into *tiefbeeindruckend*. Faber has no vocabulary for aesthetic experience, and so he reaches for intensification rather than description. He is genuinely moved and does not know what to do with it.

The Erinnye is the goddess of blood-guilt and revenge, the mythic force that pursues those who violate the bonds of kinship. She is also, without Faber’s knowledge, the deity of his fate. He

finds her beautiful, and asks: "Was sie wohl zusammenträumt –?" (Frisch, 132). This is the only moment of genuine mythic imagination in the entire *Bericht*: a question about the interior life of a stone figure, asked with a tenderness Faber extends to no living person. But the movement is immediately neutralized. When Sabeth demonstrates that the Erinnye becomes "wacher, lebendiger, geradezu wild" depending on where one stands, Faber reduces the phenomenon to "eine Belichtungssache" (Frisch, 133), a matter of lighting angles, technical optics. He has been moved; he converts the movement into measurement. The retreat is not dishonest, it is the only instrument available to him. Kiernan identifies precisely what this key moment in the novel means: this is the novel's central motif of *Blindsein*, Faber's structural inability to see what is directly before him, connected always to the guilt he cannot acknowledge (Kiernan, 161). The same blindness that converts the Erinnye into a lighting problem will, weeks later, prevent him from recognizing the Acropolis itself. What must be understood is that these are not two separate failures but a single structure operating at different levels. The reading of these scenes therefore follows the logic of that escalation rather than strict chronology: Italy first, then Greece, then the catastrophe that both were preparing.

Faber arrives in Athens with Sabeth with the same eyes that saw the Tamaulipas desert as "üblichen Formen der Erosion." Greece does not convert him. His first orientation in the city is a failed recognition: pointing at the Lykabettos, he asks Hanna: "was du hier hast! Das also ist diese berühmte Akropolis?" She corrects him: "Nein, sagt sie, das ist der Lykabettos" (Frisch, 158). The man committed to seeing clearly "Ich bin Techniker und gewohnt, die Dinge zu sehen, wie sie sind" cannot recognize the Acropolis. This is not a failure of cultural education. It is an ontological failure. The technological mode of disclosure through which Faber encounters the world orders everything as calculable, functional, instrumentally relevant or irrelevant, and the ancient

landscape, presenting no coordinates, no schedule, no standing-reserve, simply does not appear within that ordering. What cannot be measured cannot, in the most literal sense, be seen. And what makes this failure tragic rather than merely ironic is the fact that the landscape Faber cannot see is also the landscape of his own fate: the world that produced Oedipus, the Erinyes, the mythic structures of kinship and transgression that are, at this precise moment, organized around him.

Athena, according to the myth Kerényi transmits, secretly reared a fatherless child, Erichthonios, concealing him from the other gods. She was carrying a great rock with which to fortify the Acropolis when the secret was discovered; in her anger she let the rock fall, and it became Mount Lykabettos. The child had been conceived when Hephaistos, *faber*, in Latin, is the smith, was betrothed to her: she escaped him on the wedding night, his seed fell upon the earth, and Gaia bore the child, whom she handed to Athena, the mother who wanted the child but not its father, the mother, in Leber's formulation, "die die Verbindung mit dem Vater des Kindes nicht, wohl aber das Kind selbst wollte, es gleichwohl aber verlieren mußte" (Kerényi, 98–100; in Leber, 167, Anm. 58).

Faber and Hanna discuss the Acropolis and the Lykabettos; and the window of Sabeth's room looks out upon the Lykabettos. The configuration is total: the smith-god whose name the protagonist bears, the mother who kept the child and refused the father, the fatherless daughter, the rock let fall in a mother's rage. And Faber walks through this geography experiencing a mild disagreement about which hill is which. He is not deaf to myth in general; he is deaf to the myth that is enveloping him. The mythic material has not been alluded to, but rather has been made into the topography through which the technician moves while insisting that topography is all there is.

And yet there is a counter-moment some scenes before Sabeth would pass away. On Akrokorinth, something briefly permeates Faber's constitution. Faber recalls it with a phrase that

is almost unprecedented in the *Bericht*: “es kam mir wie eine Jugenderinnerung vor” (Frisch, 150). The ancient landscape produces something, not an analysis, not a classification, but a memory without content, a feeling of return. He cannot name it and does not pursue it. The sunrise scene above Korinth extends this breach. Watching Sabeth sitting on a rock with her eyes closed in the early light, Faber writes: “Ich werde nie vergessen, wie sie auf diesem Felsen sitzt, ihre Augen geschlossen, wie sie schweigt und sich von der Sonne bescheinen läßt [...] ich werde nie vergessen: das Meer, das zusehends dunkler wird, blauer, mehr violett, das Meer von Korinth und das andere, das attische Meer, die rote Farbe der Äcker, die Olivendämmerung” (Frisch, 151-152). The repetition of “ich werde nie vergessen”, twice in two sentences, is structurally foreign to the *Bericht* form. Faber does not catalogue here; he witnesses. The Greek landscape reaches him, briefly and incompletely, through Sabeth. He can produce, in the right conditions, something close to lyric. What he cannot do is understand that the landscape reaching him and the fate closing around him are the same thing.

This is the formal enactment of what Horkheimer and Adorno identify as the Fluchtbahn des Subjekts vor den mythischen Mächten (Horkheimer & Adorno, 44): the subject’s flight-path away from mythic forces that continues to be organized by those very forces precisely because the flight prevents recognition. The sleeping Erinnye, the unrecognized Acropolis, the sunrise witnessed but not understood, all these mythic presences surround Faber as he denies their relevance. He discovers the goddess of revenge in a museum and asks what she dreams. He teaches his own daughter the theory of cybernetics. He explains to her that the machine “erlebt nichts” while the mythic machine of fate moves around him, unopposed, because the only faculty that could have interrupted it has been systematically suppressed by the very worldview his *Bericht* performs. The phrase “machine of fate” is not merely rhetorical. Myth here operates as a structure

with a logic of its own, closing in on Faber with the impersonal regularity he ascribes to mechanism, which suggests that myth is not simply the machine's opposite but its structural double, a combinatory system that arranges its elements as any apparatus. This structural doubling has an analogue in Roland Barthes's account of myth. For Barthes, myth is "a second-order semiological system" (Barthes, *Mythologies,* 114): it takes a sign that is already complete, a signifier joined to its signified, and takes that whole sign as the mere signifier of a new meaning, so that its materials are "reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth" (Barthes, 114). Myth, on this account, does not invent its contents; it runs on significations already produced, arranging pre-existing units the way Faber's apparatus arranges tires, tubing, and oil. This is exactly the operation the *Bericht* performs on fate. Faber does not encounter fate to then deny it; he takes an already-constituted sign, the daimon, the Erinnye, the *Fügung* his culture had long since given him, and processes it into the mere signifier of something calculable, a probability, a so-called demon, a *déformation professionelle*. The mythic content is not abolished but caught and re-functioned, precisely as Barthes describes. What Faber calls the mechanism of fate and what his prose calls its opposite are therefore the same combinatory system working on the level of signs: he has not escaped myth into calculation, he has built a second-order myth whose concept is calculation itself. The vocabulary of entropy and probability is the form; the disavowed daimon is the meaning it holds "at a distance" without ever letting die.

Barthes specifies the mechanism by which such a capture preserves what it appears to cancel. When a sign is taken up as form, its meaning is not suppressed but impoverished: the form "puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal" (Barthes, *Mythologies*, 117). One believes the meaning dies, but "it is a death with reprieve" (117): it loses its value yet keeps its life, and the form feeds on it rather than abolishing it. This is the exact structure of Faber's disavowal. The

daimon is not eliminated by the idiom of entropy and probability; it is emptied into that idiom and held in reserve, available to be recalled, as it is, almost verbatim, on the final flight, when the landing gear becomes *ein Dämon* an instant before the sentence retracts it. What the *sog.* of the Maxwell demon performs at the scale of a single word, the second-order myth of calculation performs across Faber's entire idiom: it holds the mythic meaning at a distance without letting it die, which is why that meaning can return, when the disavowal fails, with the full force the form was built to defer.

The consequence is not metaphorical. When Sabeth falls and strikes her head, Faber reaches immediately for the statistical mean, the quantitative expression of what is normal: snakebite is "nur in drei bis zehn Prozent der Fälle tödlich" (Frisch, 197). Kiernan makes explicit what the novel implies: it is not the snakebite that kills Sabeth but "ihr Sturz bei der Flucht vor ihm" (Kiernan, 77), her fall while fleeing Faber's naked, aging body in the moment of sexual recognition. The statistical reasoning is not only useless; it is the mechanism through which Faber's blindness directly causes her death. The man who reduced the Erinnye to a lighting problem has now, through the same reduction, allowed the Erinnye to fulfill her function. The goddess he asked about dreaming was already awake.

And the novel keeps the transformation the discarded title promises. Hanna waits for Faber at the airport in black, and he receives her as one of the black Erinnyes; she kisses him on the forehead. Later she appears in white, and he tells her that she looks like a bride. In the tragedies to which the novel alludes, as Leber notes, the Erinnyes become Eumenides only for one who consents to recognize his limits and to take his guilt upon himself. Faber, in the Second Station, confesses that he is the father who destroys everything; Hanna kneels and kisses his hand. Leber

reads this ending as a renewed utopia of progress and a sign of hope. Walter Schmitz, writing earlier, denied that any *Räume der Hoffnung* remain.

Both are right, and the disagreement dissolves once the transformation is understood as the catastrophe's price rather than its refutation. A disavowal is not an ignorance. Faber never lacked the material; he possessed the dissertation, the myths, the daughter's face, the recurring name of Hanna, and disposed of each by an operation of denial he could perform because he half knew what he was denying. Precisely for that reason its collapse cannot take the form of mere information arriving late. It takes the form of recognition, the tragic form, *anagnorisis*, and recognition of this kind is available to Faber only at the cost of ceasing to be Walter Faber. He can enter the grove at Colonus, but only as a man dying of stomach cancer in an Athens hospital, with his typewriter locked away and his *Bericht* revoked. The Eumenides are real. They are not a consolation. They are what the Erinnyes become when the man who denied them stops, and what it costs him to stop is everything he was. Frisch's discarded title is therefore neither a promise of hope nor an irony at hope's expense. It is the exact name of what the disavowal, in failing, produces.

9. The Body, Time, and the Collapse of the Technical Self

The body is the site where Faber's technological worldview fails most intimately. Kiernan identifies the structural logic: "Gemäß seiner Komplizität mit dem 'Man' verneint Faber den Tod ständig und grundsätzlich. Aber gerade durch sein überbetontes Leugnen beweist er, daß auch er das latente Gefühl seiner Endlichkeit nie abstreifen kann" (Kiernan, 152). The first sign of failure appears in characteristically minimizing terms: "ich spürte den Magen – wie öfter in der letzten Zeit, nicht schlimm, nicht schmerzhaft, ich spürte nur, daß man einen Magen hat, ein blödes

Gefühl" (Frisch, 10). The stomach becomes an inconvenient presence, an interruption of the body's normal transparency. Kiernan notes the deeper logic of Faber's subsequent refusal to see a doctor: "Er scheint zu glauben, daß er dem Tod entgehen kann, wenn er seine Krankheitssymptome nicht beachtet" (Kiernan, 154). The medical consultation is avoided not out of negligence but out of a quasi-magical (or mythical) belief that what is not confirmed cannot be real.

The parallel with Heidegger's account of breakdown coincides precisely with Faber's body. In normal conditions, the body operates as *zuhanden*, ready-to-hand, invisible, an unnoticed medium of engagement with the world. The stomach's repeated intrusions convert it momentarily to being *vorhanden*, an object of unwilled attention. Kiernan's reading of the stopped watch captures the deeper temporal dimension: "Fabers Uhr ist in gewisser Weise tatsächlich stehengeblieben: er lebt, als gäbe es keine Zeit, kein Alter, keinen Tod" (156). Faber reads time at the surfaces; coordinates, flight schedules, timestamps, precisely in order not to read it as the finite horizon that gives existence its form. Heidegger distinguishes the inauthentic time of the *Man*, which levels temporality into an endless sequence, from the authentic temporality in which Dasein owns its finitude as the condition of genuine existence (Heidegger, 424). Faber's *Protokollsprache* is the literary form of inauthentic time: the *Bericht* with its dates and coordinates is a machine for converting lived time into measurable events.

By the time Faber is in the Athens hospital writing the final entries of his *Bericht*, he knows what his stomach has been trying to tell him: "Morgen werden sie mich aufmachen, um festzustellen, was sie schon wissen, daß nichts mehr zu retten ist" (Frisch, 198). The phrasing is still technical: *aufmachen, feststellen, retten,* but what it registers is total helplessness. The repair cannot be made. The body has exceeded the reach of the instrument. And then: "Das sagt man so: Wenn ich wüßte, daß ich Magenkrebs habe, dann würde ich mir eine Kugel in den Kopf schießen!

Ich hänge an diesem Leben wie noch nie, und wenn es nur noch ein Jahr ist, ein elendes, ein Vierteljahr, zwei Monate (das wären September und Oktober), ich werde hoffen, obschon ich weiß, daß ich verloren bin" (198). The sentence performs its own undoing. He quotes himself as a man who would rather die than suffer, and immediately confesses that the statement is false. He clings to life. He hopes "obschon er weiß."

Kiernan reads this moment as Faber's achievement of *vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*: "Walter Faber erreicht mit dieser 'vorlaufenden Entschlossenheit''die einzige Ganzheit, die der menschlichen Existenz möglich ist: Angst, Tod, Schuld und Freude am Leben kommen in diesem Phänomen zusammen" (Kiernan, 166). The man who wanted to be a robot is now constituted entirely by *Angst* and *Hoffnung*. At 4:00 Uhr, the language changes entirely:

> Verfügung für Todesfall: alle Zeugnisse von mir wie Bericht, Briefe, Ringhefte, sollen vernichtet werden, es stimmt nichts. Auf der Welt sein: im Licht sein [...] standhalten dem Licht, der Freude (wie unser Kind, als es sang) im Wissen, daß ich erlösche im Licht über Ginster, Asphalt und Meer, standhalten der Zeit, beziehungsweise Ewigkeit im Augenblick. Ewig sein: gewesen sein (Frisch, 199).

Kiernan reads this as follows: "Mit diesem 'es stimmt nichts' zieht Faber einen Schlußstrich unter seine Lebensrechnung [...] An die Stelle des 'ego cogito' setzt er sein Manifest über das eigentliche In-der-Welt-sein" (Kiernan, 167). And "Ewig sein: gewesen sein" carries the Heideggerian sense of *Gewesenheit*: the eternal is not future persistence but the inalienable having-been of a Dasein that has taken its existence fully upon itself (169).

He wants his own Bericht destroyed because "es stimmt nichts", none of it is true. The phrase brackets the whole chapter. Faber's repudiation turns on *stimmen*, a verb that means both to be correct and to be in tune, and whose noun, *Stimmung*, named the attunement whose failure

opened the *Bericht* in the vibrating aircraft (section 5). To say 'es stimmt nichts' is at once to say that the account does not add up and that nothing is any longer in tune; that the calculative accuracy Faber demanded of the world and the affective attunement he refused in his relation to it have, at the last, changed places. The report that began in a mood he could not explain ends by declaring that nothing is in tune, and the technician's final word is thus, despite itself, a word about *Stimmung*. This is the point at which Faber's collapse can be given its precise philosophical name. In *Sein und Zeit* (§29), Heidegger establishes *Befindlichkeit*, disposedness, as a fundamental existential: *Dasein* is always already attuned, and *Stimmung* is not a private coloring added to a neutral perception of the world but a primordial mode of disclosure, one that "discloses Dasein in its thrownness" prior to and more deeply than any cognition (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* 134). Mood, on this account, reveals what calculation cannot reach, and it cannot be mastered or switched off at will; it can only be refused. Faber's whole existence is the attempt at enacting exactly this refusal: to replace attunement with *feststellen*, to let *stimmen* mean only accuracy and never resonance. The *Bericht* is the instrument of that refusal. What "es stimmt nichts" registers is therefore not a new piece of information but the return of the disclosure his method was built to suppress, *Stimmung* reasserting itself as the more original truth at the moment calculation has nothing left to count. The opening vibration he could not explain and the closing declaration that nothing is in tune are the same *Befindlichkeit,* disowned at the start and, too late, avowed at the end.

The man who built his existence on the report-form is repudiating it at the moment before his death. And what arrives in its place "Auf der Welt sein: im Licht sein," "Ewig sein: gewesen sein", is the language of someone who has finally arrived at temporality as form rather than addition, at what Hanna meant when she said "Leben sei Gestalt in der Zeit." As Paul Ricoeur

argues, narrative is the mode through which human beings integrate time, contingency, and mortality into a livable form (Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, vol. 1, 52). The Bericht is Faber's attempt, The *Bericht* is Faber's attempt, however belated, to give narrative form to the life he has lived.. Frisch himself named this failure in terms that align exactly with the reading pursued here. Asked to characterise Faber, he described him not as a technician but as "ein verhinderter Mensch, der von sich selbst ein Bildnis gemacht hat … das ihn verhindert, zu sich selbst zu kommen," a man who measures himself by his Tüchtigkeit and whose reckoning is "ein versäumtes Leben" (Frisch, in Müller-Salget, 130). Meike Wiehl reads the whole novel under these headings, Rollendasein and verhindertes Erleben: the self-imposed role and its Bildnis do not merely accompany Faber's existence but actively obstruct his capacity to experience it (Wiehl, 44). What Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* describes structurally, the foreclosure of the attunement through which a world can be undergone, Frisch states biographically as a life missed and Wiehl names as thwarted Erleben. On this reading the final entries record precisely what the technical role had prevented: as Schmitz observes, Faber would have had to justify himself "nicht als Techniker, sondern als Geschöpf," and it is only in accepting his mortality that he accepts the reality he had refused (Schmitz, in Wiehl, 64). The "es stimmt nichts" is Faber's own, belated registration of that versäumtes Leben: the reckoning has come due, and it does not add up. That he writes it in the mode of a report, even while acknowledging that reports are lies, is the novel's final irony: the technological subject cannot shed his form even when repudiating it. The dash at the end "Hanna hat nicht ahnen können, daß Sabeth auf dieser Reise gerade ihrem Vater begegnet, der alles zerstört –" (199), is where the Bericht runs out. The sentence that would name what he has done cannot be completed.

Two details of the Second Station belong here, and both concern the withdrawal of the instruments by which Faber had held the world at a distance. In the Athens hospital his typewriter is taken from him and locked in a white cupboard because it is the hour of rest; he must write by hand, and he records that he cannot bear handwriting. The detail rhymes exactly with Palenque, where he had been too listless even to film. Both instruments of exteriorized memory are withdrawn at precisely the moments when experience finally arrives, the camera when the body breaks down, the typewriter when the *Bericht* turns into a reckoning. In Stiegler's terms, the *hypomnesic* prosthesis fails exactly where anamnesis begins; the technical support of memory is removed at the threshold of remembering.

The second detail confirms, from an unexpected angle, the argument of section 5: that Faber's world discloses itself not through propositions but through attunement, in an atmosphere he can neither calculate nor refuse. Twice the disclosure is timed to the same hour. The moment at which Faber starts from sleep on the beach at Theodohori and the moment at which Hanna knocks at his hospital door into a *Totenstille* both fall at noon, in antiquity the hour of Pan, the hour of divine epiphany, when shepherds resting in the open lay exposed to the god (Leber, 159). Whatever weight one assigns to the mythological allusion, the phenomenological point is independent of it and stands on its own: the world reaches Faber at the hour when, on the account he has spent two hundred pages defending, nothing whatever should be happening.

10. From Mechanical to Computational Technology

A final observation about the specific character of the technology that organizes Faber's world is necessary before turning to Herbert W. Franke's *Ypsilon Minus*. The machines that structure Faber's existence, turbines, airplanes, Landrover, Citroën, film camera, typewriter, razor, are

mechanical and analogue. They are instruments that extend human capacities but remain dependent on human use, human decision, and human presence. The technology of *Homo Faber* is a technology of mobility and productive extension, not yet a technology of total surveillance and behavioral modification.

This distinction matters for what Heidegger's analysis of *Gestell* implies at different technological registers. The enframing that organizes Faber's world operates through a subject who must still actively maintain his technological worldview against the claims of what he cannot calculate. This is why the desert, Guatemala, and Greece can reach him, imperfectly, incompletely, but enough to produce the vertigo registered in the *Bericht*. Stiegler's argument in *Technics and Time* that "the *what* invents the *who* just as much as it is invented by it" (177), that technical systems do not merely extend human capacities but constitute the very structure of human memory, anticipation, and individuation, illuminates precisely what is at stake in the transition from Faber's world to Franke's. In Faber's mechanical world, the process of *epiphylogenesis*; the accumulation and sedimentation of experience through technical objects (140), still leaves gaps: the desert, the jungle, the Greek sunrise are moments where the technical organization of experience breaks down and something else enters. The *Bericht* itself is such a gap: a technical form that the experience it was meant to contain has exceeded. In Franke's computational world, these gaps have been closed by design. What Faber could still do: write, remember, is precisely what the total technical constitution of the subject forecloses.

In *Homo Faber*, the technologically conditioned subject still has moments of breakdown, detour, encounter, and unwilled emotion in which mythic and affective experience can force its way through the defenses of instrumental reason. The desert, the jungle, the ship, the sleeping Erinnye, Greece: all these are breakdowns of the technological schedule that allow something else

to enter. Faber's *Bericht* itself is one such moment: a form that promises technical documentation and delivers, despite itself, something close to confession. What Shoshana Zuboff calls "instrumentarianism" is already latent in the technological worldview that Frisch anatomizes through Faber. Franke's *Ypsilon Minus* projects it forward to its logical conclusion: a society in which the Oedipus structure could not unfold because the conditions for tragic self-ignorance have been converted into data, and data does not dream.

Leber's account permits this thesis to be stated with more precision than Faber's own vocabulary allows. In "Die Frage nach der Technik" Heidegger insists that there is no demonism of technology, but that there is the mystery of its essence. The secret of that essence, as *Homo Faber* discloses it, is that modern technology stands toward the technician in exactly the relation the divine daimon bears toward the hero of tragedy. It seduces him into the false consciousness of hybris in order to plunge him from that consciousness into an annihilating insight. Faber lets the Super-Constellation rock him in the dream of a world that functions according to his own conception, and it is from the same Super-Constellation that he is one day cast out of the clouds and thrown back upon the elementary bonds of his existence. The aircraft that carried him above the earth is what finally teaches him to see it.

What happens to myth under the conditions of the *Ge-stell* can be stated as a law before it is illustrated, and the law is Barthes's. Myth, he argues, is "always a language-robbery" (Barthes, *Mythologies*, 131): it does not invent its material but steals an existing sign and empties it, so that in the passage from "history to nature" things "lose the memory that they once were made" (Barthes, *Mythologies*, 142). This is the semiological form of what section 6 called *Umbesetzung*: the position once held by myth is not vacated by technical modernity but reoccupied, and the theft is imperfect, the stolen name still carries the memory it was meant to erase.

The novel supplies the instances, and here Leber's observation deserves to stand at the centre: the names that once designated the divine powers have migrated onto technical objects. Faber's world contains a Maxwell demon, an Opel Olympia, and a Hermes-Baby (Leber, 160). The gods have not been abolished; they have become brand names. Read through Barthes, the inventory is not a curiosity but the language-robbery caught in the act. Hermes is drained of his history and fixed to a typewriter, refunctioned as a mark of the calculable and the purchasable; yet Hermes remains the god of writing and the guide of souls even when he has become a portable machine, so that the vocabulary meant to certify myth's obsolescence turns out to be where myth survives.

The Hermes-Baby is the decisive instance, and it draws the chapter to its point. The name belongs to a portable typewriter manufactured by a Swiss firm; it is a device of modern technology, and it is the device through which a man who prizes above all a wordless existence is brought, against his will, to language. Hermes is the god of travellers and of writing, and he is also the *psychopompós*, the guide of souls to the underworld. Stiegler's *hypomnesic* prosthesis, the technical support of memory without which no *Bericht* could exist, here bears the name of the god who conducts the dead: Faber's technics of memory does not preserve him from his fate but writes it, carries him toward it, and is confiscated at the door of the room where he will die. That the instrument turns its user from super-technician into tragic poet, as Leber puts it, is the same reversal the whole chapter has traced, now compressed into a brand name.

The analysis of *Homo Faber* has traced the arc from the suppression of myth through its catastrophic return to the belated, incomplete recognition that arrives too late to save anything. The novel's argument: that technological rationality is not the absence of mythic consciousness but its modern, self-concealing continuation depends on the existence of gaps: moments where the

Gestell fails to cover its subject completely, where the desert moon exceeds its geological classification, where the sleeping Erinnye asks what she dreams, where the *Bericht* runs out mid-sentence. Herbert W. Franke's *Ypsilon Minus* (1976) asks what this arc looks like when its middle term, the return, the breakdown, the moment where something else enters, has been systematically foreclosed. Where Frisch's novel depends on the gaps in technological coverage for its tragedy, Franke's novel will depend on their elimination. The following chapter reads *Ypsilon Minus* as the logical extension of the philosophical problematic *Homo Faber* opens, not its negation but its completion.

Chapter 3: *Ypsilon Minus* and the Computational *Ge-stell*

1. *Ypsilon Minus* and the Machine That Governs

Ypsilon Minus opens with an act of narration that abolishes the very thing a novel is normally built to record: the singular day. “Dieser Tag unterschied sich durch nichts von tausend anderen Tagen” (Franke, 7). Before a character has acted, before an event has occurred, the narration has already announced that nothing here will distinguish itself from anything else, that difference itself, the minimal condition of a story, has been administered out of existence. What follows is not a plot in the ordinary sense but the daily routine of Ben Erman, a researcher in the *Computerzentrale* of a society that calls itself the *Freie Gesellschaft* and that governs its population not through terror but through the continuous processing of their data. The novel’s world is an *Ordnungsstaat*: a state whose principle of order is embodied by a central computer that has classified every citizen into the acceptable and the rejected. *Ypsilon Minus* is not only the title of Franke’s novel but also the most undesirable category within this information-driven system.

This is the world the present chapter reads, and the reading it offers is that *Ypsilon Minus* stages the completion of a process the previous chapters could only trace in its incompleteness: the closing of the gaps through which, in the mechanical-technological order, the mythic, the affective, and the uncorrelatable could still return. Where the mechanical *Ge-stell* required a subject who had to maintain his technological relation to a world that resisted him, the computational *Ge-stell* of the *Ordnungsstaat* has become a self-running program, an anonymous system of government that administers the very interiority from which resistance might once have come. The novel’s own documents state the ambition without embarrassment: the computer “übernimmt die Funktion früherer menschlicher Regierungen […] Er ist das vollkommene Regierungsinstrument — selbstlos, rastlos, unermüdlich — im Dienste des Menschen” (Franke,

127). *Enframing* is no longer a condition a philosopher must disclose from outside; it has become the explicit, self-declared principle of social organization, and it presents itself as care.

The novel gives this administered world a story only at the point where the administration fails. Ben Erman's work is to review the files of others and confirm the computer's algorhythmic sorting of citizens into the various categories. The plot begins when the case that reaches his desk turns out to be his own file. Examining his own record, he discovers that roughly three years of his life have been erased from it, three years that he cannot recall, and overwritten with synthetic data. He sets out, against every regulation the *Ordnungsstaat* imposes, to recover the past the system has removed. That search encompasses the novel's whole movement, and it is also its argument: each step back toward the erased years is a step out of the administered self, so that the recovery of memory and the recovery of a capacity to act become, in Franke, the same event. The reading that follows treats the novel in this order, first the world and the documents that govern it, then the subject those documents produce, and finally the memory whose erasure both constitutes that subject and opens the one breach through which he escapes. Rather than proceeding in the order of the plot, I am presenting the reading structured in this way because what is at stake is less what happens to Ben individually than how a life becomes something a state can write, correct, and store.

The choice of *Ypsilon Minus* over the more canonical dystopias offered in other well-known works of 20th-century science fiction requires an explicit justification, because the argument this chapter makes could not be applied to most of them. The negative utopia has a long tradition that includes Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, and Franke writes knowingly within it. But, as Helga Abret argues, *Ypsilon Minus* belongs only with reservation to the tradition of the closed *Gegenutopie*, and the reservation is the point (Abret,

Negative Utopie, 289). Abret draws on Darko Suvin's distinction between the static, closed utopia and the open one to argue that Franke's world remains one in a state of becoming, where Orwell's has already closed (Abret, *Negative Utopie*, 297). Orwell's own ending supplies the measure of that closure directly: Winston's rebellion does not survive the Ministry of Love, and the novel closes on his capitulation without remainder: "He loved Big Brother" (Orwell, 226). Ben Erman, by contrast, keeps open until the novel's final page the possibility that a written record can still reach outside the system that produced it. The epigraph Abret places over her reading, Camus's "L'avenir est la seule transcendance des hommes sans dieu," names precisely what distinguishes Franke from the tradition: the *Ordnungsstaat* is a closed system that nonetheless leaves open the future it claims to have foreclosed (Abret, *Negative Utopie*, 287). This is the first reason the novel is indispensable rather than merely representative: it lets the chapter test its thesis about the closure of the technological order against a text that stages closure and the minimal remainder that escapes it. A perfectly sealed dystopia would prove nothing, because it would offer no measure of what closure costs; Franke's novel supplies the measure, in what its protagonist's records cannot hold.

The second reason is formal, and it parallels the argument made for *Homo Faber* in the previous chapter. There, the thesis of disavowal could be tested only on a text narrated by the technocratic subject himself, because a disavowal is a structure that cannot be observed from outside; the *Bericht* was the one form that enacted the disavowal in its own prose. Here the situation is inverted but structurally identical. The thesis of computational *enframing*, the claim that the system has closed the gaps by administering interiority itself, can be tested only on a text whose form alternates between the administered subject and the administering system's own voice. *Ypsilon Minus* is that text. It distributes its narrative between Ben Erman's third-person story and a series of embedded state documents: *Grundsatzreferate, Manifeste, Mitteilungen, Richtlinien, a*

Liederbuch, that interrupt it at intervals and speak entirely from within the system, in its own categories and its own voice. As Hans Esselborn observes, it is above all in these "graphisch abgesetzten und in den Roman eingeschobenen Dokumenten" that "die kybernetisch gesteuerte Ordnung als Ziel hervorgehoben wird" (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane,* 143). No single-voiced narration could do this, because the object of analysis is precisely the relation between a life and the system that has written it. *Homo Faber* gave us the technocratic subject narrating himself; *Ypsilon Minus* gives us the system narrating the subject, and the subject trying, from the inside, to read what the system has written of him.

The exisiting scholarship on *Ypsilon Minus* is small in number but centered on a particular feature of the novel that will be central to my analysis. Esselborn, comparing the three principal commentaries on the novel (Helga Abret's essay in Polaris 6, Franz Rottensteiner's afterword to the West German Suhrkamp edition of 1976, and Waltraut Schröder's afterword to the East German Neues Leben edition of 1979), grounds that comparison in a claim that is at once descriptive and methodological: "Der kybernetische Ansatz des Romans erlaubt eine Neutralisierung der ideologischen Positionen des Kalten Kriegs und eine Konzentration auf die Rolle des Computers für Machtausübung und Widerstand" (Esselborn, *Drei Deutungen,* 203). This is the frame within which the present reading operates. The commentaries were written across the Cold War division, and each carries the ideological signature of its origin. Waltraut Schröder's closing verdict is that science fiction of this kind "gehört zu einer demokratischen, antifaschistischen Literatur der Gegenwart" (184), while Franz Rottensteiner reads the novel against any partisan appropriation, so insistently that Esselborn detects in him "eine fragwürdige Tendenz zur Entpolitisierung Frankes" (qtd, in Esselborn, 205). What allows the disagreement to be set aside is exactly what Esselborn's premise names: the computer displaces the ideological

dispute and refocuses the question on power and resistance as such. It is this refocusing on which my analysis will build, by asking what becomes of the human subject when *Machtausübung* operates through the administration of memory and affect rather than through the ownership of the means of production or the apparatus of the party.

Franke himself supplies the poetological justification. Rottensteiner locates the recurring concern of Franke's fiction in "die Möglichkeiten der Kybernetik vor allem hinsichtlich der Beeinflussung und Manipulation des Menschen, der Missbrauch der Information zur Ausübung von Herrschaft, die Erzeugung synthetischer 'Wirklichkeiten' mittels Computern oder Psychodrogen, die Überwachung und Kontrolle der Einstellung der Staatsbürger mittels neuer Kommunikationstechniken" (Rottensteiner, 173), and cites Franke's own 1972 essay "Literatur der technischen Welt," where the author predicts a future shaped not by physical and chemical technology but by "biotechnischen, psychotechnischen und soziotechnischen Prozessen" and by "Verbindungen mit Datenbanken und Computernetzen" (Franke, *Literatur der technischen Welt,* 106). The novel is therefore not an isolated dystopian fantasy but the fictional working-out of a program its author had already articulated discursively: science fiction as the *Literatur der technischen Welt*, charged with waking a *Problembewusstsein* about developments that are about to overtake us. This is the narrative structure the chapter needs, the reason to concentrate on this text, and it is Franke's own.

2. The Genesis of the *Ordnungsstaat*

A dystopia not only presents a state of affairs but also requires a history, and to analyze the *Ordnungsstaat* only as a finished condition would be to reproduce the very timelessness its opening sentence appears to impose. The novel's own account of its origins is given not

continuously but in fragments, episodes of the past that surface through Ben's investigation, and reconstructing them is the first task of a reading that asks, as it must, how this form of society came about. Helga Abret assembles those fragments into a genesis (*Negative Utopie*, 290). The *Freie Gesellschaft* did not descend from a party seizing power in the manner of Orwell's *Ingsoc*, the ruling ideology of Oceania in *1984*. What the fragments suggest, read together, is a police state already without face or ideology, one that consolidated its rule not by proclaiming a doctrine but by computerizing the whole of social and public life (*Negative Utopie*, 290). Popular protest, including an ineffectual machine-breaking, was suppressed; so too was the more deliberate attempt of a group of specialists, Ben among them, to paralyze the system a reasoned, targeted sabotage, an attempt undone once the conspiracy was discovered. Released rather than executed, the conspirators concluded that half measures had failed and resolved to strike the system at its root. The revolt against the machine is thus the occasion of the machine's completion, and the state the novel depicts is not the antagonist of the sabotage but its outcome.

The novel presents that decisive act not as a reconstruction but as an event. Ben's cell: Hardy, François, Jonathan, Barbara, targets the central *Rechenwerk* itself, the system's "Gehirn," to which, Ben reflects the night before the attack, "so gut wie sämtliche Maschinen des Landes" are joined, "von den Kraftwerken bis zum letzten Telefon" (Franke, 96). What severing that connection might mean he cannot say, he thinks of the reactors, the weapons plants, the refineries, and concedes only, "Er musste sich die Antwort schuldig bleiben. Doch es gab keinen Schritt zurück" (Franke, 96). He enters the code from his own desk and leaves the building. Twenty-five minutes later the traffic lights fail; two minutes after that, "leuchtete ein Lichtblitz auf — heller als tausend Sonnen" (Franke, 97), and a mushroom cloud rises over what the text names, without further comment, *das Reaktorversuchsgelände*. What follows is not a machine falling silent but a

citywide catastrophe of collapsing walls and falling debris (97). The act meant to interrupt the *Ordnungsstaat*'s consolidation supplies instead its founding catastrophe: the state does not invent the emergency that legitimates it so much as inherit and administer one that Ben's own sabotage produced, and that he himself, the night before, could not rule out.

The novel presents that decisive act not as a reconstruction but as an event. Ben enters the sabotage code from his own desk and leaves the building; minutes later, the central computer on which every machine in the country depends goes down in a single flash: "Zwei Minuten danach hörten sie einige Explosionen, und dann leuchtete ein Lichtblitz auf — heller als tausend Sonnen" (Franke, 97). The light brighter than a thousand suns belongs to the same catastrophic register the chapter has been tracing, and the act it names is precisely the one Abret's genesis places at the origin of the *Ordnungsstaat*: the blow against the machine that did not halt computerization but accelerated it.

Here the genesis of the state and the wound in the individual turn out to be the same event. Ben belonged to the group of specialists who plotted to paralyze the system, and it was Ben who managed to carry the list of sabotage proposals to safety; this is why he alone knows where the records of the failed uprisings lie hidden, and why, on his search, he is unknowingly assisted by his own superiors (Abret, *Negative Utopie*, 289–90). That identity between the state's origin and the individual's wound is the decisive connection the chapter will develop in its later sections: the three years erased from Ben's record, the homogeneity too smooth to have been lived, are in all likelihood the years of his own participation in the defeated resistance. The *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* did not merely clean up an anonymous file; it cut from a man the memory of the one period in which he acted against the order that now employs him to evaluate others. The origin of the *Ordnungsstaat*, meaning the defeat of the sabotage and the consolidation of

computational rule, is inscribed as an absence in the record and in the body of its protagonist. The state's history and Ben's amnesia are two names for a single operation.

The authoritarianism of the Ordnungsstaat is not, however, only a political inheritance; it has a material substrate that the science fiction of the 1970s was uniquely positioned to register, and that criticism has rightly foregrounded. By the middle of the decade, the Club of Rome's 1972 report, *The Limits to Growth*, had made the exhaustion of resources and the collapse of the conditions of life the common horizon of the genre. Waltraut Schröder locates Franke's project within a body of writing whose intentions bear on "den widersprüchlichen Fortschritt, auf die ebenso gravierenden wie verheerenden Folgen, welche jede nicht auf ökologische und soziologische Notwendigkeiten Rücksicht nehmende Industrialisierung für das Verhältnis von Individuum und Gesellschaft, Mensch und Natur erzeugte" (Schröder, 174). Franke gives that horizon its concrete texture on the novel's opening pages, in the mundane fixtures of Ben's day. Breakfast is synthetic milk and algae bread so hard that Ben tosses his portion, uneaten, into the garbage chute; the ordinary equipment for stepping outside is the breathing filter, dispensable inside the cabin, indispensable in the street. The city sits under a sea of smog that hides even the sea, and the small compensations distributed to the citizens are pharmacological, fitness beer and pharmaceutical drops metered by the point system. This is not scenery: it is a civilization that has organized itself around scarcity, and administered adaptation to it. The novel supplies the corresponding biopolitical program in one of its own state documents. The "Richtlinien zur Persönlichkeitsveränderung," the guidelines for personality modification, opens with the sentence that names the population as such: "Das uns aus archaischen Zeiten überantwortete Menschenmaterial ist in vieler Hinsicht fehlerhaft und der Funktion des perfekten Staatswesens noch nicht völlig adaptiert" (Franke, 45). A parallel document sets that program's telos: the

biological-anthropological problems must be definitively solved before the changeover to full computerization can proceed (Franke, 194). The Ordnungsstaat is thus the political form a civilization takes when it organizes itself around scarcity and the administration of a degenerating population, when the management of shrinking resources and defective "Menschenmaterial" becomes the state's reason for being.

Technology works in Franke both as the response of an authoritarian order and as the answer to an ecological catastrophe, and the two are not separable. The surveillance apparatus that classifies citizens into all the categories that distinguishes individuals within this society, including *Ypsilon minus*, is justified, in the system's own documents, as *Versorgung und Betreuung*: as the care a besieged civilization must exercise over a population it can no longer afford to leave to contingency. The ecological emergency provides the perfect setting under which total administration presents itself not as domination but as survival. Franke's near-contemporary *Zone Null* (1970) makes this issue literal: a society discovered "inmitten atomar verwüsteter Erde" (Schröder, 179), and *Ypsilon Minus* internalizes it: the catastrophe is no longer the scenery but the unstated premise that legitimizes the state.

The anxieties the novel stages are not, however, free invention; they answer to identifiable developments of the moment of its writing. The cybernetic theory of Norbert Wiener, which had appeared in German in 1952 as *Mensch und Menschmaschine*, had by the late 1960s moved beyond its origins in engineering and control theory into the social and political sciences, most directly in Karl Deutsch's *The Nerves of Government* (1963), which recast the state itself as an apparatus that governs by processing information. The legal record registers the same anxiety: the state of Hesse passed the world's first data-protection law, the *Hessisches Datenschutzgesetz*, in 1970, and the federal *Bundesdatenschutzgesetz* followed in 1977, one year after the novel's publication. *Ypsilon*

Minus is thus the fictional completion of a real tendency, and the fact that it appeared in 1976, at the precise moment when European democracies were beginning to legislate against the administrative possibilities Franke was imagining, is not incidental to its significance.

What distinguishes the *Ordnungsstaat* from its dystopian predecessors is therefore not the degree of its control but its mode. Esselborn identifies three innovations that separate Franke from the classical negative utopia: the persistence of a real possibility of liberation; the depiction of the administered welfare state, rather than raw terror, as the alternative to dictatorship; and the computer as the concrete instrument of manipulation (Esselborn*, Frankes Romane,* 143). The middle innovation is the decisive one for this chapter. Orwell's Oceania and Zamyatin's One State rule through fear, spectacle, and the visible structure of a party; Franke's state rules through *Betreuung,* through the promise of security, relief from contingency, and a happiness it manufactures and distributes. It does not need to break its subjects in order to force them to love it. It engineers, programs, and administers the love in advance.

This shift has a precise theoretical name. What Franke stages is the passage Deleuze would later describe as the movement from the disciplinary society to the society of control. The disciplinary order Foucault mapped operated through enclosures, the school, the barracks, the factory, the prison, each a bounded space in which the individual was molded; the society of control operates instead through continuous modulation. Deleuze's formula is exact: "Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation" (Deleuze, 4), a cast that never sets because it reshapes itself from one moment to the next. Its medium is no longer the wall but the code: in the society of control "the code is a password" (Deleuze, 5), and its "numerical language… is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it" (Deleuze, 5). Its characteristic figure is correspondingly no longer the individual confined within an institution but what Deleuze calls

the "dividual," the person resolved into data, into a profile continuously scored, adjusted, and recomposed. The *Ordnungsstaat* is a society of control in exactly this sense, with the difference that Franke gives the control-form a statist rather than a corporate body: its power is not the wall but the code, not the confinement of the body but the perpetual scoring of what the novel calls the *Summe eines Lebens*, the whole of a life reduced to a single terminal verdict (Franke, 12). Where the disciplinary *Ge-stell* of Faber's world still had walls, and therefore edges at which it could break down, the modulating *Ge-stell* of the Ordnungsstaat has replaced the wall with the profile, which has no edge.

This mode of domination completes what Horkheimer and Adorno diagnosed as the endpoint of the Enlightenment: the *verwaltete Welt* in which the promise of liberation has become the most refined instrument of its opposite. Their thesis was that the mastery of external nature does not stop at the boundary of the subject, that self-preservation, organized through the bourgeois division of labor, increasingly requires the individual's self-alienation, the forming of body and soul "nach der technischen Apparatur" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 30). The *Ordnungsstaat* is the institutional realization of that thesis, but with a twist that Herbert Marcuse supplies: a total administration that secures itself by satisfying the needs it has itself produced, so that "domination, in the guise of affluence and liberty, extends to all spheres of private and public existence, integrates all authentic opposition, absorbs all alternatives" (Marcuse, 20). At this point, Marcuse writes, "technological rationality reveals its political character as it becomes the great vehicle of better domination" (20): technological rationality and political rationality have become one. The *Freie Gesellschaft* is free in exactly this Marcusean sense: it has closed the political universe so completely that the freedom it names and the administration it performs have become the same. What remains to be shown, which will be the work of the sections that follow, is how this closure

is executed at the level of the document, the profile, and the erased years, and what, if anything, may elude it.

3. The Computational *Ge-stell*: Language, Memory, and the Pharmakon

Before the concept can be turned on Franke's *Ordnungsstaat*, the sense in which *enframing* is at work here must be made precise, since the computational *Ge-stell* is not simply the mechanical one intensified. Chapter 1 established the essence of modern technology, in Heidegger's account, as das *Ge-stell*: a mode of revealing (*Entbergen*) that discloses beings as *Bestand*, standing-reserve, available for ordering and interchangeable without remainder. What must be recalled here is the pre-history of that concept in *Sein und Zeit*, because it is exactly this that the computational threshold transforms. As Hubert Dreyfus argues, the analysis of equipment in *Sein und Zeit* "is neither pre-technological nor fully technological," but occupies "a transitional role in the history of the being of equipment" (Dreyfus, *Between Technē and Technology,* 25): read one way it resists the technological understanding of being, since it refuses to build the world out of value-free objects; read another way it prepares that understanding, since it already grasps entities through their functional assignment and so anticipates the reduction of the world to a system of interlocking usefulness that the later thought names *Bestand* (Dreyfus, Between Technē, 25–26). The decisive point is the one that follows for enframing: it is only when the ready-to-hand fails, when the tool becomes *auffällig*, obtrusive, that the referential whole it had silently sustained comes into view (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §16).

This distinction is what shapes both novels, each in its own way. Mechanical *enframing* has breakdowns: the vibrating aircraft, the dead razor, the missing power socket in the desert are moments of *Auffälligkeit* in which the technological world momentarily shows itself as a world.

The technological world of *Ypsilon Minus* resides in a technological order engineered precisely so that it cannot break down in this way, an *enframing* without *Auffälligkeit,* a standing-reserve that has closed the gaps through which, in Faber's world, disclosure could still occur. What makes that closure possible is not any more powerful machinery. It is a change in the medium of *enframing* itself: from mechanism to computation, and therefore from force to information.

The *Ordnungsstaat* rests on a single ontological proposition, and the narrative does not report it so much as exhibit it: the claim is made by the state itself, in one of the *Staatsdokumente* that Franke sets off typographically from Ben's story and interpolates at intervals throughout it, speaking not in Ben's voice but in the system's own. This one is a *Grundsatzreferat zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, and it grounds the regime's program of historical planning in what it names "das informationspositivistische Prinzip der Realität": "Die Wirklichkeit ist die Summe aller korrelierbaren Informationen" (Franke, 14). The *Referat* draws the practical consequence in the same breath. Because a reality composed of correlatable information can in principle be recomputed, the document attaches to its *Institut für historische Planung* an *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur*, charged with refixing the historical record so that no dark point survives to trouble the citizens' psyche, on the stated maxim that "Der vollkommene Staat braucht auch eine vollkommene Geschichte" (Franke, 15). Reality, so declared, is the sum of all correlatable information, and what cannot be correlated is not merely unknown but unreal.

To measure the depth of this claim we need to set it against Heidegger's most concentrated statement about the medium in which beings come to presence at all, and against the image the novel opposes to it. In the *Brief über den Humanismus*, Heidegger writes that "Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins" (Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus*, GA 9, 313). Language is not one instrument of communication among others but the dwelling in which Being discloses itself and

in which the human, as its "shepherd" (*Hirt des Seins*), resides (331). To speak, on this account, is not to encode and transmit but to let beings stand in the openness where they can appear as what they are. It is exactly this figure of dwelling that *Ypsilon Minus* negates, and it negates it in the same register, as a matter of space. The subject of the *Ordnungsstaat* does not dwell; he is stored. Ben's entire private world is a *Koje* in a *Schlafsaal*, "vier Quadratmeter, und sie gehörten ihm allein" (Franke, 21), reached by a ladder and closed off only by a curtain whose edge he must check for the gap that would allow a view into his cell. Its single fixture is a loudspeaker, the connection to the public broadcast. Where Being was to have a house, the citizen has a berth, and the one voice that reaches it is that of the system.[15] The *Haus des Seins* has become a cell wired for information, and this is the spatial figure of the ontological claim the *Ordnungsstaat*'s first document makes: once reality is "die Summe aller korrelierbaren Informationen" (Franke, 14), language ceases to be a dwelling in which beings appear and instead becomes a channel through which a stored subject is addressed.

The *Ordnungsstaat* replaces this house with a database, and the substitution is exact rather than metaphorical. Where language houses Being by holding open a world in which things may show themselves in more than one way, *korrelierbare Information enframes* Being by admitting only what can be resolved into correlatable units. The two are not variants of one activity. They are opposed modes of disclosure: the first lets appear, the second makes available. Ernst Cassirer's conception, described in Chapter 1, elucidates this idea more clearly. If the human never meets

[15] The point can be reinforced with reference to a second Heidegger text involving living spaces: the house of "Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins" is a figure for language, whereas *Bauen Wohnen Denken* concerns dwelling in the literal sense. There Heidegger insists that "Indessen sind nicht alle Bauten auch Wohnungen" (Heidegger, *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, GA 7, 147), and, more sharply, that even a *Wohnung* is not yet a *Wohnen*: "Die eigentliche Not des Wohnens beruht darin, daß die Sterblichen das Wesen des Wohnens immer erst wieder suchen, daß sie das Wohnen erst lernen müssen" (GA 7, 163). Ben's *Koje* is precisely a *Wohnung* without *Wohnen*. The fact that he tries to mark it as his own, with a colored blanket and the stickers that set his berth apart from "dem einheitlichen Grau der anderen" (Franke, 20), only measures the distance: what the *Ordnungsstaat* distributes is *Unterkunft*, and the *Heimatlosigkeit* Heidegger names is here not the absence of shelter but its functional optimization.

reality directly but always through symbolic forms such as language, myth, art, science, each a road by which spirit proceeds toward its objectivization (Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* 1: 78), then data is a symbolic form that has forgotten it is one. It presents its coding of the world not as one form of disclosure among others but as reality itself, as transparent description, precisely the self-concealment that Chapter 1 identified as the signature of technological rationality: a mode of revealing that has naturalized itself to the point of invisibility.

Two consequences organize the reading that follows. First, the *Ordnungsstaat*'s violence is done at the level of the speakable: that which does not have any correlatable form has no reality, and so the administration of the population is, at bottom, the administration of a language, the reduction of every appearing to the single grammar of the correlatable. Second, whatever cannot be entered into that grammar becomes, by definition, non-existent to the system even as its existence continues to manifest itself in the one register left to it: the body. This is why the decisive rupture point in the novel is not an idea, a memory, or a desire, but a scar, a mark that aches without having been authorized to do so, and that the section on the data profile below reads as the return of precisely what the correlatable cannot house.

If the *Ordnungsstaat* administers reality by reducing it to correlatable information, its most destructive administration is not that of space but of time, impacting memory, the record in which a life is stored and from which a self is read. In the *Ordnungsstaat*, memory is not a faculty but an infrastructure, and the novel takes this literally from a model its own author had already endorsed. In his 1974 essay "Kybernetische Aspekte der Literatur," Franke adopts Helmar Frank's 1962 figures and depicts human recollection as a complete storage capacity, rating consciousness at 160 bit, short-term memory at one to two thousand, and long-term memory at 10^5 to 10^8 bit (Franke, *Kybernetische Aspekte,* 100, Tab. 1). The table does not merely quantify memory; it renames it.

Each faculty appears in its own parentheses as a storage device: *Bewußtsein* as *Reflexionsspeicher*, *Kurzgedächtnis* as *Kurzspeicher*, *Langgedächtnis* as *Langspeicher*. Recollection has become storage measured in bits.

The consequence turns on a distinction the model itself erases. A *Langspeicher* is not a memory in the sense of a living recollection, an anamnesis in which a past is taken up again by the one who lived it. It is a record: an external, technical file that can be written, read, and, decisively, overwritten. This is the ambivalence Stiegler names hypomnesis, following Derrida's reading of the Phaedrus: externalized memory is a pharmakon, at once the support without which no continuous self could persist and the poison by which that self can be dispossessed of its own past (Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy,* 97). Recollection resists administration because it belongs to the one who remembers; storage invites administration, because a record belongs to whoever controls the archive. What the *Ordnungsstaat* does to Ben Erman invites us to take its author's model at its word and place that *Langspeicher* under external administration. The *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* has no need of persuasion. It edits the storage medium directly, deleting three years and overwriting them with synthetic data. Memory reduced to correlatable information is memory that can be corrected, and the erased years are proof that in the *Ordnungsstaat* a self is only as secure as the archive that contains it. Whether the archive, and hence the person, have been corrected by the same hand, or by two, is a question that section 5 will further elaborate.

Whether erasing a file can erase a past, and not merely destroy a document the person still remembers, is not something the plot alone can settle. It calls for a theory of memory, and Stiegler provides one by adding a third term to Husserl's phenomenology of internal time-consciousness. Husserl distinguishes two kinds of retention: primary retention is the note of a melody that has just sounded and still clings to the note sounding now; secondary retention is recollection proper: an

experience no longer present, drawn back up from what one has actually lived. Stiegler adds a third: tertiary retention is the technical trace, writing, the photograph, the archive, which belongs to no one's lived experience yet conditions what any subject can retain, recollect, or anticipate at all. It is the technical form of the *déjà-là* (Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1*, 207), the past that precedes and outlasts the one who inherits it. Stiegler's decisive step is to reverse the direction of dependence. Tertiary retention is not an external backup added to an inner memory that would otherwise be whole. Memory is always selective, no consciousness holds everything it lives through, and what it selects is already shaped by the technical supports that exist to record and replay. The technical trace therefore conditions primary and secondary retention in advance, rather than merely preserving their results. There is no interiority that precedes exteriorization (Stiegler, *Memory,* 70); tertiary retention is not memory's outside but its condition.

The *Langspeicher* is a tertiary retentional apparatus in exactly this constitutive sense, and this is what the ontology of the *Grundsatzreferat zur Geschichtsphilosophie* and Ben's amnesia share without yet declaring it: the same document that declares reality to be the sum of correlatable information is the one that founds the department that will edit Ben's. If tertiary retention only supplemented a self-sufficient anamnesis, correcting the file would leave the man untouched, since Ben would still, somewhere beneath the record, remember. But because Franke's own cybernetic model collapses memory into *Speicher* without remainder, and because tertiary retention is constitutive rather than supplementary, editing the archive is sufficient, within the novel's own logic, to be indistinguishable from editing the mind. This is why the novel can withhold, until its final pages, a determination of whether the falsified file and the blank recollection share one author or two: neither Ben nor the reader can tell the difference earlier, and for the same reason. In a state

that has industrialized memory into universal storage, there is no secondary retention left uncontaminated by tertiary administration that could serve as a check against the record.

The genealogy runs in two directions, back to the origin of the concept and forward to its industrial present. Back first. In the myth Socrates recounts near the end of the *Phaedrus*, the god Theuth brings his inventions to the king Thamus and claims of writing that it is a discipline that will make the Egyptians wiser and improve their memories, so that memory and instruction alike will have found their pharmakon. The word means remedy and poison at once, and Derrida's reading turns on the fact that Theuth presents it "from a single one, the most reassuring, of its poles" (Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy,* 97): as a beneficent drug, with the other sense held out of view. Thamus refuses the gift, and the refusal restores what Theuth suppressed. Judging the invention by the harm as much as the usefulness it will carry, the king finds that Theuth "has passed a poison off as a remedy" (Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy,* 98). Writing will not strengthen living memory but hollow it out, offering not memory but mere reminders, not wisdom but its semblance. What the king sees and the god conceals is that the written mark is external and alien to the one it serves, a support so independent of its author that it will "represent him even if he forgets them," transmitting his word, Derrida writes, even after he is dead (Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy* 104). The trace is not alive; it neither grows nor answers, and for that very reason it can be separated from, and turned against, the memory it was meant to aid.

The decisive move, which Stiegler takes from this scene and which the present reading requires, is that these two poles cannot finally be taken apart. There is no pure inner memory, prior to its external supports, that writing then corrupts from outside. As Stiegler puts it, "there is no interiority that precedes exteriorization" (Stiegler, *Memory,* 70); the interior is instead configured in the very course of its exteriorization. Human memory is technical from the start, hypomnesic

before it is anything else, and Stiegler finds the lesson already in the *Meno*: the geometrical figure the slave boy traces in the sand can "conserve the characteristics of the figure more durably than can the mind" of the boy himself, whose recollection, "retentionally finite," is forever passing away and erasing itself (Stiegler, *Memory,* 74). The exterior support does not corrupt a memory that would otherwise be whole; it holds what living recollection cannot. The *Phaedrus* therefore does not oppose a natural memory to an artificial one. It stages, at the threshold of philosophy, the permanent condition of a memory that has always been technical, always pharmacological, always remedy and poison together. Anamnesis, living recollection, is never available in a pure state to be protected; it is always already entangled with the supports that make it possible and that expose it.

What Stiegler adds to Derrida is that this permanent condition has a history, and that its most recent stage transforms the stakes. His distinction is between a mnemotechnique, an external support that remains subordinate to the individual who uses it, and a mnemotechnology, a large-scale system that orders memory by its own logics and thereby displaces the remembering subject. The same alphabet that once served personal recollection becomes, industrialized, "a full-fledged mnemotechnology, a technology that systematically orders memories" (Stiegler, *Memory,* 67). And the political consequence he draws is exactly the one Franke dramatizes: the industrial displacement of memory converts it into "the object of knowledge-control" and positions memory as the very system on which Deleuze's control societies operate (Stiegler, *Memory,* 67–68). The pharmakon of writing has become the pharmakon of the database, and the poison Thamus foresaw is no longer left to the individual soul. It is administered by an institution.

That institution has a name in the novel: the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur*. Faber's camera, in the previous chapter, was a mnemotechnique. It externalized experience he could not

process, and his recollection was in no way whole: the previous chapter read the *Bericht* as a work of disavowal, structured by the blind spots through which Faber keeps his paternity, his aging body, and his death out of view. But those blind spots are his own, and they are episodic, particular refusals rather than a missing stretch of life; and what they exclude keeps returning, in Sabeth, in the stomach pain he ignores, in the mortality he cannot finally outrun. The tension between hypomnesis and anamnesis stays live in Faber precisely because the disavowed remains there to be disavowed, still pressing on the very account that labors to exclude it. The *Ordnungsstaat* realizes the opposite pole absolutely. When Ben tries to recover the three years erased from his file, he finds not repressed memories struggling upward but "keinerlei Anhaltspunkte für Erinnerungen" (Franke, 29): the *Langspeicher* has been overwritten, and his own recollection returns exactly the same blank. What the record shows in place of those years is a smoothness too even to have been lived, "ein Homogenitätsgrad, der geradezu auffallend hoch war" (Franke, 29). The scar the file omits and the years it erases are two sides of one wound; the body's side of it, the mark that aches without authorization, belongs to the reading of the data profile below and is developed there. What matters here is the record: not a stretch of life the archive has lost, but one it has replaced.

Here the pharmakon completes its passage from remedy to poison, and the completion is exact. Thamus feared that writing would let living recollection decay; the *Ordnungsstaat* does not permit anamnesis to decay but abolishes the conditions under which it could occur at all. The written trace that outlives its author and no longer answers to him becomes, in Franke, the condition of the subject himself. It is Ben who can no longer recognize his own origins: the years in which he became who he is have been expunged from the one record from which, in a society where reality is the sum of all correlatable information, a self can be read. Where Plato located the

danger in the soul's relation to its own recollection, and Faber could still perform that recollection on paper, Franke makes memory an object of administration: correctable on the record, erasable without a trace the record will show, and constitutive, by that very erasability, of the identity it stores.

The scene is thus the *Phaedrus* raised to the power of the state. Thamus could refuse Theuth's gift; Ben cannot refuse the *Geschichtskorrektur*, because he is not the king who judges the *pharmakon* but the writing that has been judged, an external record that no longer answers to its origin, administered by a hand it cannot yet name. And the poison is no longer, as it was for Plato, a matter of the individual soul. It is what Stiegler calls a "biopolitics of memory" (Stiegler, *Memory,* 69), and the novel places the instrument of that biopolitics in plain view: the same electrical stimulation the *Interne Mitteilung zur Frage der Emotionen* prescribes for the control of affect is "auch zur Erzeugung synthetischer Träume sowie zur Gedächtnisaktivierung eingesetzt" (Franke, 33). The apparatus that administers feeling is the apparatus that reaches memory, and it is Ben's memory the *Ordnungsstaat* has reached. The document's deeper irony, that this science of feeling is Franke's own, belongs to the reading of the state's documents in the section that follows.

4. Documents as Forms: The System Narrating the Subject

Ypsilon Minus is formally unlike most dystopian novels of its tradition. Whereas Orwell's *1984* and Zamyatin's *We* present their totalitarian orders through the consciousness of a protagonist who gradually becomes aware of the system's reach, Franke's novel distributes its narrative between two registers that never fully converge: Ben Erman's third-person story, and a series of embedded state documents that interrupt it at regular intervals. These documents (*Grundsatzreferate,*

Manifeste, Mitteilungen, Richtlinien, Liederbücher, Kataloge, administrative notes) do not provide context for Ben's story in any conventional sense. They speak entirely from within the system, in the system's own voice, using the system's own categories and objectives. They are not documents about the *Ordnungsstaat*; they are the *Ordnungsstaat*, thinking aloud.

The organizing claim of this section is that these documents are not context but co-text. Read in the order in which they interrupt Ben's story, they do not describe the state from a distance; they act on the reader exactly as they act on the citizen of Franke's state, and the novel's critique is generated in the gap between what a given document claims and what the adjacent narrative shows. This is the formal inversion the opening section named: *Homo Faber* gave us the technocratic subject narrating himself; *Ypsilon Minus* gives us the system narrating the subject, and the reader is placed, document by document, in the same relation to that narration as Ben.

As Esselborn observes, it is above all in these "graphisch abgesetzten und in den Roman eingeschobenen Dokumenten" that "die kybernetisch gesteuerte Ordnung als Ziel hervorgehoben wird" (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane,* 143). Helga Abret identifies the related formal principle in her stylistic analysis of Franke's prose: "Die Sprache verzichtet auf schmückendes Beiwerk, attributive Adjektive werden weitgehend eliminiert," a stripped syntax that produces critical distance rather than readerly immersion (Abret, *Schreibend die Notwendigkeit*, 23). The same principle governs both registers. Ben's narrative registers "die Armseligkeit und Gleichförmigkeit von Bens Dasein durch eine rudimentäre, auf ein Minimum reduzierte Sprache" (Abret, *Schreibend die Notwendigkeit*, 22); the embedded manifestos, in "ein neutraler unpersönlicher Stil," correspond directly to "der in diesem Programm vollzogenen Entpersönlichung des Menschen" (Abret, *Schreibend die Notwendigkeit*, 22). The manifestos do not merely describe depersonalization; they perform it, grammatically. They arrive without editorial comment, without

a narrative voice that positions them as objects of critique. The system speaks; the reader receives the message. The formal experience of reading the novel enacts the very condition the novel describes.

The sequence begins before Ben has done anything. The first embedded document, the *Grundsatzreferat zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, lands while he is still moving through the routine of an ordinary day, and it establishes the epistemological foundation of everything that follows. Its governing proposition, that reality is the sum of all correlatable information, was examined in the previous section for its ontological force; what concerns the reading here is not the proposition again but the program the document builds around it and the position it occupies as the first of the novel's interpolated voices. The document opens by casting history itself as a field of entropy, of *Zufallsprozesse* that before the *Stunde Null* drove events into uncontrollable channels, and it draws the institutional consequence at once: "In unserem Staat der Einheitlichkeit und der Ordnung müssen entropische Einflüsse aus der Geschichte eliminiert werden" (Franke, 13). Entropy, the disorder that resists correlation, systematization, and prediction, must be eliminated. The vocabulary carries its full technical weight. In information theory, entropy designates the uncoded: the signal too costly in binary distinctions to transmit until a code reduces it to something communicable. This is the sense in which, as the previous chapter argued with Kuhn-Osius, entropy structured Faber's *Bericht*, where lived events stayed uncoded noise until the wrong code proved fatal (Kuhn-Osius, 350–52). The *Ordnungsstaat*'s program is to eliminate at the level of the state what Faber could not master at the level of his life: it drives the informational entropy of history toward zero, admitting only one possible past. The document's closing maxim, quoted above, names exactly this ambition: 'Der vollkommene Staat braucht auch eine vollkommene Geschichte' (Franke, 14).

The placement of the document in the narrative is pointed. The reader obtains the ontology of correctable history, the claim that a perfect state requires a perfect past clean of everything that resists its categories, just before watching that ontology operate on Ben's own file. The *Grundsatzreferat* is the premise; the three years erased from Ben's record, which the following section reads in full, are its demonstration. The document does not comment on Ben's case. It has already determined it in advance. If the *Grundsatzreferat* establishes what the state does to history, the "Manifest des Ausschusses für soziale Sicherheit" extends the same logic from history to the subject, and it does so as Ben moves into the machinery of his own evaluation. The state, according to the manifesto, assumes responsibility for "Versorgung und Betreuung" as the precondition of freedom and happiness: "Maßnahmen dieser Art verlangen auch eine Änderung der menschlichen Funktionen und Einstellungen" (Franke, 22). The administration of life requires the modification of its recipients. Full automation becomes achievable "sobald das biologisch-anthropologische Problem gelöst ist" (Franke, 23). The human being is named, in the document's own terms, as a problem to be solved.

This formulation realizes what Horkheimer and Adorno diagnose as the endpoint of Enlightenment rationality: a *verwaltete Welt* in which the subject is administered rather than emancipated. In the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* they trace how the intention to master external nature does not stop at the boundary of the subject: self-preservation, organized through the rational division of labor, increasingly forces the self-alienation of individuals, who must form themselves, body and soul, "nach der technischen Apparatur" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 30). The Manifest does not threaten Ben; it promises him care. And it is precisely the language of care, of *Betreuung, Versorgung,* freedom, and happiness, that frames, without ever naming it, the administration that

has already edited his record. The document lets the reader hear the promise of care at the exact moment its cost becomes legible in the narrative.

The administration reaches into the most intimate register with the "Interne Mitteilung zur Frage der Emotionen," and here the novel detonates its deepest irony. The memorandum defines emotions, "im Sinne der Kybernetik," as "assoziativ ausgelöste bewußt werdende Signale, die auf die Relevanz einer Situation hinweisen" (Franke, 31), and classifies them, so defined, as "ein Relikt archaischer biologischer Zustände" whose unpredictability renders them "nicht kalkulierbar" and therefore a source of disturbance (Franke, 31). It specifies three methods for bringing them under control: the associative, through the collective recitation of verses in the hours of *Psychotraining*; the pharmacological, through agents added to the water supply; and the neurological, through electrical stimulation of the brain, which also serves "zur Erzeugung synthetischer Träume sowie zur Gedächtnisaktivierung" (Franke, 33). What makes the document more than a dystopian conceit is its origin. Its definition of feeling is Franke's own, the cybernetic model of emotion as an associatively triggered conscious signal that he had published, in a journal of literary studies, in "Kybernetische Aspekte der Literatur" (Franke, Kybernetische Aspekte, 106). The *Mitteilung* keeps that functional definition intact and reassigns only its end: where Franke's signals pointed to the organism's own "lebenswichtige Situationen," the state's now register only "die Relevanz einer Situation" for the power that has assumed "Schutz und Versorgung des Bürgers" (Franke, 31). The definition of feeling is preserved whole and turned against feeling. The functionalist science Franke advanced discursively is the science the *Ordnungsstaat* administers as government, and the novel returns the author's theory of the human to him as a dystopia.

Read against Ben's narrative, the memo names in advance the anomaly the plot will later produce. The state has engineered feeling out of the citizen, and yet an affect it did not calculate survives at the very edge of its own provisions. Ben's contentment with Blondy, the feedback-controlled *Schlafpuppe* issued to him and sanctioned as a reward for service, extend beyond the doll into his disturbing recognition of its features in a living woman, Barbara. That overflow is exactly the affect, "nicht kalkulierbar", that the memo set out to eliminate. Here the memo functions as the system's textual claim about what feeling is, a claim the narrative will falsify from inside. Stiegler's already-there (*déjà-là*) names the structural condition the memo weaponizes: the subject always finds itself preceded by a technical past it did not make (Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1*, 207). The *Ordnungsstaat* converts that contingent inheritance into a deliberately engineered program, so that the constitution of the subject becomes indistinguishable from its administration.

The "Richtlinien zur Persönlichkeitsveränderung" name the human being with a directness the other documents avoid: "archaisches Menschenmaterial — in vieler Hinsicht fehlerhaft" (Franke, 45). The language of material and defect converts the human entirely into standing-reserve, *Bestand* in Heidegger's precise sense: available for modification, optimization, and replacement. The document is written in the tone of technical specification, as if the correction of human defects were an engineering problem of the same order as the correction of machinic ones. This is the *Ge-stell* not as a metaphysical condition to be disclosed from outside but as an institutional method, stated in the state's own hand.

The final two documents supply the myth that makes the apparatus livable. The "Liederbuch des Psychotrainings" does not argue; it is meant to be chanted. Its lines instruct the citizen to sing that "Niemand hat Sorgen / Niemand hat Angst," that "Unser Schicksal ist geplant

/ Unser Leben ist gesichert," and, most starkly, that "unser Glück ist unser Staat" (Franke, 40). They replace the conditions of persuasion with a manufactured affective state in which the question of truth does not arise. Blumenberg's analysis in *Arbeit am Mythos* describes how myth functions not as explanation but as *Bewältigung*, a working-through of existential anxiety that converts what is overwhelming into something habitable by giving it form, name, and emotional texture. The *Liederbuch* performs precisely this function, but as a state production rather than a collective elaboration. What it produces, and how it fills the spaces the system has otherwise left empty, belongs to the section on interiority; in the sequence of documents it marks the point at which the state stops describing itself and begins to require singing. The state itself has no voice; what it commands are the voices of its citizens, and its self-description becomes real only when chanted in their throats, the exact point of the exercise, for a sentence sung in one's own voice is no longer encountered as a claim that could be false, but inhabited as a feeling that simply is.

The sequence closes with the "Grundsatzreferat zu den Entwicklungszielen des Ordnungsstaats," whose final line performs the system's deepest self-understanding in block capitals, as if the declaration were a monument: "DER MENSCH HAT DEN WEG ZURÜCKGEFUNDEN: INS PARADIES" (Franke, 157). The system presents its total administration not as a rupture with the human past but as its fulfillment, not as the endpoint of alienation but as the recovery of what alienation took away. This is the *Ordnungsstaat*'s foundational myth in Blumenberg's sense: an *apotropaion*, a gesture that repels the terror of contingency by replacing it with the comfort of care, a narrative that creates the present arrangement not as merely acceptable but sacred. Its placement at the end matters. It is the state's final word, placed just as Ben's search for his erased years closes in on what the state most needs him not to find.

Taken in sequence, the documents are not the architecture of the *Ordnungsstaat* described from outside but the system narrating the subject from within. Where Faber's myth operated unconsciously, through structures his rational framework could not acknowledge, the *Ordnungsstaat* manufactures and distributes its myth as a state product, replacing the very conditions under which mythic consciousness (its relation to anxiety, to the incalculable, to what lies beyond comprehension) might arise. Faber was destroyed by the mythic forces he suppressed; Ben Erman has been given a replacement myth so complete that he can no longer locate the anxiety it displaces. What the documents cannot reach, and what nonetheless persists in him, is the subject the next section reconstructs from the one register the correlatable could not reach: not the record of a life, which the state has overwritten, but the body that aches outside it.

The documents do not develop. Read in the sequence this section has followed, from the *Grundsatzreferat*'s ontology of correlatable reality through the *Liederbuch*'s chant to the final *Grundsatzreferat*'s paradise, they could in principle be reordered without loss: each states the system's self-understanding, none discovers anything, and nothing in a later document is contingent on what an earlier one revealed. They are achronic in a way the narrative sections are not, and that achronicity is exactly what marks them as ideology rather than narration: a document does not learn, it declares. This asymmetry locates where the novel's actual epistemic work happens, and it is not here. It happens instead in the one register this chapter has not yet examined: italicized, separately numbered, interrupting the documents' declarations with something no document can produce, a fact neither Ben nor the reader knew a page before. It is there, rather than in any *Grundsatzreferat*, that the novel eventually gives back what its documents spend the whole of the chapter taking away.

5. The Subject as Data Profile

The documents of the *Ordnungsstaat* speak in a register from which the individual subject is structurally absent. They address the population as a whole, function through categories and distributions, and articulate the system's goals in the impersonal vocabulary of optimization and care. The narrative sections of the novel are, by contrast, rigidly focalized through Ben Erman, but this focalization is itself the problem. Ben is a researcher whose professional task is the evaluation of qualification profiles, and his self-understanding is organized by the same categorical framework he applies to others. The question this section asks is therefore not whether the system's categories are adequate to the life they score, the novel takes for granted that they are not, but the harder one the *Ordnungsstaat's* own procedures force: what happens to a subject who is constituted in those categories at the moment the categories return a verdict on him. The answer Franke gives is not the one the question invites, and this section works toward it in the order the file itself imposes: the profile, the discrepancy, the erased years, and the catalogue that scores them.

The classification is an alphabet. Ben's post in the Computerzentrale is "ein Posten, der nur Angehörigen der R-Kategorie zustand" (Franke, 9); the tables of random numbers are restricted to classes A and B; an apartment marks "die Wohnung eines Angehörigen der B-Kategorie" (Franke, 86); and at the far end, a line on the screen separates "die Y- und die Z-Kategorien" (Franke, 10). What gives this scheme its peculiar force is that Franke has written it into the proper names. Ben **Er**man belongs to the R-Kategorie, Barbara **Te**man to T, Jonathan **Vau**man to V, Hardy **We**man to W, Oswaldo **Ef**man to F: in each case the surname is the German name of the letter, suffixed with *-man*. The citizen does not have a classification in addition to a name; the name is the classification, and the most intimate marker of a person, the thing one is

called, the thing that precedes any achievement or record, has been absorbed into the grammar of the correlatable. There is exactly one exception, and it defines the system's shape: Oswaldo will later tell Ben "ich selbst gehöre der Kategorie A an. Meine Qualifikation F dient nur zur Tarnung" (Franke, 154). The name encodes the class for everyone the apparatus administers and serves as a costume for those who administer it. The signifier that constitutes the citizen is, more than anything, a disguise.

The device has a genre history worth naming before turning to what the classification does to a life. Hans Esselborn notes that Zamyatin's citizens, the genre's founding case, are called only "Nummern," bare ciphers with no other identity to encode (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane,* 142). Franke's classification goes one step further than its model: Zamyatin's number sits beside the person, external and arbitrary, while Franke's letter is folded into the name itself, pronounced every time the citizen is addressed rather than stamped on a file he may never see. What was once a badge worn on the body has become, in the *Ordnungsstaat*, the grammar of the body's own name.

Ben's work consists of processing data fields: medical records, psychiatric test results, medication logs, contact registers, leisure behaviour, mandatory critical self-evaluations. The scoring apparatus aggregates these into what the novel calls, "Summe eines Lebens," a single terminal verdict (Franke, 12). The phrase is the precise point at which this chapter's argument meets the previous one. Hanna's judgement on Faber: "du behandelst das Leben nicht als Gestalt, sondern als bloße Addition" (Frisch, 202), was delivered as a diagnosis, the name of a failure, an accusation a man could be destroyed by and still, dying, refuse. In the *Ordnungsstaat* that accusation has become a job description. To treat a life as mere addition is not an existential deformation here but the correct methodology, salaried and audited, performed by a functionary

whose competence is measured by how well he does it. What Frisch could only present as the pathology of a subject, Franke presents as the procedure of a state; the diagnosis has been institutionalized, and the man who performs it has no vocabulary in which the performance could appear as a diagnosis at all.

The sum, in Ben's case, is R, and it is only after the quest that follows, the quest this section now reconstructs, that it becomes Y: Ypsilon Minus. That transformation is the novel's central pivot and the source of its title, but its inciting incident appears minor: the man whose work it is to confirm the computer's classifications is handed, as his next routine case, the order to run that same confirmation on himself. It is that order, not the verdict it will eventually produce, that is the system's most concentrated formal gesture: "Er hatte den Befehl erhalten, sich selbst zu überprüfen" (Franke, 15). The *Ordnungsstaat* does not audit Ben. It commands Ben to audit Ben, and in doing so makes the subject the instrument of his own evaluation. Whether the assignment was a mechanical error or a trap set to observe how the individual behaves and chooses, the incident states the thesis of this chapter in a single sentence of Franke's. The administration of interiority does not require a watcher, because it has made the watched into the watcher, and it does not require consent, because it has issued the procedure as an order that the subject carries out with professional competence on himself. What is striking is where Ben looks for consolation. He recalls that "oft genug wurden Personen durch den Zufallsgenerator ausgewählt" (Franke, 15), that selection is frequently arbitrary. In a state whose declared program is the elimination of entropy from the world, the only comfort available to a subject under review is the possibility that the review was random. Ben's reassurance is drawn from precisely the dynamic that the *Ordnungsstaat* has resolved to abolish.

That the profile does not represent Ben but constitutes him is stated by the narrator without irony and without protest. The data "aus dem genetischen Programm, aus den Erziehungsprotokollen, aus den Psycholehrgängen", culminate in a formulation that Ben registers as simple description: "In diesen Symbolen lag sein Ich verschlüsselt, das war er mit seiner physischen und psychischen Existenz" (Franke, 25). The self is encrypted in symbols; the encryption is not felt as a loss of something richer, because there is nothing else from which it could be a subtraction. This is the concrete realization of what the second section, following Deleuze, named the dividual: the person resolved into "masses, samples, data, or banks" (Deleuze, 5). Where that section stated the concept, Ben's profile enacts it. What moves through the *Ordnungsstaat*'s terminals is never Ben as such but a bundle of separable, correlatable values, a behavioral score here, a medical coefficient there, an aggression index elsewhere, each legible, updatable, and reassignable without needing to answer to a whole he could recognize as himself. The individual of the disciplinary order is an indivisible whole confined within an institution; the dividual is divisible without remainder, a bundle of scored values reassembled at each pass. When the *Summe eines Lebens* is returned as a verdict, it does not represent a self that exists elsewhere and could contest this summation. In the *Ordnungsstaat* there is no elsewhere: the sum is the self, which is why a bad score is not an insult but an ontological event.

Ben's colleague Olf shows how completely the categories have replaced the operations of ordinary desire. Planning a holiday, Olf calculates not what he would like to do but what will contribute to his overall score: "Meinst du, daß ich Abfahrt machen soll? oder könnte man mir das als Aggressivität anrechnen?... Wenn ich mich zusätzlich in eine Gruppe für meditativen Gesang einschreiben lasse, hätte ich sogar noch einige Bewertungspunkte gut" (Franke, 18). Foucault's account of normalizing judgement names the mechanism exactly: what disciplinary penality

confiscates is “non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it” (“Discipline and Punish*”* 178). Olf does not fear punishment for skiing; he fears the scoring of aggression. Anxiety has been relocated from the prohibited to the merely unprescribed, and the subject polices a norm rather than obeying a law. This is not disciplinary surveillance in Foucault’s narrower, architectural sense; it is closer to what he later called governmentality; the point of contact between technologies of domination and what he named technologies of the self, operations by which individuals work “by their own means or with the help of others” on their “own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being” (Foucault, *Technologies of the Self,* 18–19). Olf performs exactly this operation, testing each impulse before it is spoken or acted on, except that the currency he tests it against is not truth or virtue. It is *Bewertungspunkte*. This is the panoptic principle beyond the wall that first housed it. In Bentham’s design the inmate, uncertain whether he is being observed, “assumes responsibility for the constraints of power” and “becomes the principle of his own subjection” (*Discipline and Punish*, 202–03); the *Ordnungsstaat* needs neither watchtower nor uncertainty, because the record is continuous and the citizen knows it. Olf scores himself in advance. The gaze that once required a building has become the ambient condition of a life lived entirely inside the file.

It is Ben’s own compliance with this logic that produces the novel’s first rupture. Having processed his behavioral and psychological scores without locating a deviation, he turns to the medical protocol, and the file returns him everything: birth data, growth coefficient, immunizations, fluoridation, pigmentation, each childhood illness, each minor accident, down to the quantities of cotton wool and adhesive plaster issued to him (Franke, 30). To exist in the *Ordnungsstaat* is to have been measured at every point. His relief on finding no irregularity is precisely calibrated; he is relieved not that he is well, but that his categorization is confirmed:

“Alles war in Ordnung, alles entsprach seiner Klassifikation: Stufe R” (Franke, 26). And it is at this moment of administered relief that the body reasserts itself. A faint scar runs from the base of the neck; a shoulder aches at intervals; the pain has long since been absorbed into routine. What makes it legible is not the pain but its absence from the record: “Nun erst gewann dieses kleine Gebrechen an Bedeutung, als er nämlich feststellte, daß es in seinem medizinischen Protokoll fehlte” (Franke, 26). The scar’s significance is entirely relational. It is not dangerous because of what it is but because it is unrecorded, and Franke then draws the consequence in the sentence on which this chapter’s argument turns: “Für ihn als Rechercheur existierte die Narbe nicht. Für ihn als Person freilich war sie vorhanden” (Franke, 26). The distinction between the subject as an object of data collection and the subject as an embodied person becomes visible to Ben for the first time, and it does so not through reflection, desire, or memory, but through a discrepancy between two administrative records. What the *Grundsatzreferat* declared unreal, the uncorrelated thing, insists on its existence in the only register left to it: as an ache in a shoulder, a mark on his skin, something that hurts without authorization.

Franke does not let the moment stand. Ben concludes that he has no official occasion to pursue the matter, since he would normally never have learned of the discrepancy at all, and reasons that if he chooses to look into it, “dann war das seine private Angelegenheit” (Franke, 26), and on the very next sentence he hears footsteps and voices in the corridor, among them a woman’s, and identifies Oswaldo Efman. The man who has, as the novel’s closing pages will reveal, been watching him for years arrives precisely as Ben claims the investigation of an inconsistency to be a private matter. The point is not that the claim is naive; it is that Franke has placed the refutation next to the assertion, so that the reader is given, in the space of two sentences, both the discovery of a private register and the demonstration that no such register is available.

The three erased years are the same wound approached from the archive's side, and the way Ben finds them is the most precise demonstration in the novel about how a total record fails. He cannot search for a gap, because the system does not produce gaps: the fields are complete. He must instead read the positive trace the correction has left, and what he finds is not absence but a surface: "Es waren genau drei Jahre, in denen der Homogenitätsgrad geradezu auffallend hoch war" (Franke, 29), a smoothness where the small frictions of a lived life should have deposited their irregularities. The administered structure betrays itself not by lacking data but by being too clean; entropy is the signature of having lived, and its elimination is what becomes telling. Around this surface the medical protocol arranges its corroboration: the irradiations for the shoulder begin abruptly, immediately after the three years, and end as abruptly, with no recorded incident to cause them. And when Ben turns from the file to himself, attempting to recall what the record cannot account for, his own search arrives at the identical nothing: "er fand nichts" (Franke, 29).

It is worth marking what has and has not been established at this point, because the inference the passage invites is one the novel will withdraw. The notion that the record was administered is certain; the *Institut für historische Planung* maintains a department for exactly this purpose, and the *Grundsatzreferat* has already declared the correction of history to be a philosophical requirement. The notion, however, that the *recollection* was administered by the same hand is an inference, the reader's and Ben's, and it does not follow. Editing a file does not edit a brain. The concordance between a falsified archive and a blank memory is not a single operation observed from two sides but a conjunction of two facts whose relation the novel withholds until its final pages, where the answer proves to be that they have different authors and that the second is not the state's work at all. What section 5 can establish is only this: that Ben's

dispossession is doubled, that the two instruments which might tell him who he is return the same blank, and that the concordance itself, not the erasure, is the thing requiring explanation.

The *Katalog der Punktewertung* is the document in which the apparatus states what it is scoring for, and it is the section's last piece of evidence because it is the one most easily misread. Its entries are unambiguous: *Subordinationsvermögen* = +3; *Mut* = −3; *Kritikfähigkeit* = −3; *Offenheit* = −2 (Franke, 53). Written in the register of technical specification, it presents the quantification of human virtue as an engineering problem of the same order as the calibration of any other variable, and the obvious reading is that the system has assigned negative values to courage, critical capacity, and openness because all three are conditions of genuine agency and the state intends their elimination. That reading is half right, and the half it misses is the more disturbing one. The *Ordnungsstaat* does not merely suppress these capacities; it has built an instrument for detecting them. As Oswaldo will explain, the *Ypsilon-minus* qualification is "nur eine Zwischenstation" (Franke, 150), a filter, because the standard tests are calibrated for a population whose work does not require initiative, and "Was bedeuten Aktivität, Initiative und Kreativität für einen Arbeiter am Fließband? Eigenschaften dieser Art sind seiner Tätigkeit nur lästig" (150). A subject who scores badly enough on the *Katalog* is thereby identified as the anomaly the state is looking for, and is promoted.

This is the *Ordnungsstaat's* actual achievement, and it is more complete than the suppression thesis allows. The *Katalog* performs two operations with one metric. Applied to the mass of the population it produces docility, since the scores push every citizen toward subordination and away from the dispositions that might question the ends being served. Applied to the exceptions it produces recruits, since a sufficiently negative score is the only reliable signal of the qualities the tests cannot measure directly, "gerade wer intelligent ist, weiß, wie er sich

verhalten muß, um im herkömmlichen Sinn ‘gute’ Eigenschaften vorzuweisen” (Franke, 150). What the *Katalog* performs, in Oscar Gandy’s terms, is a version of what he calls the panoptic sort: not merely surveillance but “a kind of high-tech, cybernetic triage through which individuals and groups of people are being sorted according to their presumed economic or political value” (Gandy, 1). Gandy’s triage is explicitly two-tiered, sorting the population into those to be served and those to be discarded; Franke’s *Katalog* performs the same operation but inverts its visible logic, since the citizens it discards from the mass: *Kritikfähigkeit, Mut, Offenheit* scored negative, are not written off as worthless but instead are extracted as valuable, reclassified into the apparatus that does the sorting. The *panoptic sort* here does not simply rank the population by conformity. It uses conformity as the filter through which it locates its own future administrators. The system has thus done the thing that should have been impossible under its own ontology: it has correlated the uncorrelatable, not by describing it but by triangulating on the shape of its own failure to describe it. Horkheimer’s account of instrumental reason requires a corresponding adjustment. A rationality of means so total that the capacity to evaluate ends has been eliminated (Horkheimer, *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft*, 14–15) is not quite what Franke depicts. The *Ordnungsstaat* does not eliminate that capacity; it locates it, extracts it, and promotes its bearers into the administration. Critique is not forbidden: It is a qualification. This is why the state can afford to score courage at −3 and survive: the negative sign is not a prohibition but an address.

What the profile has therefore produced is a subject whom the system knows better than he knows himself, whose name is his classification, whose memory is in line with his falsified record, and whose one unrecorded mark is the trace of an episode the apparatus has been waiting years for him to recover. The categories have not failed to apply to him. They have reached him so completely that his discovery of what they omit is itself the outcome they were calibrated to

produce. If anything in Ben remains outside the correlatable, it is not a property, properties are precisely what the *Katalog* can find, and the following section turns to the one register in which the *Ordnungsstaat's* administration is not a matter of scoring at all: the manufacture, distribution, and replacement of what a citizen feels.

6. The Administration of Interiority

The *Ordnungsstaat*'s most profound achievement is not the regulation of behavior but the systematic organization of feeling, memory, desire, and self-understanding through technical procedures that make the subject not merely compliant but genuinely attached to the conditions of its own administration. Where classical totalitarianism required the suppression of inner life through terror, Franke's system has made inner life its most productive resource. The "Interne Mitteilung zur Frage der Emotionen," read in the previous discussion of the documents as the system's textual claim about what feeling is, is put into operation here: the three methods it specifies, the pharmacological in the water supply, the associative in *Psychotraining*, and the neurological in synthetic dream and memory activation (Franke, 31), are the concrete apparatus by which affect is not repressed but replaced. This is the precise measure of the distance from Orwell. O'Brien must break Winston to make him love Big Brother; the *Ordnungsstaat* engineers that love from the start, pharmacologically and through chant, so that whether one loves the state never arises as a question at all.

Foucault's analysis of pastoral power provides the most precise conceptual framework for this operation. The shepherd, Foucault argues in "Omnes et Singulatim," wields power over a flock through constant individualizing attention to each member's particular needs, an endless watchfulness that knows each one's particular condition (Foucault, *Omnes et Singulatim*, 230).

The shepherd's power is not repressive but constitutive: it produces the subjects it governs through the knowledge it accumulates about them. The figure returns us, pointedly, to the other shepherd this chapter has named. Where Heidegger's *Hirt des Seins* guards the openness in which beings may appear as what they are, keeping watch so that something can show itself, Foucault's *pasteur* keeps watch in order to *know*, and governs by the knowledge it gathers; the one lets beings be, the other administers them. The *Ordnungsstaat* has exchanged the first shepherd for the second, and then extended him computationally. The system knows each citizen through their data profile, their *Psychotraining* records, their leisure behavior, their position on the *Katalog der Punktewertung*, and it responds to this knowledge not with punishment but with care: drugs in the water supply, synthetic dream generation, pharmacological calibration of the emotional states appropriate to the citizen's situation and the system's needs. The *Ordnungsstaat*'s power is simultaneously individualizing, since it knows each citizen in their particularity through the *Summe eines Lebens*, and totalizing, since it transforms individual variation into a single evaluative distribution. The shepherd knows the whole flock and each sheep; the computer knows the entire population and each citizen's profile number.

Against the totality of this administration the novel preserves, almost invisibly, a handful of moments the system has not reached, and it is from these that everything unadministered in Ben eventually proceeds. The first is barely an event at all. Each day the *Hängebahn* carries him between the *Individual-* and the *Sozialarbeit*, and in the enclosed cabin, where the air is clean enough that he does not need his *Atemfilter,* he feels "wie befreit… als wäre er nicht selbst ein Teil dieser ruhelosen Stadt" (Franke, 9). The freedom is illusory and its cause is merely technical, a pocket of breathable air, but the passage records a residue the administration has not scheduled: a minutes-long interval "ohne Aufgabe, ohne Verpflichtung," a gap in the day that belongs to no

evaluative field. It is the smallest possible instance of what the erased years are at the largest scale, an interval the record does not fully close around.

The pastoral logic that Foucault describes as knowledge-through-care extends, in the *Ordnungsstaat*, to the most intimate spaces of the citizen's existence, and it is there that the second and decisive gap opens. Ben is left one space the system has not explicitly organized: "vier Quadratmeter, und sie gehörten ihm allein" (Franke, 20). In this space he has Blondy, his *Schlafpuppe*. The novel's description of his private moments in this confined space, where Blondy offers him an escape from the system, is technically precise: "Er überließ sich den zärtlichen Bemühungen der Puppe — durch ein Feedbacksystem kontrolliert und gesteuert" (Franke, 21). The feedback system runs between the doll and Ben's body; Ben himself is outside it. He surrenders to what it produces. This is the one moment in the novel where Ben is not a data point, not an object of evaluation, not a subject being processed and scored; he simply receives warmth. Everywhere else in the *Ordnungsstaat*, systems run through him; here, a system runs for him, and he lies outside its logic entirely. And from that outside, something the system did not anticipate takes shape. When Ben meets Barbara for the first time, he feels an immediate and inexplicable pull of recognition, and only later, on the way home, does he understand it: "Sie wies verblüffende Ähnlichkeit mit Blondy, seiner Schlafpuppe, auf" (Franke, 52). The technical object is the original; the human being is encountered as its echo. The one space the system left him, the one moment in which he was external to every loop of control and evaluation, produced the one attachment the system could not score.

What the four square meters represent at the level of private space, the television programs extend into the domain of collective experience, but now the administration runs in the opposite direction. Among the programs are what the novel calls "negative Archetypen," characters whose

deviance, disorder, and suffering function not primarily as entertainment but diagnostically: the viewer's responses are monitored and analyzed, and the data fed back into the system's ongoing calibration of each citizen's profile (Franke, 50). The system does not merely control what citizens see; it uses what citizens feel in response to what they see as data for the continuing administration of who they are. The citizen who responds incorrectly to the negative archetype has not broken a rule; they have deviated from a norm, and the deviation is registered, scored, and filed. This structure, the apparatus that delivers the world into the home simultaneously processing the home's reaction to what it delivers, realizes at an institutional level what Anders had already identified as the defining condition of radio and television as media. For Günther Anders, the broadcast delivers the world to the subject as a passive recipient: "Die Behandlung des Menschen geht als Belieferung ins Haus vor sich, die sich von der mit Gas oder Elektrizität in nichts unterscheidet" (Anders, "Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen," Bd. 1, 110). The subject no longer goes out to the world; the world comes to him, pre-processed, pre-calibrated, in a form that forecloses the distance needed for genuine experience. In the *Ordnungsstaat*, Anders's diagnosis has been institutionalized and reversed: the delivery does not merely foreclose critical distance, it converts the recipient's reaction into data, so that the passivity Anders describes becomes itself productive, feeding back into the system that administered the delivery in the first place.

The administration of interiority reaches its limit, and its most revealing formulation, in the *Individualarbeit* protocol and the *Psychotraining* sessions. The purpose of the *Individualarbeit* is stated with precision: "Fehler zu beseitigen, ehe sie entstanden waren" (Franke, 37). The system does not wait for deviance to manifest; it identifies the conditions under which deviance might emerge and intervenes in advance. The Psychotraining carries this logic into language itself: the group recites, in unison, "Unser Denken ist frei und ungezwungen" and follows this immediately

with “Wir haben nichts voreinander zu verbergen” (Franke, 40). Freedom has been redefined as the capacity to hide nothing; transparency as the highest form of liberty. What presents itself as the abolition of self-censorship is the most complete form of self-censorship imaginable: the internalization of the system’s categories so thoroughly that no different thought arises to require concealment, because the thought has been preemptively absorbed into the affective endorsement of the conditions that would have suppressed it. The Psychotraining session is not a moment in which Ben’s inner life is regulated from the outside. It is a moment in which inner life and social requirements have been made indistinguishable, performed collectively in chant so that the performance itself becomes the feeling.

Here the “Liederbuch des Psychotrainings,“ read in the previous section as the state’s manufactured myth, does its work on the citizen directly. Its lines, “Niemand hat Sorgen / Niemand hat Angst” and “unser Glück ist unser Staat” (Franke, 40), do not describe a feeling; performed in chant, and underwritten by the pharmacology in the water supply, they produce one. “Liebe zum Staat” is not a feeling the system represses but a feeling it manufactures by replacement, and its production is effective precisely because it preserves the form of feeling, warmth, togetherness, security, while extinguishing the vulnerability and risk without which, in Blumenberg’s sense, the affective registration of what exceeds calculation cannot exist. The *Ordnungsstaat* has manufactured the sensation of myth while suppressing the condition that makes myth necessary. This is the structural difference that separates it from Faber’s world absolutely. Faber was destroyed by the mythic forces he suppressed; Ben Erman has been given a replacement myth so complete that he cannot locate the anxiety it has displaced. The gaps the system left him, the clean-air minutes on the *Hängebahn* and the four square meters with Blondy, are the last intervals it does not fill. The *Liederbuch* is the system’s answer to the question of what to put in every other space.

The documents are not the novel's only counter-form to Ben's narrated present, and the other one has gone unnamed so far because it does not announce itself the way a *Grundsatzreferat* does. *Ypsilon Minus* interleaves eighteen main chapters, the further sequence of embedded political documents this chapter has already examined, and a third, separately numbered sequence, only three chapters long, that carries the whole of what the record erased (Selivanova, 183). Roughly a third of the novel's text, by Selivanova's count, belongs to this third sequence, and Franke sets it apart typographically as well as numerically, in italics, so that a reader can identify it, in Selivanova's phrase, "sogar auf dem Niveau der visuellen Wahrnehmung," at the level of visual perception alone (Selivanova, 183). These are Ben's dreams. Where the state's documents assert without developing, the dream chapters are where the novel actually narrates: they are the one place, as this section will show, where Ben and the reader learn something neither of them knew a page before.

Selivanova's functional catalogue of these chapters gives that formal asymmetry a precise anatomy, and it is worth being exact about which functions are hers and which she is borrowing. The retrospective and instrumental functions are her own: the dreams return Ben and the reader to what he calls "einen Ausflug ins Unfassbare" (Franke, 70), and where the genre's inherited device for time travel was the machine, in Franke it is sleep itself that performs the crossing (Selivanova, 184). The next two she draws from Bakhtin's account of the chronotope, naming them in her own terms: a *sujetbildende* function, since the dreams carry the key events on which the entire plot rests in a self-contained inner narrative with its own rise and resolution, which is exactly why they receive their own numbering, and a *Darstellungsfunktion*, giving the unfreedom the *Ordnungsstaat*'s apparent well-being conceals a felt, concretized shape rather than a stated one (Selivanova, 185). What follows is hers again, and for one of these functions she says so explicitly,

noting that it has no precedent in the scholarship she is drawing on: an emotional-evaluative function, since it is Ben's fidelity to what the dreams show him, his refusal to look away from what he recovers there, that discloses a conviction no document could have produced in him, and what she calls a *modellierende* function, the modeling, after the fact, of a situation the dream itself first stages (Selivanova, 185).

The function that matters most for this chapter's argument, though, is the one Selivanova identifies as the genre's genuine novelty against dream literature generally: *Steuerbarkeit*, controllability. What was once taken to be strictly individual, impossible for one person to enter another's dream, has been undone by exactly the science this chapter has been tracing (Selivanova, 186). The chemist who prepares Ben's ampoules makes the administration explicit: "Also sag schon, was du willst. Willst du Farben sehen oder die Engel singen hören? […] Willst du für eine Stunde der Teufel sein, oder Gott?" (Franke, 59). A dream that can be commissioned to order has entered the correlatable, and Selivanova is right that it thereby loses what she calls its "Einzigartigkeit, Individualität und Einmaligkeit," its uniqueness, individuality, and unrepeatability (Selivanova, 186). This is the pharmakon this chapter has been tracing, staged a second time in a different register. The same *Sonderimpfungen* that make Ben's dreams an instrument of the *Interne Mitteilung*'s "Erzeugung synthetischer Träume" (Franke, 33) are the instrument by which he recovers the three years the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* erased. Where the documents administer without narrating, the dreams narrate precisely because they administer: the same technology that closes Ben's interiority to spontaneous feeling is the technology that reopens his own erased past to him.

Jurij Lotman, whom Selivanova invokes to close her own account, names the dream a "semiotisches Fenster," a semiotic window capable of carrying either of two older meanings at

once, prophecy in the shamanic sense or the Freudian turn inward (Selivanova, 187). *Ypsilon Minus*, in her reading, contaminates the two: for Ben the dream is the way into his own "verschüttetes Gedächtnis," his own buried memory, and for the reader it is simultaneously the dystopia's projection of a possible future (Selivanova, 186). The window opens in both directions at once, backward into a past the state erased and forward into a future the state has not finished writing. It is this double aperture, rather than anything the *Grundsatzreferate* ever declare, that the closing section of this chapter takes up as the site where the novel's closure is not, after all, complete.

7. From Mechanical Gaps to Computational Closure

The distance the chapter has traveled from *Homo Faber* can be measured at a single point: the breakdown. Faber's world was built of mechanical and analogue instruments, turbines and aircraft, the Landrover, the film camera, the typewriter, the electric razor, machines that extend human capacity but remain dependent on human presence and human use. Because they are used, they can fail, and their failure is disclosive. When the aircraft vibrates on the runway, when there is no power socket for the razor in the desert, the equipment withdraws its cooperation and, in that withdrawal, the world it had silently sustained comes briefly into view. These are the moments of *Auffälligkeit* through which anxiety, desire, and the claims of a suppressed past forced their way into a life organized to exclude them. Faber's *Bericht* is the record of a man reached, too late, by what his instruments could not hold, arriving at "es stimmt nichts" and, dying, at "Auf der Welt sein: im Licht sein" (Frisch, 236). The gaps in the mechanical order were the condition of that arrival.

The *Ordnungsstaat* is an order engineered so that it cannot break down in this way. Its medium is not the mechanism but the code, and the code has no runway on which to vibrate, no socket it can lack. Where Faber's world still had walls, and therefore edges, the modulating *enframing* of the *Ordnungsstaat* has replaced the wall with the profile, which has no edge; where mechanical technology left intervals it could not schedule, computational administration extends into memory, feeling, and dream, closing the gaps through which, in Faber's world, disclosure could still occur. This is why Ben Erman has no *Bericht*. Faber could write his own, however distorted, because he still possessed what he had lived; Ben's past has been processed before he can compose it, corrected by the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* and overwritten with synthetic data. The subject who could narrate himself has been replaced by the system that narrates him.

And yet the closure is not total, and the chapter's thesis depends on the remainder. What the correlatable could not house did not vanish; it persisted in the one register the record could not fully enclose, the body, as a scar that aches without authorization, and it insisted, at the largest scale, as three years the archive did not lose but replaced. Where Faber was destroyed by the mythic and affective forces his rationalism suppressed, Ben is not destroyed but dispossessed, cut off from the years in which he acted against the order that now employs him. The difference is decisive: dispossession, unlike destruction, can in principle be reversed. The recovery of the erased years and the recovery of a capacity to act are, in Franke, the same event, and it is exactly this that makes *Ypsilon Minus* the open system Abret describes rather than the sealed one with which Orwell leaves us. The computational *Ge-stell* closes every gap it can name. The scar is what it could not name, and it is enough.

Naming what the system could not name is not, in Heidegger's own vocabulary, a neutral description. It is the site at which *das Rettende*, the saving power, first comes to presence, since

for Heidegger the danger grasped as danger is already the moment the saving begins to grow from the same ground (GA 79, 72; GA 7, 29; see Chapter 1). But Franke does not give his saving power in Heidegger's form, and the difference is the whole argument of this closing section. Andrew Feenberg's objection to Heidegger, already cited in Chapter 1, is that the saving power there has no author and no location: it is a change in the essence of revealing that no human program can bring about, so that Heidegger's only strategy before technology is to bound it, not to reform it (Feenberg, 162–163). *Ypsilon Minus* supplies exactly what Heidegger's account structurally withholds: a saving power with an author, a location, and an instrument. Ben does not wait for a change in the essence of revealing. He acts, and the instrument of his action is the very apparatus that dispossessed him.

Hans Esselborn names this precisely as the second of Franke's two innovations over the classical twentieth-century dystopia, the first being the anonymization of power this chapter has already traced through the documents' impersonal voice. The novel, Esselborn writes, shows technology "in ihrer Ambivalenz": it "schafft keine unveränderbaren und geschlossenen Welten, sondern kann auch der Veränderung dienen, wenn man sie entsprechend benutzt" (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane,* 143). What makes Ben's final act into more than just sabotage is that it turns the state's own instrument against the state by publication rather than destruction: he releases the codes that defeat the *Ordnungsstaat*'s computer through the official communications network the *Ordnungsstaat* itself built, an act of what Esselborn calls "emanzipativ angewandtes Herrschaftswissen," ruling-knowledge turned emancipatory (Esselborn, Frankes Romane, 143). This is Feenberg's missing agency, supplied: not Heidegger's authorless destining but a located, technically literate act by a named man who has read the same information the state reads, and turned it against the state.

Esselborn is precise about what kind of act this is by specifying what it is not. Against Zamyatin's *We*, whose ending *Ypsilon Minus* otherwise resembles closely enough to invite direct comparison, Esselborn identifies a third possibility the earlier novel does not have: not an underground movement, which can always be corrupted, and not a revolution, which in the genre's precedents ends in atomic catastrophe, but "die überlegte Tat eines informierten Einzelnen, der der Öffentlichkeit die Daten zum Überlisten des Computers mitteilt," the deliberate act of an informed individual who makes public the data needed to outwit the computer (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane*, 143). What that act destroys is named as precisely as what it uses: Ben, Esselborn writes, "bricht" the "Informationsmonopol als Basis der Herrschaft," the information monopoly that is the basis of rule (Esselborn, *Frankes Romane*, 142). This is the same monopoly the *Grundsatzreferat* declared at the opening of section 3, that reality is the sum of all correlatable information; Ben's act does not deny that ontology, it ends the state's exclusive custody of it. Abret describes Ben's arc across the novel as the passage "vom manipulierten Objekt zum Akteur, der dem Gegenspieler seinen Willen aufzwingt," from manipulated object to agent who imposes his will on his opponent (Abret, qtd. in Esselborn, *Drei Deutungen*, 204). And the instrument by which he recovers what he needs to make the act possible is exactly the register the previous section isolated: the dream chapters, themselves state technology, *Sonderimpfungen* and neurological induction, turned back against the archive that authored them. The pharmakon completes its reversal here, in the open, at the level of the state rather than only the self: the same tertiary retentional apparatus that let the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* dispossess Ben is what lets Ben re-arm himself, and then disarm the state in turn.What Franke supplies, then, is the located saving power that Chapter 1 found missing from Heidegger. The danger grasped as danger becomes, in *Ypsilon Minus*, not a change in the essence of revealing that no one can author, but a deliberate act by a named man who reads what the state

reads and turns it back on the state. Feenberg's objection is answered not by argument but by narrative: the reform of technology by technically literate agency, which Heidegger's account structurally withholds, is exactly what the novel stages. It does so, crucially, through the same apparatus that produced the dispossession, the tertiary retentional archive, the dream-inducing neurology, the communications network, so that the reversal is not an escape from the computational *Ge-stell* but its turning. Where Heidegger could locate no author for the saving power and Horkheimer and Adorno could locate no exit from the administered world, Franke locates both in a single figure. This is the chapter's finding, and it closes the gap Chapter 1 opened.

Chapter 1 closed on a disjunction it could not yet resolve: a myth that promises the end of contingency as such can only be believed or exposed. Ben exposes it, and he does so by the one means available inside a state that has made reality coextensive with correlatable information, namely by correlating it publicly rather than administering it privately. This is Deleuze's control society answered from within its own logic rather than escaped from outside it, and it remains exactly as precarious as that description implies. Ben's own fate past the novel's final pages is not secured by his act; what is secured is only that the *Ordnungsstaat*'s monopoly on correlation and control is broken, that the future it declared closed is, provisionally and at cost, open again. This is the openness Abret's Camus epigraph names, *l'avenir est la seule transcendance des hommes sans dieu*, and it is the same openness this chapter has been arguing the computational *Ge-stell* cannot, after all, fully close. The scar was what the system could not name. The codes are what, once released, it can no longer take back.

Afterword: From Fiction to Infrastructure

The third chapter of this study ended with an opening. Ben Erman releases the codes, the *Ordnungsstaat*'s monopoly on correlation is broken, and the future the state had declared closed becomes, provisionally and at a cost, open again. The scar was what the system could not name; the codes were what, once released, it could no longer take back. That ending was also the end of the trajectory this dissertation set out to reconstruct: from the mechanical extension of the human body in *Homo Faber* to the computational administration of human life in *Ypsilon Minus*, from a *Ge-stell* that still required a subject to maintain it to a *Ge-stell* installed as a self-running program, and, across that passage, the transformation of the two functions named in this study's title, myth and memory, into their administered forms. What remains to be said does not belong to the readings themselves. It concerns the position from which they were written. The two novels were extrapolations: they took tendencies of 1957 and 1976 and projected them toward completion. This afterword begins from the fact that these predictions are no longer such. The world the novels imagined has, in the decades since, ceased to be a literary hypothesis and become an infrastructure, and the dissertation itself has been written from within the condition its objects foresaw.

The first chapter already carried the genealogy to the threshold of this present. It named the economic form of the computational order, the rendition of lived experience into behavioral surplus refined into prediction (Zuboff, 96), and its subjective complement, the transparency society whose members expose themselves without needing to be watched (Han, 46). Those analyses stand where they belong, at the end of the conceptual history, and they will not be repeated here. The task of this afterword is to say what the chapters could not yet say: first, to provide the precise name and logic of the form of government that is at stake here, which will show exactly where Franke's imagination has been both confirmed and exceeded; second, to name the material

ground on which that regime stands and which it conceals; third, to register its newest mutation, the machine that speaks, which touches the categories of myth and memory more directly than anything the novels could know; and finally to return, under these altered conditions, to the question with which the third chapter closed, the question of *das Rettende*, of who can still do what Ben Erman did.

The name exists, and it was coined almost midway between Franke's novel and the present. In 2013, extending Foucault's analysis of security apparatuses into the age of machine learning, Antoinette Rouvroy and Thomas Berns proposed the term algorithmic governmentality for a mode of power founded on the automated collection and analysis of massive data in order "to model, anticipate and pre-emptively affect possible behaviours" (Rouvroy and Berns, 10). Its operation has three moments that in practice occur at once: the default capture of traces that are meaningless in themselves; the automated mining of correlations among them, a production of knowledge that no longer requires any hypothesis; and the application of the resulting profiles to individuals, not as commands addressed to their understanding but as adjustments of the environment in which their behavior takes place (Rouvroy and Berns, 6–9). Nothing in this description would have surprised the *Ordnungsstaat*, whose founding definition, established in the third chapter's reading of the state documents, is that reality is the sum of all correlatable information. What the concept makes visible is rather the point at which the present has moved beyond Franke.

The *Ordnungsstaat* classifies. Its order is categorical: its scale runs from the accepted to the rejected, and it is at its bottom the category that gives the novel its title. Ben can discern his standing because the state stamps it; the demotion to the undesirable category *Ypsilon Minus* is a legible event, printed, communicated, appealable in principle if not in fact. Algorithmic governmentality dispenses with the category. Rouvroy and Berns call its normativity a-normative:

it measures no one against an average or a class, because the profile is recomputed for each person in real time, assembled from what the first chapter, following Deleuze, already named the dividual, the person resolved into recombinant traits. The result is a power that classifies more finely than any *Computerzentrale* while producing no classification anyone could read. Ben's card bore a stamp; the profile has no stamp, no edge, and no document. Where the third chapter described the passage from the wall to the profile, the present adds a further step: the passage from the stamped profile to the unreadable one. In this respect the actual order is more total than the imagined one, since the imagined order still told its subjects what it had decided they were.

Nor does the unreadable order silence its subjects; it does the opposite, and the inversion completes a diagnosis this study has made twice. The third chapter showed the way in which the *Ordnungsstaat* administered interiority as care, and the first chapter, with Han, showed the transparency society's members exposing themselves without compulsion. Rouvroy and Berns add the paradox proper to the algorithmic order: it produces hyper-subjects, persons enjoined at every moment to express, curate, and perform themselves, while the government of conduct ignores every word of the performance and reads only the traces it throws off (Rouvroy and Berns, 16). Expression and government have come apart. The citizen of the *Ordnungsstaat* was told what he was and was forbidden to be otherwise; the subject of algorithmic governmentality may say whatever she likes about herself, because what she says is not what is read. Self-description, the very medium in which Faber's *Bericht* and Ben's stolen self-knowledge did their work, persists as an activity while losing its purchase on the order that governs it. The dossier has not silenced the subject; it has made the subject's speech inconsequential, which is a subtler dispossession than any that the novels imagined.

A second difference appears deeper, because it touches the diagnostic instrument this dissertation has used throughout. Both literary chapters turned on the breakdown. In Faber's mechanical world the failure of equipment was disclosive: the vibrating runway, the missing socket, the moments of *Auffälligkeit* through which anxiety and the suppressed past forced their way into a life organized to exclude them. In Franke's computational world those gaps were closed by design, and the third chapter measured the distance between the novels at precisely that point. Algorithmic governmentality closes them again, one turn further. In a self-learning system, the deviation is not even a failure; it is feed. Every unpredicted act, every sidestep from the anticipated realm of possibility, is immediately re-ingested to refine the model that failed to anticipate it, so that the system, as Rouvroy and Berns observe, cannot in any meaningful sense misfire (Rouvroy and Berns, 11). The breakdown, which in Faber's world opened the world and in Ben's world had to be engineered away, has in the present been converted into a resource. What the mechanical order suffered, and the imagined computational order suppressed, the actual computational order processes.

A third difference follows, the one with which the stakes of this study's central category come fully into view. The *Ordnungsstaat*, for all its closure, still narrates itself. It issues documents; the fourth section of the third chapter read them as forms. It defines emotion in cybernetic terms, announces that humanity has found its way back, and describes its computer as "das vollkommene Regierungsinstrument" (Franke, 127). A government of statements can be contradicted, and that is exactly what Ben's final act is: a public correlation set against the state's own, a counter-statement made with the state's instrument. Algorithmic governmentality states nothing. Its normativity, as Rouvroy and Berns argue, resists discursivity altogether: no norm is announced before it acts, nothing is asserted that could be denied, and disobedience loses its object

because there is no command to disobey. The first chapter ended on a disjunction: a myth that promises the end of contingency as such can only be believed or exposed. The third chapter showed Ben exposing it. What the present regime threatens is not the belief, which it does not need, but the exposure, which presupposes that statements circulate and can publicly fail.

This is the point at which Bernard Stiegler, whose account of tertiary retention has carried this study's analysis of memory since the first chapter, enters the diagnosis of the present, and it does so in disagreement. Rouvroy and Berns describe algorithmic governmentality as a new regime of digital truth in Foucault's sense. Stiegler, as Patrick Crogan has shown, accepts their anatomy of the system but rejects the conclusion: what is emerging is not a new regime of truth but the destruction of the existing ones, a corrosion of the shared circuits through which statements could be produced, verified, contested, and become shared objects of belief (Crogan, 57). The computational systems of the platforms, Stiegler remarks, operate at speeds that "return to us, to our behaviour, faster than those behaviours" (qtd. in Crogan, 65), short-circuiting the time of reflection in which individuation, and with it the formation of any public capable of receiving an exposure, takes place. For the argument of this dissertation the consequence is severe and exact. The first chapter established, with Zuboff, that the computational order no longer needs to be believed, because it does not present itself as a power at all. Stiegler's diagnosis adds that it may soon no longer be exposable either, because exposure requires precisely the regime of truth its operation dismantles. Ben Erman's gesture, releasing the codes to a public for whom the release could still function as revelation, presupposed such a regime. The novel could take it for granted. The present cannot.

Kate Crawford's atlas of artificial intelligence proceeds through exactly the categories its title promises, earth, labor, data, classification, affect, state, and its governing thesis is that the

computational order is neither artificial nor intelligent: it is extracted (Crawford, 8). The intelligence of the machines is wrung from lithium and rare earths mined at the extractive frontier, from the water and electricity the data centers consume, from the classified, repetitive, and largely invisible human labor that assembles the training data and moderates the outputs (Crawford, 15). Read through the categories of this study, Crawford demonstrates that *Bestand* reaches all the way down. The reduction of the world to standing-reserve does not halt at the human whose behavior is rendered as surplus; it descends into the mineral, the hydrological, and the biospheric, and the first chapter's exemplary figure, the Rhine set up as a supplier of hydraulic pressure, finds its contemporary continuation in the river whose water cools a server farm.

The self-concealment that this dissertation has treated as the signature of technological myth is in this way doubled. The computational order conceals, firstly, that it is a mode of disclosure at all, presenting its way of revealing the world as the world itself; this was the argument of the first chapter, and both novels were read as stagings of it. But it also conceals, secondly, the planet and the labor on which it rests. The governing image of the present order, the cloud, is a myth in the strict Blumenbergian sense this study has given the word: a work of distance that makes an overwhelming materiality weightless and frictionless. The megamachine with which the first chapter's history began, Mumford's pyramid-age organization of labor held together by the myth of divine kingship, has not been left behind. It has been completed: a planetary organization of extraction and labor held together by the myth of immateriality, with the difference that the god-king's myth was visible as myth, carved and sung, while the cloud presents itself as a description.

Beneath its a-normative surface, the training categories of the computational systems are saturated with classifications: labeled datasets in which human judgments about gender, race, emotion, and worth have been sedimented, industrialized, and buried, operative upon those they

sort, and invisible to them (Crawford, 17). The taxonomy has not disappeared; it has gone underground, migrating from the stamp on Ben's identification into the base of the model, where it can no longer be read even, in many cases, by its administrators. Seen from here, Franke gave classification its most honest form: a title. *Ypsilon Minus* names the category on its cover and, in this way, keeps it in view, nameable and contestable; the buried taxonomies of the present govern namelessly. The trajectory this study has traced, from the legible order to the self-concealing one, runs through the history of classification itself, and it ends, for now, in a classifying power that has concealed even the fact that it classifies. The apparatus no longer only sorts, predicts, and administers; it produces language, image, and narrative on demand. The machine has begun to speak, and this touches the two categories of this dissertation's title at their center.

What the third chapter established about language in the *Ordnungsstaat* is that the state speaks in the administered register of its documents: it defines emotion cybernetically, redescribes history through the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur*, and even manufactures dreams, feeding sedated citizens a neurology of contentment. Franke came closer here than anywhere else to the present, and it is no accident that these were the passages in which the third chapter located the novel's deepest analysis. Yet even the dream-inducing state does not narrate; it administers narration produced elsewhere, corrects records that once were true, projects contents into sleepers. The generative system, by contrast, narrates. It performs, automatically and at scale, the activity that Blumenberg reserved for the human as its oldest labor: the telling of stories that convert an overwhelming reality into a bearable one. *Arbeit am Mythos* was work, the long, collective, revisionary labor of gaining distance from the absolutism of reality. A machine that tells the stories on demand does not abolish that labor; it expropriates it. And the expropriation has a precise structural consequence within this study's framework: distance cannot be won through a telling

performed by the very order against which distance would have to be won. The first chapter described the computational myth as a myth without a story, a probability, a set-point, a feed, against which no distance can be gained because nothing is narrated. The newest form is stranger: the story has returned, but the teller is the apparatus. Myth-work without a mythmaker has become myth-work with a machine for a mythmaker, and the human position in Blumenberg's oldest scene, the position of the one who tells, is for the first time occupied by the technical order itself.

The third chapter read the *Abteilung für Geschichtskorrektur* through Stiegler as the state monopoly on tertiary retention: the past is here exteriorized in an archive, and the archive remains subject to correction. But correction still requires an original. The *Geschichtskorrektur* falsifies records of what happened; its power is parasitic on there having been a document, and the third chapter's asymmetry of documents and dreams turned on exactly that residue of the real. Generative retention, on the other hand, needs no original. It synthesizes texts that were never written, voices that were never recorded, pasts that never occurred, with the same fluency with which it retrieves real ones, and it does not itself mark the difference. Hypomnesis, the artificial memory whose history the first chapter followed from the *Phaedrus* to the data center, completes therefore its emancipation from anamnesis: the exteriorized memory no longer supports, supplements, corrects, or even falsifies living remembrance; it produces its own contents. Ben was dispossessed of his past by an office that rewrote it. The subject of generative retention can be furnished with a past, plausible, coherent, and without origin, and the office needs no scissors and no archive. What Franke imagined as the state's most violent intervention has become a default capacity of the infrastructure.

The development registered here has a prehistory, and it runs through the tradition in which Franke wrote. Hans Esselborn, whose work on Franke has accompanied the third chapter

throughout, surveys German-language science fiction's engagement with artificial intelligence as the meeting of two dispositions, an enormous interest in science and technology and a fundamental skepticism toward the machine, the latter rooted in the shock of German modernization and in a Goethean preference for the organic over the mechanical, and he divides the history of that engagement into two clearly separated phases: the central computers of the 1960s and 1970s, shaped by cybernetics and dominated by Franke, and the superintelligences and singularities of the novels written after 2010 (Esselborn, *German Science Fiction,* 73). Within that periodization *Ypsilon Minus* stands at the end of the first phase, the point at which Franke's initially helpful machines have hardened into "tyranny in a machinic society" (Esselborn, *German Science Fiction,* 85), and Esselborn finds in the novel precisely the structure the third chapter read in it: a dictatorship founded on the informational monopoly of an anonymous computer network, and a liberation accomplished when a rebellious outsider makes the state's data public (Esselborn, *German Science Fiction,* 77). The periodization also discloses, without remarking on it, a silence. Between Franke's cybernetic novels and the singularity fictions of the 2010s lie three decades in which the tradition had little to say about the machine, and they are the decades in which the machine ceased to be a literary hypothesis and became an infrastructure; the second phase does not resume the first phase's work so much as awaken inside its fulfilled prediction. German science fiction proceeded, as Franke himself insisted, by projection: it took the tendencies of its present and extended them forward, which presupposes that the future so computed remains fiction, a hypothesis the present has not yet caught. The generative systems described above have closed that gap from the other side. Projection has been overtaken by its object; the machine now performs the projection of futures that was the genre's defining labor, and the tradition that imagined the

speaking computer must now be read inside the condition it imagined. That is the situation of this dissertation, and it returns the argument to the present.

One further irony belongs to this history, because it removes the comfortable picture in which philosophical critique stands outside the technical world. In 1993 Beth Preston argued, extending Dreyfus, that artificial intelligence research had something to learn from Heidegger, and that the situated and representation-free systems then emerging deserved the name Heideggerian AI (Preston, 58). What that program abandoned as unworkable, the internal world model, the conviction that intelligent behavior requires a complete inner representation of its world, is nothing other than the epistemology of the *Ordnungsstaat*: a state that defines reality as the sum of all correlatable information is the internal world model raised to a form of government, and at the very moment Franke's readers could recognize that model achieving institutional completeness, the engineering avant-garde was discarding it as unworkable for a fly, let alone a society. Whether one reads the migration of Heidegger into the laboratory as the danger calling on thought or as opposition absorbed into design, Stiegler's category holds the two readings together: the technical object is a pharmakon, poison and remedy at once. What the episode rules out is only the picture in which thinking stands outside the danger. It stands inside it, and is used. Which returns the argument, as everything in this study finally does, to the question of the saving power.

The third chapter's last finding was that *Ypsilon Minus* answers, by narrative means, the objection Andrew Feenberg raised against Heidegger: that an account which locates the danger in the essence of revealing leaves no room for anyone to do anything. Franke locates the doing. Ben Erman is a named, situated, technically literate agent who reads what the state reads and turns the apparatus of his dispossession, the retentional archive, the network, the machinery of correlation, against the state itself. The saving power grows where the danger is because it is exercised through

the danger's own instruments. The question this afterword cannot avoid is whether that answer survives translation into the present, and the honest response is: not unchanged.

This condition dissolves Ben's position. His act had a door, a code, and a hand. In the generative order, none of the three exists in the singular: whoever prompts the system sets off an outcome that the model's training, the accumulated data, and the platform's aims determine together, and there is no single place where the act happens. One could end there, with the loss. But the theorists of the present order do not end there, and neither does this study. Rouvroy and Berns close their analysis not with the perfected system, but with what it cannot digest: the disparateness of the real, the space between persons out of which individuation proceeds, everything a government of correlations must flatten and can flatten only at the price of impoverishing itself (Rouvroy and Berns, 18). Stiegler insists that the same apparatus of memory that dispossesses is also the only one through which any cure can pass, and this is exactly what Ben does, stated as a general rule. Freed from the singular, his act names a competence rather than a hero: the learned ability to read what the apparatus reads, to treat its outputs as something made, and to turn the instruments of correlation against their own opacity. *Das Rettende*, under distributed agency, is technical literacy raised to a public virtue.

And this, finally, is why the reading of these two German novels is not an antiquarian exercise but a training in that competence, and why a dissertation written inside the administered present ends by defending the specific work its objects still do. What the computational order withholds is not information, of which it dispenses more than any order in history, but a position: the position from which the order itself can be seen as something made. Its myth, the promise of a world relieved of contingency, presents itself as a description; its memory, the profile, presents itself as the person; its narration now presents itself as anyone's voice. Against this, the novels

perform the one operation the system cannot: they show the administered world as authored, motivated, and prone to error, a world with a genesis and therefore with an outside. *Homo Faber* shows the technological subject from within at the moment his self-description fails, and gives him a last sentence, “Auf der Welt sein: im Licht sein” (Frisch, 236), that no profile could have predicted, because presence is not a correlation. *Ypsilon Minus* shows the administered society from within at the moment its self-description is turned against it, and leaves the future open by exactly the width of that turning. The first chapter closed with the observation that myth and memory do not weaken across the passage from mechanical extension to computational administration but reach their most total form at its computational end. What the novels could still narrate as a warning, the present dispenses as a service; and to read them now, attentively, historically, from inside the service, is to recover for the duration of the reading the thing the service is designed to make unnecessary: the sight of the technological world as a work, created at a cost, sustained by labor and myth and administered memory, and therefore, like every work, capable of having been otherwise, and of becoming otherwise still.

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