The Catastrophe of Platonism (Idea and Representation)

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Here we can draw a parallel with the biblical subject of the appearance of the snake in the earthly paradise. It would seem that heaven, Adam, and Eve abide in bliss and abundance; but even in this beautiful and fresh world, forces of coming misfortunes already make themselves known. And even before then, even at the dawn of Creation, when order is first being created and all creatures are close to God, the first of the Angels, of the entities of light, of the ministering spirits, rebels and is overthrown into the abyss with his supporters. From this abyss he later percolates into the earthly paradise. And at the end of times his power will be extended over the world, over the cosmos. But the devil, evil, the presage of the end, appears already in the first pages of the sacred history of the World. In a cloudless, happy heaven his supple body twines around the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil and tempts Eve to try the fruits. Likewise, within the first Beginning, in the situation of the highest tension of spiritual forces and the "heavenly" primordial philosophizing, the great pre-Socratic jump, when philosophy, becoming ontology, still hesitates in indecision [over] how to interpret the being of beings, the end is already drawing near. This "first end" is an end within the first Beginning. Heidegger never regarded this end disdainfully, lightly, arrogantly, contemptuously. He honoured it and was delighted by it, because it was indeed something great. Even in error and delusion there is sometimes scale and scope worthy of veneration.

And for Heidegger, true being (Seyn) speaks through the catastrophe of Socratic and Platonic thought, although in an extremely indirect way, through the oblivion of itself (Seinsverlassheit), through its concealment. The end within the first Beginning is determined by one major name: Plato. According to Heidegger, Plato, and before him Socrates, and after him Aristotle, is the precise name and historical legalization of the greatest catastrophe. Here the teaching of the ideas plays a fundamental role. Heidegger takes apart the basic etymological-philosophical aspects of the movement of Platonic thought, which leads it to the teaching of ideas. Plato’s illumination [озаренность] by the ideas and the introduction of the ideas within the framework of his philosophy simultaneously represent for Heidegger both greatness and a fundamental substitution. The greatness consists in the fact that the thought of Plato, as also of all Greek philosophy of the epoch of the Beginning, is moved by the question of the being of beings. In other words, we are dealing with that unique and unexpected jump that Greek thought executes from the truth of beings to the the truth of being. And it is impossible not to see this trajectory of thought in all its triumph, risk, and tension, in all its fatality and fatefulness, in Plato, in the very mood of his philosophy. The substitution consists in the following. Before Plato, the philosophical thought of the Greeks still wavered between considering φύσις/λόγος ("physis/logos") as the true name of being, and thereby relating to being as beings, and moving further, higher and deeper and "seizing" being as a unique event (Ereignis), which does not have anything in itself of beings; i.e. as Seyn (fundamental-ontology). Pre-Socratic philosophy can still be interpreted in two ways. In this question, Plato dots all the "i"s, interpreting the preceding philosophical tradition as ontological and making one more very important step in an ontological (and now already unambiguously non-fundamental-ontological) direction. Plato's teaching is the replacement of the wavering of pre-Socratic ontology (the manifestation of being - Sein? Seyn? - through beings) with the presentation of being as an idea. With Plato, being becomes that which is placed before man, and this gives rise to such a phenomenon as "pre-sentation” [“представление”: i.e. “before-putting”, “before-placing”; unhyphenated, the word is commonly translated as “representation”], Vor-stellung. A man stands before the ideas; ideas stand before the things of the world. The etymology of the word ιδὲα is connected with visualization and originates in the capacity of vision (a participle from the verb ὁρῆν2). On every level of the account of the "cave" in Plato's dialogue "The Republic3", where for the first time the developed teaching about the ideas is given, the discussion is precisely about "vision", at first of shadow, them of the objects themselves, and finally of the ideas. In this procedure of the introduction of the ideas, there occurs in the very centre of philosophical thinking a reduction of the basic operations of knowledge to clear vision, to the detection of ideas, which are the heavenly models of things and phenomena. But contact with the ideas presupposes being opposite them, only thus can they be "seen". From this begins the epoch of a very peculiar direction in the movement of reason, an epoch of a very peculiar rationality, which with Plato and Aristotle becomes the fate of Western European philosophy, predetermining absolutely all its stages, including the Modernity, and before that the Middle Ages, and even earlier, late Antiquity. For Heidegger, the pre-Socratics were located in the world, inside of it; they were beings among beings, thinking beings and thinking of beings among beings. Such were the ancient Greeks on the whole. Moreover, philosophers, abiding in beings and thinking about beings, decided the godly lunge (the δαίμον of the philosophers) in favour of being (Sein? Seyn?), not breaking completely the connection neither with mankind nor with "naturalness". And philosophizing in wonder and amazement, in a state of wonderful ecstasy in an instant (of the daimon) they allowed logos to think through them, giving being (Sein? Seyn?) the opportunity of coming about, show itself through opening up through them [сбыться через них]. And here with the arrival of Plato and his teaching about the ideas man stands before beings: he is no longer in the world, he is before the world; he vor-gestellt, he is pre-sented to the world, he stands-before it. He is no longer able to associate with beings, with the things of the world directly. He cannot participate in the "unconcealedness" of the world (i.e. in its pre-Socratic "verity"). Henceforth, he is doomed to constantly posit between everything, before everything and over everything the idea, an additional authority of a visualized model. From the dynamics of hiding/concealment [“скрытия/сокрытия”]and the constant burst of being in beings we transition to Sein als Idea (being as idea) and, correspondingly, to an additional authority: to the idea, which replaces being with itself. The most terrible of the things that Plato accomplished consisted in the fact that he equated the idea with Sein. The idea was put in place of Sein. By his "decision", Plato made two ontological gestures, fateful for Western European philosophy: he settled (implicitly) in favour of beings the hesitation in the question of the status of φύσις; i.e. he unambiguously interpreted φύσις as the being of beings as essence (Seiendheit, οὐσία), and then he identified the essence with the idea (Plato unambiguously speaks of the idea as the essence, ουσία). Thanks to this two-fold movement, the passageway to Seyn-being was irreversibly closed. And although Plato himself and the philosophers who joined with him (Aristotle in particular) constantly raise the question of the essence of beings, i.e. do not drop being from sight, yet henceforth the discussion is only about Sein-being as a "kind", "form", "representation" of Seyn-being. The ontological visual copy passes itself off as the fundamental-ontological original. Henceforth everything changes in comparison with pre-Socratic philosophy. Truth appears from now on not as the unconcealnedness of φύσις (and, perhaps, as the unconcealedness of the concealed Seyn-being - through φύσις and through λόγος), but as correspondence (reference). Moreover, that to which beings correspond is henceforth the idea, i.e. to another [of the] beings, which is as Sein and which is contemplated by the mind. In this moment, the open ontological (with the possibility to be fundamental-ontological) topography of philosophy's first jump finally closed in the upper limit, where the idea is placed, and the first of the ideas, the idea of the good (τό ἀγαθόν). Precisely from this moment, in which the thought of the being of beings still shines, the process of the progressive oblivion of being (Seinsverlassenheit) and the formation of European nihilism begins. The passageway to Seyn-being is irreversibly blocked up, and in place of Seyn-being is put Sein-being as essence, Idea, and, consequently, as beings themselves. Truth henceforth and until the last end of philosophy in the 20th century is thought of exclusively referentially, i.e. as the correspondence of one being to another (at first it is suggested that it corresponds to the highest being, and then merely to another being). Subsequent post-Socratic philosophers put various ontological constructs in place of the idea as Sein. Thus, Plato's student Aristotle selects ἐνὲργεια (energy). Later, other philosophers will prefer other pretenders for the replacement of the "office" of the highest [of the] beings. But this does not change the essent of the picture. After Plato, the ontological topography is established once and for all and remains in effect from the end within the framework of the first Beginning to the very last and final End. Translator: Michael Millerman (Martin Heidegger The Philosophy of Another Beginning - Alexandr Dugin) ISBN 10: 1593680376ISBN 13: 9781593680374 note: 1. Heidegger M. Geschichte des Seyns. Op. cit.; Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis). Оp. cit 2. The same Indo-European root was preserved in Russian in the verb "to see" [видеть], as in the Greek. That is, "ideas" [идеи] can be thought of as "looks" [виды] or "visions” [видения], the looks of the original patterns, of the forms. It is rather significant that from the same Indo-European root the word “to know” [ведать] is formed, from which such other words as “area of responsibility” [ведение], "information" [сведение], “news” [весть], "repute" [известность], "report" [известие], etc. In German, the word Wissen, "knowledge", goes back to the same root. 3. Plato. The Republic. // Collected Works. V. 3. T. 3. M., 1971.