

MYTH AND TECHNIQUE

I

The least that could be said about myth is that it is something "which makes one think." This is not by any means to say nothing. Spelled out it means "that the nature of myth requires that it be included in the context of contemporary philosophy, and that its urgency, which is noted everywhere, be founded on its essential nature." There is such an urgency about myth—or more precisely, about a serious occupation with it—because quite apart from the philosophical context, myth now appears in a great many publications. These remarks are taken from a Catholic writer on the theory of myth, Gonsalv Mainberger.¹ The following pages fit into this context by placing the determination of the nature of myth on the broadest possible foundations. The earlier investigations by André Jolles,² the Germanic

Translated by Hans Kaal.

¹ "Sein und Sitte im Mythos," in *Walberger Studien* I, 1963, p. 37 ff.

² *Einfache Formen*, 2nd ed., 1958, p. 91 ff.

linguist, and by Walter F. Otto,³ a classical scholar, as well as by myself,⁴ in which I begin with an exact philological interpretation of the Greek word *mythos*, have all labored under initial self-imposed limitations which can now be removed without abandoning the earlier results.

In the words of the above mentioned writer on myths, an essential feature of the phenomenon of myth is this: "It shows itself two-faced: present and past." But this inseparable union of the present and the past is not just a contemporary phenomenon. It has always existed; there has always been this paradoxical simultaneity of the present and the past in myth. When myth itself unfolds into particular myths—and this is what is meant by "mythology"—it tells us how things *were* originally and thereby expresses how things really *are*, and of what they are worthy at present. "Origin" in mythology is what "Being and essence" is in philosophy, but interpreted as a primordial process. It has nothing to do with "origin" in the present scientific sense of the word. Living myth imparts a kind of knowledge that anticipates philosophy and makes it superfluous. This is why the quoted writer can take the simultaneity of the present and the past to consist in this: that myth manifests itself on the one hand in story-telling, openly and in the present, and is superseded on the other hand by philosophy, where the same content appears, though no longer in the form of a story. But in that case, myth has ceased to be present, now that science and philosophy reign supreme, and becomes entirely past. Nor does myth owe its actual presence to the kinship of mythology and philosophy or to their interchangeability, but among other things to its technical usefulness.

This element cannot be ignored if we are to determine the nature of myth. It calls for an examination of the relationship between *myth* and *technique*, which does not seem at all far-fetched today. The current spontaneous use of the word "myth," a sign of its actual presence, derives largely from present conditions—present, not "as of today," but "as of yesterday," and

³ "Gesetz, Urbild und Mythos," 2nd ed., in *Die Gestalt und das Sein*, 1955, p. 66 ff.

⁴ "Werk und Mythos," in my *Griechische Miniaturen*, 1957, p. 139 ff.

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present at least in our memories if not perhaps in the memories of the younger generation. I am not reaching far back into the past when I begin with a quotation from Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*.

II

"This was indeed the shrill and alarming prophecy of the book, that popular myths, or rather myths meant for the masses, were to serve henceforth as vehicles of political movement: fables, chimeras, phantasms, which need have nothing to do with truth, reason, science, but could nevertheless be creative, determine life and history and thereby prove their dynamic reality. It will be seen that the book did not bear its menacing title in vain." The book was Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*, and in chapter thirty-four of his novel, Thomas Mann repeats its thesis: "For it dealt with force as the triumphant counterpart of truth . . . It opened a mocking abyss between truth and power, truth and life, truth and the community." On the one side the truth, and on the other the myths, in the service of power, life and the community.

Why did the elite choose the word "myth" rather than "fable" in this connection when there was talk of *political technique*, of an instrument for setting the masses in motion? For the uninitiated who were to be set in motion the word "fable" was of course of no use. To them one had to speak instead of "truth," "reason," "science." But why did the initiated reach back for the Greek word? What was the *concept* which, they thought, could be attached to the word "myth?" And what was the justification for attaching this particular concept to it? I am not yet concerned with the *phenomenon* of myth in the history of religions, but with what is meant by "myth" as such when particular "myths" are spoken of as "vehicles" of political movement.

What is meant by it is evidently a story or lesson or, combining the two, a text that stakes a claim to truth, even to important truth, but falls short of its demands. But whether true or not, the text must be of such a kind as to possess functional value. It must serve as a well-functioning instrument.

It can be given a "technical" use—in the original sense of the word, which does not necessarily require a machine—in religion or in politics. It lends itself to this use; it *is* something to be used. And thus, this concept of myth consists of two elements: a bare claim to truth, even when there is no basis for it, and technical usefulness.

The first element agrees with what we know of the history of the Greek word "*mythos*." Originally it "rang out" the facts; it had the ring of truth. Afterwards it lost that ring for all those who sought to check the facts. For a while it still "rang out" the claim to truth, but no longer the truth itself, and even, as time went on, only a past, a former claim. To the initiated it had, rather, the ring of a transparent lie whose falsity hardly needed to be exposed. Some people even in antiquity, and more and more people after a certain time, took "myths" to mean "fables, chimeras, phantasms."

The second element, technical usefulness, was no audible part of the "ring" of the Greek word "*mythos*." When Walter F. Otto said that "genuine myth requires a cult," he was not dealing with the word alone, but had to supply this element from his other knowledge. It was on the basis of his experience as a student of religions that he took the phenomenon of myth in the history of religions, calling this the "genuine myth," and expressed his general impression of the connection between myth and cult. He even saw in this intimate connection with a cult a criterion for distinguishing myths from stories whose sole purpose was to entertain. But usefulness, the second element of the modern concept of myth—even usefulness in matters of cult, not to speak of technical matters—cannot in fact be derived from the ancient history of the *word*.

But can it be derived from the ancient *phenomenon*? The phenomenon of religion— of Greek religion as well as others— does comprise both myth and cult, and there are connections between the two. But is this sufficient? Does it allow us to describe the phenomenon, the "genuine myth" of the history of religions, by saying that, in addition to the claim to truth, it already contained the usefulness and the intimate and essential connection between myth and technique—no matter what kind of technique?

III

A great gulf separates the myths in the history of religions from the myths in the history of modern politics. The myths of the Greeks and of other peoples who at one time possessed a mythology were special narratives, different in kind from fables and free inventions. They were created by a special activity of mind, simultaneously with poetry and the beginnings of science and philosophy, but either partly intermingled with them or else wholly interchangeable with them. In mythology, the phenomenon of myth unfolds itself in a discursive and a visible form: in stories and images. But neither its claim to truth nor its usefulness is especially prominent. Even if both were non-existent, the mythological stories and images could subsist. But something else stands out: its spontaneity, which is related to lack of pretension and lack of purpose. And yet—or rather just because of this—it may be said that we are here dealing with *the* myth, with the proto-phenomenon to which the stories and the images alike may be traced back.

In speaking of a "proto-phenomenon" "Urphänomen" I am following Goethe's usage of the word, to mean something to which apparently inter-related phenomena can be traced back, but which cannot itself be traced back or reduced to anything else. As a statue which is being excavated before our eyes may be called "genuine" even if its genuineness cannot be further defined, we may call "genuine" what we are now talking about: the stories and images, together with the whole phenomenon to which they belong: the definite myth with its historical—say, Greek—character. The history of religions furnishes us with the genuine article in its proper place where it is neither exiled nor estranged from its origin: from the *proto-phenomenon* "myth."

The myths of political history are a different matter. They do not yield a mythology existing in its own right, devoid of pretension and purpose, evidencing spontaneity. And they cannot be traced back to the proto-phenomenon "myth" as it unfolds itself in stories and images, but at best to the proto-phenomenon of politics, no matter how this may be conceived: whether as proto-Machiavellian or else as proto-socialist in the

manner of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Here we can speak of "myths" only in an extended sense, provided we are conscious of what we are saying, and here we can apply the term "spurious." These are "spurious myths"—"fables, chimeras, phantasms" trying to pass for truths even though they are only useful, and hence, correct only from a technical point of view. But it is not because of this that they are spurious. They are genuine political instruments. Nevertheless, the word "spurious" must be added if they are to be called "myths" at all. So foreign is the place they occupy to myths, so much at home are they in politics, and so little do they have in common with the proto-phenomenon "myth."

IV

But can spurious and yet useful myths be described simply as "fables, chimeras, phantasms?" If that is all they are, how could they be useful? They were also said to be creative, to determine life and history, to be on the side and in the service of power, life and the community. At least part of this view—that myths further life and hold together the community—is based on ancient history. It cannot be said that this view is without foundation. Myth transfigured life in every sense of the word, also life in the community—in the family and in the state. It thereby furthered life, and it was helped in this by the cult. Let us ask the question concerning the *degree* of unreality of myth and cult: Which of the two is less real? Surely cult *without* myth. Myth must have been prior to cult as its *logical* presupposition. For without a content, without a claim to truth and without a use, a cult would be a blind instrument; its manipulation, the rites, would be like an engine idling; and the whole would be a technique guided by wishful thinking and without any basis in reality.

Even if it is asserted that cult was prior to myth in time—an assertion for which there is no basis in history—we would immediately have to postulate explanatory myths to serve as the foundation for the acts of the cult. The spurious myths, which

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are subordinate to political aims, as well as the genuine ones, which can be traced back to the proto-phenomenon "myth," have one thing in common which is not shared by our hypothetical cult-without-myth. In some way they *deal with reality*. It may be a wrong way or a partially wrong way. But if they had nothing whatsoever to do with reality, the spurious myths which are after all supposed to serve a purpose would be of no use, and it would be the genuine myths that were "fables, chimeras, phantasms" even though they were thought to be true by such a gifted people as the Greeks. In that case, the proto-phenomenon "myth" would not be a single error, but a source of the most various errors. For it is the *mythos* which, with the help of *logos*, develops the genuine myths into the various "mytho-logies" and embodies itself in various "mytho-logems": the mythological stories and images.

Let it be a source of errors. But what then do these errors relate to if not to reality? Errors or no errors: they are produced or not produced in operating on reality. The proto-phenomenon "myth" is a way of operating on reality, but a way which is never complete, which is always in process. This kind of operation *is* the proto-phenomenon "myth." We arrive at the essence of myth when we realize that myth is just *its peculiar, always incomplete operation on reality*. If it were complete, myth would be dead and no longer *the* myth, which is what is now *in* question. A further difference between genuine myth and spurious myths is that the latter are governed by intent, by the direction of a goal, while the process of the former can only be conceived of as spontaneous, as the gushing forth of a spring. It is possible to construct single myths and to devise mythologems according to a technique of one's own, one's mythopoetics. But having once admitted the existence of the proto-phenomenon "myth" behind all myths, mythologems and mythologies, we must also admit its spontaneity—though at the same time the beginnings of a technique which is part of the very essence of spontaneous operation and leads to applications in the form of a cult, and hence to a "cultic" technique, which is the genuine continuation of a genuine beginning.

V

Myth even contains in a genuine way the beginnings of two kinds of technique: the mythopoetic and the cultic; for myth is the presupposition of mythology as well as of cult. But what *is* it? Wherein does it differ as a process from any other kind of process in the world? The proto-phenomenon "myth" must have been a process or—no matter how often it has recurred or will recur—a *recurring* process which was *prior to the word*. In the *word* the Greek language grasped at least one aspect of it. In Greek the "word" was "*mythos*," and originally it had the ring, not of an invented, but a true content. But except for spontaneity, the assumption of a proto-phenomenon "myth" does not entail any particular content. It does entail Being as the most concrete and general reality. Of course, myth came to be embodied not only in the word, but in the image and in the "action in the image": the symbolic act, or in dance.

VI

The state of myth prior to the word was also prior to religion—if we take "religion" to mean, not subjective feelings, but objectively existing things like myths and dogmas, rites and institutions. Here too the word "prior" is to be understood not necessarily in a historical but in a logical sense, that of presupposition. Evidence of that state of incomplete operation is to be found in the history of religion. Outside the history of religion proper, it is evidenced by poets who do not preach a particular religious doctrine. In that state, Being—reality most concrete and general—reveals its splendor and its meaning. And this can take many forms: the form of theophanies in which the dimension of myth opens up *towards* us, as well as through the use of a simple technical device, a set of swings, for by their aid one floats between heaven and earth and *is*: One does nothing but to *be*. Among the Greeks and the Indians swinging was a religious game, played not only by humans but by divine beings, a game appropriate to the human condition, for in it the dimension of myth opens up *away* from us. We *are*—and we communicate with heaven.

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There can be a technique even in what is spontaneous. If the phrase "operation on Being" is for "operation on reality" not altogether inaccurate, technique was not even excluded from the proto-phenomenon "myth." Every human activity involves some technique, no matter how rudimentary. The technique of the dance is certainly closer to the technique peculiar to myth than the technique of sculpture, which creates its images out of solid material. But both are *technai* in Greek. A *techne* is a craft, but also more than a craft. *Orchestiké* is the "*techne* of the dance" as *agalmatopoietiké* is the "*techne* of sculpture." When we use the Greek substantival adjective "techniké" in our modern languages to mean not only "technique" but "technology"—and this is what we do when we speak of "*Technik*" in German or "*technique*" in French—it is as if we were talking about a *techniké techne*, a *techne* of a *techne*, an operation on an operation, its completion for its own sake, a heightening of *techne*. *Techniké* is *techne* on its way to independence, to being-for-itself. There were myths of particular *technai*. But there can be no genuine myth of *techniké* and hence, no genuine myth of technology, for it would be an operation, not on Being, but on an operation itself. That is true not of myth only but of art also according to Friedrich Dürrenmatt: "The atomic bomb can no longer be reproduced, now that it can be produced. Any art, being a human creation, is powerless before it because it is itself a human creation. Two mirrors that reflect each other remain blank."

The technique implicit in myth may develop further in two directions. One direction is that of increased spontaneity to the point of ecstasy, till the capacity for self-control and design is lost either by artistic means like the dance or by artificial ones like wine, mescaline or the mushroom *Psilocybe Mexicana*. The other direction is that of design and calculation, the use of myth even outside a cult and even outside religion: in the sphere of politics, where spurious myths are usually employed. When a religious act is used in such a way, it signifies the absorption of myth by technique. The fact that there is such a use is a disturbing proof of the actual presence of myth. Having started out with spurious myths, and having tried to determine the nature of true myth, let us look now at an example of a

myth turned wholly into a political instrument. In it a genuine myth proved its terrifying usefulness—which is not to pass a judgment on its *aims*.

VII

Having quoted Thomas Mann, let me now quote an ancient representative of the humanist point of view: "So you don't know that Peregrinus is about to burn himself in Olympia?"—"To burn himself?" I exclaimed in astonishment, "How do you mean? And why does he want to burn himself?" When we read these lines in Lucian on the "Death of Peregrinus," our initial shudder is lessened by the temporal distance as well as by the inner distance of the author and his cool and disapproving manner. When we encounter a similar case, and even more than a single case, in our daily papers, the eery impression is even heightened by the fact that it would never have occurred to us that such horrors could ever be repeated. At first the news reached us only about a *single* Buddhist monk who let himself be burned alive in Saigon as a fire signal to expose the threat to Buddha's followers in South Vietnam. The signal was given to the world at large. There can be no doubt about that. But it was such a wild, inarticulate and incomprehensible signal that it failed to produce the calculated effect outside the Buddhist world. The shot went past its mark. Two other monks were therefore selected by lot to suffer death by fire—or so it has been alleged by a follower of the rival Western religion: Christianity. In this case they did not suffer as willingly as the world at large was supposed to believe. The last martyr then reportedly notified the press in advance. At any rate the press appeared in time at the place of the awesome deed.

It has also been maintained in the international press that the self-burning of Buddhists in South Vietnam was the result of incredibly clever psychological speculation. Calculation was certainly involved. But things were not as simple as all that. Self-burning was not suddenly invented after shrewd calculation. On the other hand, it was a mistake to connect it exclusively with Buddhism, with its exercises for extingui-

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shing the self. Self-burning is, rather, an archaic element in Indo-Chinese Buddhism, a heritage from pre-Buddhist ascetics. The most famous of these ascetics became superior to the gods, capable of forcing the gods to give in, by their *tapas*: the heat they produced in themselves by their exercises. But besides this heritage, there is another even more archaic heritage: the no less horrible Indian custom of burning widows. Indian lawgivers themselves differed in their opinions on this custom. In referring to the texts, I am following an expert who could not yet have been thinking of the revival of the custom by Vietnamese monks.⁵

While Apasthamba, Gautama, Manu and Vasistha condemn the custom, the latter, in a different passage, nevertheless promises the world of Brahma to anyone who goes up in flames, evidently in accordance with an ancient and wide-spread custom. The Indian epic makes it clear that this custom is an application of a myth, its translation into action. In the *Ramayana* we are told about Sarabhanga's death by fire and his conquest of the world of Brahma by severe penitence. " 'That is the way,' he said to Rama. 'Observe, my dear, for a moment how I leave my members, like a snake that sloughs off its old skin.' Thereupon Sarabhanga laid the fire, sacrificed some butter while reciting incantations, and climbed into the fire. The fire consumed his hair, his old skin, bones, flesh and blood. A youth arose resembling the fire. From the stake Sarabhanga rose up in splendor; he stepped over the worlds of the fire-worshippers, the great Rshis and the gods, and up into the world of Brahma." In a different passage in the *Ramayana*, the penitent Suberi sacrificed herself with Rama's permission on the stake and "like the flaming fire entered into heaven."

The Greeks encountered this custom for the first time when Kalanus, a Brahmin who had joined Alexander the Great and accompanied him to Persia, climbed onto the stake there. The king admired him, but must have felt the haughty attitude of the ascetic towards the Westerners. Onesicritus, a cynical philosopher in Alexander's entourage, left an explicit account of it, bringing out the provocative character of the Brahmin. In the

⁵ A. Hillebrandt, *Sitzungsbericht*, Munich 1917, p. 5 f.

famous case of the Brahmin Zarmarus or Zarmanochegas it is especially clear that death by fire was not only intended as the realization of a myth, but had become a spectacle, to show the Western world what the East was capable of. Zarmarus came to the West with the delegation of an Indian king who sought to establish good relations with Augustus. In Greece Zarmarus wanted to be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. This took place in the year 20 B.C., in the presence of Augustus himself. In Eleusis, the *visio beatifica*, the beatific vision, was staged against a background of fire which did no harm to anyone. After being granted the vision, the Indian had a stake put up and his body rubbed with oil in the manner of Greek athletes. He then jumped laughing into the fire, as the champion of the East playing according to the rules of Western competitions, and before the entire world and its rulers. He triumphed over the *visio beatifica* of the Greeks with the *sacrificium beatificum*, the beatific sacrifice, of the Indians.

In comparison with this act, which may be called "political" in the fullest sense because of the extraordinary attendant publicity, Peregrinus' act was a private imitation, serving only his own glory. "The ambitious fool," writes Lucian, "did at long last turn to fire, so strongly did the love of glory burn in him. On this count he could be called a second Empedocles, but with this difference: that the latter did not want to be seen by anyone when he jumped into the crater of Mount Etna, whereas this noble hero chose the most frequented of all national gatherings in Greece as the showplace for his great feat and had an enormous tower of wood piled up in order to leap into it in the presence of an infinite number of spectators, having even notified them in a public speech a few days before the event.

This happened under the emperor Marcus Aurelius, immediately after the holy period of the Olympic games and somewhat outside the holy grounds. Other speeches were also made, either glorifying "the silly old fool," as Lucian calls him, or else mocking him. We have no reason to suspect the truthfulness of this account on any essential point. Lucian seems not to have known the man's original name—he preferred to call himself Proteus among Greeks and Peregrinus among Romans—but only that he came from East. The pro-consul of Syria, a man who

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loved philosophy, had already seen through the man when he was brought before him. In Lucian's words, he had seen "how it looked inside the head of this man, and that he was even fool enough to die out of vanity and a craving for future glory." The pro-consul therefore let him go. The half-insane man—he was also alleged to have strangled his father—"had at the time infiltrated a Christian congregation in Palestine" and become its "prophet, community leader and head of the synagogue." As Lucian also tells us, he was like a second Christ, a god and a lawgiver who, so Lucian continues, "was thrown into prison, a fact which helped in no small measure to instil in him for the rest of his life a peculiar pride, and to fan his love for the miraculous and the restless striving for the reputation of an extraordinary man, which were to be his ruling passions." By letting him go, the philosophical pro-consul had kept him from eventually mounting the cross.

Only after trying in vain to compete with the founder of Christianity did Peregrinus turn to India in order to prove, as Lucian expressly says, "that he stood in no way behind the Brahmins in steadfastness." And Lucian adds: "As if there could be no equally vainglorious fools in India as among us!" He did not, however, go as far as was customary among the Brahmins. According to the above-mentioned account of Onesicritus, the pilot and philosopher, they did not do what Zarmarus did, who had apparently imitated Greek athletes. Instead, when the stake had been set up and began to burn, they stood motionless quite close to it, letting themselves be singed for a while. They then mounted the stake and let themselves be burned without flinching and without altering their position in the least.

Peregrinus wanted to mount the stake like the Indians at the moment of sunrise in order to pay his respects to the sun in Brahmin fashion. But being a cynical philosopher, he also wanted to follow the example of Heracles and the Greek myth of heavenly ascent through fire. "I too," he exclaimed in his oration, "want to be a benefactor of mankind, by showing them how death must be held in contempt." He was hoping that, at the last minute, he would be prevented from carrying out his design. There were indeed some who shouted: "Preserve your-

self for Greece!" But the others cried: "Do what you have decided to do!" He thus chose a moon-lit night, appeared with a flare, accompanied by another person carrying a flare—in imitation of the high priest of Eleusis and his companion, the *daduchos*; then lit the stake, tossed incense into it as into a sacrificial fire, turned South to invoke his maternal and paternal deities, and finally leapt into the fire.

VIII

The martyrs of Saigon were certainly not thinking of Kalanus and Zarmarus or Zarmanochegas. And I cannot say anything about the Southern Buddhist tradition of death by fire—who the saints were who preceded the self-sacrificial victims of today after Buddha had already taken care of de-mythologizing their religion. Nothing more need be said about the political aspect and the technical features of their sacrifice that follow from that aspect, or about the absorption of myth by technique. But myth and its presence appear there—among the followers of a de-mythologized religion—under certain aspects about which nothing has been said so far. While myth appears fraught with danger and shot through with terror, its presence appears as an irruption which may always recur at any moment and become visible through terror. If there is anything in Jungian psychology which has any prospect of survival, it is surely this early axiom of C. G. Jung's: "It can be said that, if one were to succeed in cutting off all traditions at once, mythology and the history of religion would begin again with the next generation." Jung was here thinking of the dark chapters rather than the splendid ones. For it was always the dark ones that hovered before his mind, and even in the splendid ones he surmised more darkness than is generally thought to be there.

The Vietnamese irruption may have come to pass under the highest ethical ideals, and it may represent not only a technical, but an ethical transformation of an old Indian mythologem, in which the terrifying and destructive aspect has always been directed, not against others, but against the bearers of the sacrifice. Nevertheless, it seems to confirm the truth of

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Jung's axiom. If we disregard the higher aim and look only at the common human element in the case of Peregrinus and that of the Buddhist monks, one impression will force itself upon us: A tradition which, though not completely forgotten, is nevertheless thought to be dead at the present time can yet be revived because its roots reach into a timeless abyss, and above this abyss floats the isle of man—defended by Lucian and Thomas Mann—always in danger and always in process of erosion. But then a question also forces itself upon us, a question raised by the definition of myth as an "operation on reality": To whom are we to attribute the terror and the evil, the intent to destroy, which may also appear in a genuine myth and its sequel—to *Being* or to *Man*?

IX

The answer will probably depend on our answer to the purely philosophical question, whether Being can be "Being for self-annihilation." But we can also reflect on a question concerning myth in a purely anthropological way—only with a view to man, even contemporary man. There can hardly be a genuine myth of technology, as technology shows itself on the road cybernetics is taking. And even this road is not without barriers. But what are we to make of the fear that machine is becoming an independent power? The expressions of this fear already constitute a considerable body of literature—a literature in which no genuine myth, but nevertheless a *myth of technology* is being developed? This literature would hardly exist if one could conceive of an independently existing machine—the realization of a technology that had become independent—as a benevolent power. Nor, probably, would it exist if the power of the machine were conceived of as neither good nor evil, as science would seem to require—if science could at all admit the possibility of such independence. We always fear only an evil power, if not among the gods, then at least in the practical sphere. Not everybody shares this fear. If we were to undertake an analysis of writings directed against technology, we should find that technology is in fact being invaded by demons, except

that the demons do not exist at all for the technicians, only for those minds who are receptive to myths, whether genuine or spurious. The myth of technology must be spurious because it lacks a basis in Being. It remains an "operation on an operation." It does not lack a basis in man, for man creates evil, either in his mythical conception of technology or—if we are to concede the truth of this conception for the sake of the argument—in technology itself, but that is after all produced by man.

This example, taken from experience, decides the question. There is no need to postulate a collective unconscious which would contain all evil, either as an independently existing entity or as an integral component of the whole. It suffices to know that man is "an abyss of the past," according to a dictum of Schelling's, brought to light again by Karl Löwith. As Hölderlin puts it:

The heavenly powers cannot do everything.
For mortal men reach closer to the abyss.

Not to the abyss of Being, but of their own past. Man has a complicated structure; to speak of it on the model of "levels" is already to oversimplify the facts. The older level, the one that originated earlier in time, can be thought of as the deeper level; but the deeper must not as a matter of course be thought of as the better or the less dangerous. But we did not set ourselves the task of analyzing man. We also tried not to separate what belonged to Being from what belonged to man. This would require an analysis of particular genuine myths, not just of the modern myth of technology. But it can hardly be doubted that the evil demons of the mythologies belong to man's part in myth. Man shall be cured of his demons.