

condition of technology. The old prehistoric dread already envelops the world of our parents because we ourselves are no longer bound to this world by tradition. The perceptual worlds <Merkwelten> break up more rapidly; what they contain of the mythic comes more quickly and more brutally to the fore; and a wholly different perceptual world must be speedily set up to oppose it. This is how the accelerated tempo of technology appears in light of the primal history of the present. □ Awakening □ [N2a,2]

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.—Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language. □ Awakening □ [N2a,3]

In studying Simmel's presentation of Goethe's concept of truth,⁵ I came to see very clearly that my concept of origin in the *Trauerspiel* book is a rigorous and decisive transposition of this basic Goethean concept from the domain of nature to that of history. Origin—it is, in effect, the concept of *Ur*-phenomenon extracted from the pagan context of nature and brought into the Jewish contexts of history. Now, in my work on the arcades I am equally concerned with fathoming an origin. To be specific, I pursue the origin of the forms and mutations of the Paris arcades from their beginning to their decline, and I locate this origin in the economic facts. Seen from the standpoint of causality, however (and that means considered as causes), these facts would not be primal phenomena; they become such only insofar as in their own individual development—"unfolding" might be a better term—they give rise to the whole series of the arcade's concrete historical forms, just as the leaf unfolds from itself all the riches of the empirical world of plants. [N2a,4]

"As I study this age which is so close to us and so remote, I compare myself to a surgeon operating with local anesthetic: I work in areas that are numb, dead—yet the patient is alive and can still talk." Paul Morand, *1900* (Paris, 1931), pp. 6–7. [N2a,5]

What distinguishes images from the "essences" of phenomenology is their historical index. (Heidegger seeks in vain to rescue history for phenomenology abstractly through "historicity.")⁶ These images are to be thought of entirely apart from the categories of the "human sciences," from so-called habitus, from style, and the like. For the historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time. And, indeed, this acceding "to legibility" constitutes a specific critical point in the movement at their interior. Every present day is determined

by the images that are synchronic with it: each “now” is the now of a particular recognizability. In it, truth is charged to the bursting point with time. (This point of explosion, and nothing else, is the death of the *intentio*, which thus coincides with the birth of authentic historical time, the time of truth.) It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural <*bildlich*>. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical—that is, not archaic—images. The image that is read—which is to say, the image in the now of its recognizability—bears to the highest degree the imprint of the perilous critical moment on which all reading is founded. [N3,1]

Resolute refusal of the concept of “timeless truth” is in order. Nevertheless, truth is not—as Marxism would have it—a merely contingent function of knowing, but is bound to a nucleus of time lying hidden within the knower and the known alike. This is so true that the eternal, in any case, is far more the ruffle on a dress than some idea. [N3,2]

Outline the story of *The Arcades Project* in terms of its development. Its properly problematic component: the refusal to renounce anything that would demonstrate the materialist presentation of history as imagistic <*bildhaft*> in a higher sense than in the traditional presentation. [N3,3]

A remark by Ernst Bloch apropos of *The Arcades Project*: “History displays its Scotland Yard badge.” It was in the context of a conversation in which I was describing how this work—comparable, in method, to the process of splitting the atom—liberates the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the “once upon a time” of classical historiography. The history that showed things “as they really were” was the strongest narcotic of the century. [N3,4]

“The truth will not escape us,” reads one of Keller’s epigrams.⁷ He thus formulates the concept of truth with which these presentations take issue. [N3a,1]

“Primal history of the nineteenth century”—this would be of no interest if it were understood to mean that forms of primal history are to be recovered among the inventory of the nineteenth century. Only where the nineteenth century would be presented as originary form of primal history—in a form, that is to say, in which the whole of primal history groups itself anew in images appropriate to that century—only there does the concept of a primal history of the nineteenth century have meaning. [N3a,2]

Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be