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# How We Stand Before Things to Come: Cavell as Reader of Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Benjamin

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## ABSTRACT

Beneath Stanley Cavell's philosophy for the future lies a view of history and historicity expressed by the ideas of 'declining decline' and 'finding as founding'. In this article, I analyze how such ideas arise from readings of Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Benjamin. In his dialogues with these thinkers, Cavell engages with issues in the philosophy of history that are mostly absent from discussions of human life within the analytic tradition. I claim that Cavell's notion of the ordinary is as much inherited from this engagement as from the philosophies of language of Austin and Wittgenstein. I end by suggesting that despite Cavell's fascination with Heidegger, his philosophy for the future is in fact closer to Benjamin in the way they both conceive relations between art and the ordinary.

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## 1. Introduction. Cavell's 'Philosophy for the Future' and Post-Hegelian Philosophy of History

The main issue in this article is Stanley Cavell's engagement with what in Continental philosophy is called philosophy of history. In several places, Cavell depicts his work as a 'philosophy for the future' (Cavell 2005 *Philosophy – The Day After Tomorrow*; Cavell et al. 2022, Time after Time).<sup>1</sup> Beneath the idea of a philosophy for the future lies a view of history and historicity<sup>2</sup> expressed by the ideas of 'declining decline' and 'finding as founding' (these are the titles of the two lectures in *This New Yet Unapproachable America*, Cavell 1989). In this article, I will analyze how the two ideas of 'declining decline' and 'finding as founding' arise from readings of Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Benjamin, as these authors think about history and the historicity of our experience. In his dialogues

with them, Cavell, the ordinary language philosopher, engages with issues in the philosophy of history that are almost absent in the analytic tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Given the dominance of reductive naturalism in the analytic tradition, discussions of the temporal and historic condition of human life, which are frontstage in the Continental tradition, and which have permeated philosophy from Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche to the Frankfurt School, to Heidegger, to twentieth-century French philosophy, are rare. Cavell is an exception. In this article, I will argue that the notion of ordinary, which lies at the heart of his philosophy, and which ultimately makes his liberal naturalism *liberal*, as opposed to reductive, is as much inherited from Austin and Wittgenstein as it is developed in his dialogue on history and historicity with Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Benjamin.<sup>4</sup>

Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Benjamin all think about the historical nature of human experience. This is not just thinking about history. Also, thinking about history is not just getting facts about the past right, fitting that which has been, and ceased to be, into our present thought and language, or pursuing that same task within an academic discipline called ‘history’. In Continental philosophy, discussions reach from history (including the history of philosophy) to philosophy of history. This involves considering human (individual and collective) existence in time, its meaning, its progress, or decay, as well as considering what speaking of progress and decay in human forms of life might mean. It also involves a reflection on the stance of human existence towards time: its temporality. The ‘temporality’ of human existence names the fact that one finds oneself situated in a specific present, between birth and death, with a specific past and an open future, being called to project oneself towards things to come. Each temporal human existence is lived in a particular historic context: the term ‘historicity’ names the contingent worldly context in which every individual existence ‘finds itself’ and is called to project itself. It is not the same to find oneself and project oneself being born in fourth-century Rome, 1940s Germany or today’s China.<sup>5</sup>

Within Continental philosophy, the project of thinking about history is pursued not only as methodological reflection about what it means to think and write about the past, since past things are not there anymore. It is also pursued, after Hegel, as a critique and an alternative to Hegel’s views of the whole of reality, human history included, as the realization of *Geist*, or Spirit, or Reason, and as the reaching of a *telos*, a goal. Such a goal is, for Hegel, the recognition of Reason in Reality, and thus the reconciliation of Spirit with itself (in the *present*, and in *philosophy*, which are thus seen as ‘*culmination*’). This Hegelian framework is one way to formulate the idea that there is such a thing as progress in human history. Such progress is the result of a dialectic and teleological path of *Geist* (or Spirit, or Reason), which recognizes itself at the end, in the higher forms of human society, culture and thought, such as philosophy itself (what Hegel calls the Absolute Spirit). Except for Emerson,

whose connection with European philosophy goes mostly through Kant, all the authors considered here (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Benjamin) should be understood in relation to these ideas as they are found in Hegel and discussed in a post-Hegelian context. This means that Nietzsche, Heidegger and Benjamin are fully aware of the philosophical debates about time, history and historicity pursued in a Hegelian framework and in Hegelian language, and yet do not share Hegel's conviction that there is such a teleological, dialectic, path of *Geist* in history. Their common topic of the future thus comes to the fore and becomes pressing. The future lies open, anew, when one thinks about human temporal and historical existence after the demise of Hegel's trust in the realization of Spirit, or Reason, in history. Regarding the present as the culmination of history and seeing history as the process of recognition and reconciliation of Spirit with itself, Hegel simply elides the future as a question. Without Hegel, though, and when one wants to leave Hegel behind, the future is *the* question.

The future (what I am calling 'things to come') is, naturally, the central issue of Cavell's philosophy for the future. Addressing it, Cavell is up to risky business: he is taking the ordinary language practice of philosophy, inspired by Wittgenstein and Austin, which is modest and focused on detail, to very different waters. Yet the future is a topic Cavell cannot avoid, seeing philosophy as he does, as instruction, as education for grown-ups and as an attempt at understanding what is there in plain view.<sup>6</sup> According to Cavell, philosophy necessarily involves an understanding of what is of interest and importance, as we stand toward things to come and 'project' ourselves, to become 'who we are' (Cavell 2005). These are the challenges of moral perfectionism.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is Cavell's moral perfectionism itself that forces the theme of the future upon him.

When Cavell approaches issues of history and historicity in a dialogue with the authors I am about to consider, he always keeps in mind Emerson's words about the ordinary in *The American Scholar*. Emerson says: «the materials are strewn along the ground for the upbuilding of a man».<sup>8</sup> This means that one projects oneself into the future, starting from what is contingently at hand around us, wherever we happen to find ourselves. Only such a contingent 'finding' can possibly work as 'founding'. 'Finding as founding' thus replaces the search for 'foundation', the desire of 'getting to the bottom for all things', which is an 'old thought for an old world' (Cavell 1989, 109).

In the following sections, I will spell out how Cavell's 'philosophy for the future', with its twin ideas of 'declining decline' and 'finding as founding', develops as an essential part of his moral perfectionism, based on a reflection on the notion of 'ordinary' and against the background of post-Hegelian philosophy of history. In [section 2](#). (*Emerson and Nietzsche on history and historicity: The philosopher as 'the man of tomorrow and the day after*

tomorrow) I analyze Cavell's reading of Emerson and Nietzsche, as he interprets them together, resulting in a view of history and historicity, and of the future, different than Heidegger's important reading of Nietzsche. I also suggest that Cavell's philosophy for the future is built on Emerson's and Nietzsche's valuing of the near and ordinary. In [sections 3 and 4](#) (*Heidegger and Benjamin on the role of art in thinking anew of things before us*, and *Heidegger on decline*) I continue exploring the shaping of Cavell's notion of the ordinary, adding Heidegger's and Benjamin's views on art, history and the ordinary to the valuing of the common and the near found in Emerson and Nietzsche. I end by suggesting (Conclusion, *A philosophy for the future: declining decline through art and the ordinary*) that despite Cavell's fascination with Heidegger, his philosophy for the future is in fact closer to Benjamin, as shown in the way both conceive relations between art and the ordinary.

## 2. Emerson and Nietzsche on History and Historicity: The Philosopher as 'The Man of Tomorrow and the Day After Tomorrow'

In *Philosophy – The Day After Tomorrow* (Cavell 2005) and *Here and There* (Cavell et al. 2022) Cavell, often points at the path I am about to analyze. There he presents Nietzsche as 'the obvious bridge from Emerson to Heidegger' (Cavell et al. 2022, 82). He stresses the importance of the fact that the very same Nietzsche without whom 'there is no later Heidegger' 'loved Emerson's mind' (82). Reading Emerson and Nietzsche together thus marks Cavell's reading of Nietzsche on history, distancing him from Heidegger's reading. This is what I will try to show in what follows.

We find Cavell thinking about history after Emerson and Nietzsche in *Philosophy – The Day After Tomorrow* (Cavell 2005), a clearly Nietzschean title, *This New Yet Unapproachable America* (Cavell 1989), *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* (Cavell 1990) and *Emerson's Transcendental Études* (Cavell 2003). The last three are his most Emersonian works. Together with Thoreau, Emerson is one main source of Cavell's moral perfectionism, and in fact has many roles in Cavell's philosophy; I won't go into all of them here. I am interested in how Cavell reads Emerson and Nietzsche together, almost (intentionally) conflating them (Cavell 2005, 117).

Nietzsche himself was a passionate reader of Emerson and Cavell's Nietzsche is an Emersonian through and through. Yet seeing Nietzsche as closely related to Emerson as Cavell does is not the only way to see Nietzsche. In fact, one main problem of doing that is that « The idea that Emerson, founding father of American democratic philosophy, could be related to Nietzsche, demonic symbol of German autocracy and eccentricity, was

long considered to be something equivalent to the desecration of a national icon » (Zavatta 2013, 375) . Clearly, whatever their affinities may be, Emerson is a thinker of democracy, whereas Nietzsche is not.<sup>9</sup> Yet, no matter how much Emerson inspires Cavell's own approach to democracy (which he does),<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche is a conspicuous presence in his work, and with a very important role.<sup>11</sup>

In *Philosophy – The Day After Tomorrow*, Cavell appeals to Nietzsche's theme of 'the day after tomorrow' to characterize philosophy itself. He claims that the philosophy for the future will be, or should be, Nietzschean.<sup>12</sup> In contrast with receptions of Nietzsche within analytic philosophy, which take Nietzsche mostly as a naturalist philosopher of mind and action (e.g. Leiter 2014), Cavell is interested in Nietzsche as a thinker of 'the future'. Nietzsche describes himself as writing for 'the man of tomorrow and of the day after tomorrow'. This is what matters for Cavell. This is, in fact the very same reason why Nietzsche is so important to Heidegger (Heidegger 1991). Still, Heidegger and Cavell do not see the same Nietzsche.

The Nietzschean theme of the man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow that Cavell is interested in is present in *Human All Too Human*, in the 1886 prologue to the 1878 original edition, in *Beyond Good and Evil – Prelude to a philosophy of the future* (1886), as well as in the new Preface (1886) to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *The Gay Science*.<sup>13</sup> Dealing with the theme, Cavell enjoys playing with the German words Nietzsche uses: the *Über* in *Übermorgen* (the day after tomorrow) is the same *Über* as in *Übermensch* (Nietzsche's superman, or overman). In both cases, what is at stake is *overcoming* – overcoming things as they are in the present. Addressing the man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, Nietzsche is thinking about how we stand before things to come, how we face the future: « The *Übermorgen* is the day realized by the *Übermensch* » (Cavell 2005, 118).

Nietzsche calls the man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow 'philosopher'. Cavell is interested in Nietzsche's 'philosopher' as « thinking through pessimism to affirmation » (Cavell et al. 2022, 23–25). This is what he believes that both Emerson and Nietzsche are doing. For both Emerson and Nietzsche, philosophy, as 'thinking for the future' (Bauer, Cray, and Laugier 2022, 7) involves 'a sense of morning', a sense of newness. The philosopher is a 'furtherer of man', who finds himself 'in contradiction with his today' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 212). He is averse to the demand of conformity of the present and strives for different virtues in the future (Cavell 2005, 117).<sup>14</sup> He is a founder, a free spirit (Cavell et al. 2022, 25),<sup>15</sup> set to create new values and a new culture, not just a genealogist, turned towards the past and doing philosophy 'with a hammer'.<sup>16</sup> Having ears for this newness, Nietzsche claims, calls for a reversal (*Umkehrung*) of one's habitual estimation and esteemed habits (Cavell 2005, 117). The

ideas of aversion to conformity and of having ears to new words and new virtues are Emerson's ideas. As Cavell sees things, these ideas are doing their work in Nietzsche.

Cavell follows Nietzsche as Nietzsche explores his views on history and historicity in dialogue with Emerson. Cavell thinks that in their dialogue a new conception of philosophy emerges: « Emerson and Nietzsche are variously explicit in saying that philosophy as such is thinking for the future – (...) their sense of going beyond philosophy in what they say about the future is at the same time a claim to the stance of philosophy. » (Cavell 2022, 23). Cavell claims for himself this Emersonian-Nietzschean view of philosophy. It is that view of philosophy that he articulates it in the titles of the two lectures of *This New Yet Unapproachable America* (Cavell 1989)<sup>17</sup>: 'Declining decline' and 'Finding as founding'. These are two stances towards historic experience. This is what an Emersonian-Nietzschean view of philosophy involves: their 'philosophy of history', as it were. The two stances are appealed to by Cavell as he characterizes his own moral perfectionism; moral perfectionism is thus permeated by the 'sense of morning', the sense of newness, that Cavell finds in Emerson and Nietzsche.

But what is the 'decline' to be declined? That decline is what Nietzsche calls *nihilism* (I will soon go into that). Nihilism as historic decline (as it came to be the title of Oswald Spengler's 1918 book the 'Decline of the West', *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*) very much captured European imagination in the twentieth century. Europe saw itself portrayed by it. Nihilism as decline amounts to a wearing out of the desire for the world, and thus a lack of will for the future. In fact, two of Cavell's philosophical heroes, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, were personally quite receptive to Spenglerian ideas of decline (Cavell 1989, first lecture; Cavell 2003, 110). Yet what Cavell wants to keep from Wittgenstein and Heidegger (which is, no doubt, much in other areas of his work) does not include such inclination.

'Finding as founding' is an antidote to views of decline: the Emersonian challenge that one projects oneself starting from what is at hand, from the 'materials strewn on the ground', in their contingency, counters the wearing out of desire for the world, the pessimism and the nihilism. Throughout Cavell's writings, 'Finding as founding' is sometimes spelled out as 'America' (in his words, « the future, call it America, or call it the world that may be», Cavell 2022, 27). Yet although Cavell is, no doubt, interested in his own country, 'a country without philosophy' as he calls it,<sup>18</sup> 'America', in the sense that matters here, is not necessarily one specific country but, he stresses, 'the future, the world that may be'. Declining decline is anyway, crucial in Cavell's articulation of moral perfectionism, as it is crucial, as we will see, for his view of the relations between art and the ordinary. Much depends here on Cavell's interpretation of Nietzsche's nihilism, so I will go back into that.

Cavell's interpretation of Nietzsche as an Emersonian thinker of the future and a moral perfectionist clashes with Heidegger's interpretation, which is perhaps the dominant one within Continental philosophy (Constâncio 2013). Heidegger reads Nietzsche as a metaphysician the 'last metaphysician', proposing a metaphysical view of the nature of the world as Will to Power and its acceptance as 'Eternal Return'. This is not Cavell's Nietzsche. Nihilism is there in both interpretations, but with different roles.

It is in dialogue with Emerson, according to Cavell, that Nietzsche makes explicit his own way of 'declining decline'. He is set on overcoming the danger he calls *nihilism*, which he sees as the fear that the possibilities of man, and of history, have all been exhausted (Constâncio 2013) after the death of God (Cavell 2022, 28). Nietzsche's thinking for the future is a way of confronting nihilism. Articulating such confrontation, Nietzsche takes from Emerson the very words he uses to describe the 'man of the future' and the steps against 'being infected with unreality' (Cavell 2005, 210). He speaks of enhancement, intensification and expansion of man.

Heidegger, too is interested in Nietzsche's views on nihilism. In his courses on Nietzsche in the 1930s (Heidegger 1991), he interprets Nietzsche's nihilism in the light of the history of metaphysics, as the last metaphysician in the Western tradition. But reading Nietzsche, Heidegger also has his eyes on the wider extra-academic debate on culture and civilization, and decline, going on in Germany at his time. After heveloping his thinking about history and historicity in *Sein und Zeit*, a work where erudite analyses of temporality and historicity range from Aristotle's views of time to Hegel's view of history, to Dilthey's methodological discussions of history as an academic discipline, Heidegger feels the need to appeal to Nietzsche. The point is to bring nihilism into a discussion that the wider audience of his contemporaries can relate to, seeing their times as times of nihilism. In all these contexts, bringing in the issue of nihilism, Heidegger is exploring his topic of historicity, *Geschichtlichkeit*, which he connects with destiny and fate (*Geschick*). *Geschichtlichkeit* is an omnipresent issue in his work; in his later writings on 'Being' and language, he is still engaged with it.<sup>19</sup>

My point is, Heidegger's Nietzsche is not Cavell's Emersonian Nietzsche. Heidegger's Nietzsche serves Heidegger in drawing a bridge between his audacious readings of the history of metaphysics and the proposal of a 'destruction of metaphysics' (§7 *Sein und Zeit*) and the widespread (popular, extra-academic) decrying of the decline of the West in his times. On the other hand, the (intra-academic) goal of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche is far from Cavell's moral perfectionism, his goal being rather the quest for Being, to reopen the *Seinsfrage*, the question of Being, the all-important and forgotten central question for thought.

These differences matter for a view of history. According to Heidegger's view of history, Being donates itself. Such donation takes place through

destiny and fate and so, as it were, ‘from the future’, as things to come dawn on us, happen to us. Humans find themselves in historic times, thus ‘donated’. Although the conception of thinking as piety which Heidegger puts forward at this point in fact interests Cavell (1989), he, in contrast with Heidegger, is not interested in views of history as involving destiny and fate. He holds fast to his reading of Nietzsche as an Emersonian perfectionist. Even if Emerson’s tone of enthusiasm may end up being not tolerable for too long (Cavell 2022, *Time after time*, p. 22), that is the tone Cavell hears; not Heidegger’s tone of decline to speak of the present and destiny to speak of the future.

What matters in both cases, anyway, when discussions of nihilism are brought in for thinking about history and historical experience, is that in times of nihilism, newness, or ‘the future, the world that may be’, may seem impossible. There is no purpose, no meaning, no will, no desire. Exhaustion marks how one stands towards things to come. Nietzsche warned of the philistinism accompanying the death of God. Another celebrated reader of Emerson, Thoreau, famously said most men live lives of quiet desperation, and secret melancholy. According to Nietzsche, the tiredness of humans regarding the human in the times of nihilism is a disease affecting his contemporaries. Still, he believes such a disease can be overcome and that greatness is possible in the present and the future. But greatness supposes a re-valuing what is there before one’s eyes. This is what Nietzsche’s names ‘Yes to existence’ (Cavell 2005, 68). Without Nietzsche’s ‘Yes to existence’, which Cavell describes in terms of appraisal, or valuing (Cavell 2005, chapters 5 and 6), Nietzsche’s depiction of historic newness as *Vergrößerung* of man cannot be understood. According to Cavell, Nietzsche’s ‘Yes to existence’, or appraisal, takes up Emerson’s ‘invitation to philosophers to see the world dance before their eyes’ (Cavell 2005).

The process of re-valuing what is there before one’s eyes is connected to another important topic common to Emerson and Nietzsche: the value of history for life. Both Emerson and Nietzsche see the excess of historic conscience, the excess of knowledge of what the past was, and the feeling of how important it was, as an impediment to action and to the creation of new forms of life. A paradigm of which is Nietzsche’s second *Untimely Meditation, On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (Nietzsche 1997). The Emersonian-Nietzschean man of the future does not constantly look back to the great and remote past. Such attention is stifling and sterile. What he gives attention to, and values, is the near, the common, the ordinary. Emerson’s essay *The American Scholar* epitomizes for Cavell the philosophical valuing of the near and the ordinary, which is central in his own work. In *The American Scholar* we find an injunction to the Harvard students of 1837 that they do not search for the antiques of Europe, but look around them for the close, the low, the near in Emerson’s exact words, «I ask

not for the great, the remote, the romantic, what is doing in Italy or Arabia, what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy: I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low.» (Emerson and Porte 1983, 68–69). It is in this sense that Emerson's and Nietzsche's philosophy for the future is a philosophy of the ordinary, one which Cavell wants to pursue.

The parallels between Emerson and Nietzsche, which interest Cavell are not without limit. It is not straightforward e.g. whether and how the valuing of the common and the ordinary relates to Nietzsche's view that the Greeks were profound in that they valued appearances (see Nietzsche 2001, Preface). Also, as I pointed out earlier, the valuing of the close and the near is connected, in Emerson, with a striving for democracy and community (Emerson and Porte 1983), of which there is no counterpart in Nietzsche. Nietzsche is not a thinker of democracy. Nietzsche's man of tomorrow is a solitary, not a member of a community. Heidegger will read yet something else into this valuing of 'the close and the near'.<sup>20</sup> What I wanted to bring forth, though, was only that in his philosophy for the future, Cavell inherits Emerson's and Nietzsche's valuing of the near and ordinary. Clearly, the ordinary in this sense (as 'the common and the near') is not only ordinary language as it matters methodologically for Cavell, the ordinary language philosopher, the follower of Austin and Wittgenstein. The ordinary in this sense of the common and the near relates to the ordinary historical world around us and how we face it, when facing things to come.

Cavell's theme of 'America, or the world that may be' (Cavell et al. 2022, 27) reveals its importance at this point. 'America' is a name for a way of standing before things to come without appealing to the cultured antiques of Europe and the weight of history. But it also stands for making room for those arriving anew and starting anew. Cavell often tells his readers about his own identification with the stranger and the immigrant (Cavell 2005, 111). The first thing he means is that he himself is a stranger within analytic philosophy, the philosophy of his tradition. But he also sometimes means he is a latecomer to the high culture of Europe.<sup>21</sup> His writings are full of ironic remarks on reading quite late, say, the German Romantics or some European philosophy (Cavell 1989, 2022). He reflects on what to make of that: he thinks there is nothing wrong with not sharing with others, from the start, a past of high culture (Cavell 1989). These are not topics Cavell explicitly takes up; he rather alludes to them. Yet they matter because of relations between the ordinary and art, the relation which is the very mark of Cavell's work in aesthetics (Miguens 2022). The valuing of popular art and popular culture, and thus of what for many is low art and low culture, namely Hollywood film of the 30s and 40s (Cavell 2004) that is so important in Cavell's work is unusual within analytic aesthetics and in the philosophy of film. In it Cavell connects an 'eye for the near' with the 'eye for the new' moral perfectionism involves. As we will see, the very same themes of the

near and the new loom large in Heidegger's and Benjamin's work on art and the ordinary (Benjamin 1969; Heidegger 1975b).

### 3. Heidegger and Benjamin on the Role of Art in Thinking Anew of Things Before Us

Cavell read widely in Heidegger, from *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger 1962) to the later writings on language and Being (Heidegger 1975b, 1975c, 1975d, 1975e, 1991, 1996).<sup>22</sup> His fascination is manifest in 'Thoreau thinks of ponds, Heidegger of rivers', 'The world as things' (both in Cavell 2005, the latter also in; Cavell et al. 2022), or in *This New Yet Unapproachable America* (Cavell 1989). Heidegger's idea that works of art let truth happen clearly marks him, as does the idea that 'what (art) does [letting truth happen] this may not be found in everything we call art and be found in what we do not' (Cavell 1989, Prologue). Still, I want to argue that despite the fascination with Heidegger, Cavell's philosophy for the future is in fact closer to Benjamin, precisely in the way they both conceive relations between art and the ordinary.

Until this point I have claimed that Cavell's theme of the ordinary is inherited not only from the ordinary language philosophy of Austin and Wittgenstein, but also from Emerson's poetic and moral thinking, as it converges with an interpretation of Nietzsche. This being so, what Cavell means by 'ordinary' is not at all straightforward. The appeal to the ordinary means, granted, that the philosopher takes natural language, the language that we speak, as a starting point and touchstone for philosophy (as opposed to e.g. Cartesian consciousness, or logic). Natural language is part of the 'rough ground' to which philosophy constantly returns, according to Cavell. But that is not the only meaning of 'ordinary'. By 'ordinary', Cavell also means the world around us, the availability of things ready at hand, what in *Being and Time* Heidegger called *Zuhandenheit*, our familiarity with things, our being drawn to them, 'the low and the near' of everyday life. Such familiarity with things simply characterizes our being in the world.<sup>23</sup> Cavell is always interested in the ordinary in that sense as well.

This is the sense of ordinary I will now consider, and the first thing to point out is that nothing is obvious or manifest in what concerns time and history about the ordinary taken in this sense. In ordinary material life, we are faced with the presence of the but this is something we are immersed in. It is not like anything, for me, that everything around me now belongs to a historic present. It seems to be simply there. It would not be like this if the same material context were transposed in time. Imagine these same screens, books, furniture, the buildings that I see through the window, and imagine that two hundred years have passed. The naturalness and obviousness of such things would disappear; strangeness would come forth. We could try to travel in time in the opposite direction, as it were. Imagine that we are at the

mumok, a contemporary art museum in Vienna, in an exhibition about the Secession, the Wiener Werkstätte, the works of the architect Adolf Loos, organized around common furniture and architecture, and going through the transition between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, until around the 1930s. As we walk through the exhibition, we learn facts about the passionate discussions in Vienna, in this relatively recent past, about the design of common objects, and about architecture and its function. We read some extracts from Adolf Loos's *Ornament and Crime* on the wall. We read about the horror of the Viennese in front of the clean facade of the Looshaus on Michaelerplatz. We understand all this, and yet the effect of novelty and disruption, which provoked discussions and disputes, has disappeared. All of this has become history for us. We are latecomers. What does it mean, however, for something to have become history and yet still be around? How are we in relation to all that which is no longer present but to which we somehow still have access? How is it that, despite the voracity of time, despite the disappearance of things, something is preserved in what is there before us? Walter Benjamin cared about all these questions. It was by thinking about them that he had something important to say about time, history, and historicity.<sup>24</sup>

Cavell comments at one point, speaking of Benjamin, that « Seen from that shared territory (the tradition of Frege, Russell, Carnap and Quine) the honest answer to the question of Benjamin's actual contribution [to that tradition] is: roughly ni l » (Cavell et al. 2022, 121). That is perhaps true. In fact, Cavell does not have a global interpretation of Benjamin, only comments on different works by Benjamin, such as *The Arcades Project*, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, and the writings on technology and art (see Cavell et al. 2022). Still, their shared territory is easily identifiable. We find it in the questions I identified above and in the fact that newness, a crucial topic in Cavell's work on modernism, is also a crucial topic in Benjamin. For Cavell, the word 'modern' signaled « not just a twentieth-century literary and artistic movement, but a moment in which human beings no longer understand tradition as a determinate guide and therefore feel that they must innovate and improvise while still, at the same time, forging a future that counts as meaningful continuation of the past. » (Bauer, Crary, and Laugier 2022, 5). In Continental philosophy, questions of newness and modernism are dealt with within 'aesthetics', which is thus understood as comprising not just discussions of the beautiful, of taste, and of the nature of art, but also the discussions about history and historicity. These are found under the guise of discussions of 'modernity' and 'modernism'. In other words, Cavell's range of themes doing aesthetics is simply that of a Continental philosopher (see Cavell 1969, 1979, especially on modernism).

What is new in history then? And what is new in art? What counts as new? And how does thinking about newness in art help us think about history and

our historic experience of newness? As I said, this is Benjamin's territory. Given his relations with the Frankfurt School, we might expect him to think like a Marxist when thinking philosophically about the future, and so to think of history as a dialectic process, as Hegel does, only from a materialist point of view. History is seen in the Marxist tradition, as in Hegel, as a dialectic process where human alienation is present, but where an end to alienation will come, in a future communist society (the materialist counterpart to Hegel's reconciliation of Spirit with reality). Yet one reason Benjamin felt distant from Marxism was precisely the view of time at work in the dialectical vision of history (Benjamin 1969a). He saw the dialectic view of history as depending on a conception of time as an empty container, where facts lined up, 'as if inertly hanging on a rope', 'congealed in the form of things'.<sup>25</sup> He was very critical of such a conception of time. He saw it as a dominating, overpowering view, lying behind not only positivistic history, done by historians, but also behind most thinking about art, resulting in chronological view of art history, which, according to him, was totally devoid of interest for thinking about art (Molder 2011, 2025). So, contrasting with Marx's historic materialism, Benjamin's approach to time and history has mystical and theological undertones. Benjamin, a self-professed materialist who was as interested in the transformation of human life as Marx was, thought philosophically about the future by bringing together art and salvation. Where Marx envisioned an end to alienation in social and economic life in a future communist society, Benjamin saw art as the only salvation possible, and as profane illumination (see Friedlander 2012, especially Chapters 7, 8, and 9).

The ideas of salvation and profane illumination involve a leap outside time. There seems to be something religious about that. Yet Benjamin, who was Jewish, was not exactly religious, the same way that although he was (perhaps) a Marxist he was not exactly orthodox. To understand Benjamin's views of salvation and profane illumination, we must understand that, in thinking about history, his attention was set on what he called *Jetztzeit* (now-time), time as actualization. This was his alternative to so-called vulgar time, time conceived as an empty structure in which present moments succeed and accumulate. Benjamin started out being interested in experience and in Kant's concept of experience (Friedlander 2012). Yet Kant was interested in individual perceptual experience, in sensitivity and understanding, receptivity and conceptualization and left out the historic nature of such experience. For Benjamin, human experience is historic experience, of something that is itself historic. Kant missed this, as he concentrated on experience as individual cognition. But art allows us to grasp what is at stake in human experience as historic experience. Benjamin uses the notion of *Jetztzeit*, together with the concepts of *Eingedenken* (remembrance) and *dialektisches Bild* (dialectic

image) to try to capture it. A dialectic image is a link between the present and the past, a constellation of elements that allows for an understanding of history. Remembrance names the fact that since the past does not exist anymore, all we can do is realize it by remembering. All that we have to go on, in our historic experience, are fragments of the past. Only such fragments are materially present. There is nothing but ruins, remains, fragments, before us, not only in the case of material life (say, old buildings in cities like Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Istanbul, New York), but also in the case of texts. Think of the *Iliad*, the *Divine Comedy*, *King Lear*, or *Les Fleurs du Mal*, or *The Birth of Tragedy*. The people who wrote these texts are not there anymore, just as the people who painted the pictures that capture us especially in the history of painting are not there anymore (say, Picasso, Basquiat, Paula Rego), or the people who composed a symphony we listen to (say, Brahms N°1), or the people who built the ancient Greek temples that we see in front of us now. They're all dead. Authors do not accompany the works they have brought into existence. All we have are these things, these works, as they have come to us. According to Benjamin, what we have can be used either to reconstruct the past, as historians aim to, or as fragments of the future. His point is that replicating the past is simply impossible. We cannot do it; that is not the nature of our relation to history; we will never bring back what once was and ceased to be. The unity that is built when we encounter fragments, ruins or remains of the past is a historical resumption of history, not the past itself. He proposes that flashes of insight do arise from confrontations between the past and the present; this is the dialectic image.<sup>26</sup> Only such seeing the historical past within the context of the present, reveals the potential for revolutionary change or redemption. Such is the importance of art in our historic experience. Naturally, the historical retaking of history by the artist is not the writing of history by the historian. What the artist does is make something exist anew. The artist actualizes and realizes the past, he does not reconstitute it. This is both destroying and redeeming.

In *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin 1999) Benjamin puts this view of history to work. The *Arcades Project* is not just a book: it is *in itself* (rather than presents or and argues for) a view of history. Concentrating on the materiality of the ordinary historic world, Benjamin means to measure himself with Hegel, Marx, or Heidegger, in thinking of history and human life. He provides an alternative both to dialectical and totalizing views of history of Hegel and Marx, as to the mysticism of a donation of Being from the future, as in Heidegger's idea of fate or destiny (Miguens 2022; Molder 2011). Yet the unity of historical time in Hegel or Marx allows us to speak of a single direction of universal history, and of progress; the unity of the dialectical image in Benjamin does none of that. There's no such singleness, or arrow of

progress. Unity can only be achieved in a glimpse, a flash, a constellation, in language, in art, or in thinking.

The first impression of *The Arcades Project* is inevitably strange. We are faced with a heteroclite fresco of 'Paris-the capital of the nineteenth century', of its figures and forms of life. The title refers to the *passages* (arcades), the glass-covered galleries uniting streets in a covered space, a feature of the then-modern architecture. It does not seem to be a philosophy book, if we think of philosophy as conceptual analysis and argumentation, nor does it seem to be directly about history, about time or even about art. In his writing, Benjamin is simply *collecting* the most banal aspects of nineteenth-century Paris. There we find human figures (the *flâneur*, the dandy, the prostitute, the gambler, the poet, the photographer), objects, places and novelties (stores that became department stores, boulevards, panoramas, fashion, dolls, automats, railways, street lighting, . . .). Why did Benjamin write something as bizarre as the *Arcades Project*? Writing it Benjamin was thinking about what writing and thinking themselves are, from a materialist point of view. The form of the text itself is relevant. It involves *collage*, assembly, and construction (practices of surrealism, in fact). He thought that history (the registering, the reporting) takes place in a similar way. Some of Benjamin's figures in the book (the collector, the translator) embody what is done in our historic experience and in our thinking and writing about history: we are collectors and translators. What is there before us is concrete materiality, in its contingency. We undertake a collection and an archive of concrete materials.<sup>27</sup> The details collected in fact often come in the form of written materials. Even if it seems too obvious to say this, Benjamin's materials are texts, that is, they are neither objects nor the experience itself of wandering around Paris in the nineteenth century. In other words, Benjamin works with quotations. His work is a collection and a collage of quotations, which he carefully distinguishes from his comments. Quotation is language taken out of context, removed from the context in which it took place. Even though Benjamin worked on the book's materials for many years, he intentionally leaves the quotations as quotations in most sections. He does not want to incorporate them into his own words. Citing is disruptive: it influences the perception of the relevance and irrelevance of what is said. Perception of importance normally surrounds and contextualizes actual uses of language, which thus lean on our common and shared understanding of the world. Citation, in contrast, produces a leveling effect between the maximally important and the utterly trivial. Aspects of meaning that may not have been originally intended emerge. Benjamin is aware of all of this and does not want to alter it through authorial intervention. This is part of the strangeness of the *Arcades Project*.

But is this history or something completely different? Is this what writing history is supposed to be? Is this not merely erratic wandering

through the most banal materials? And if Benjamin considers himself a historic materialist, aren't all relevant political questions of Marxist materialist view of history as class struggle simply invisible here? Is Benjamin doing epistemology of history, or a metaphysics of time? These are not good questions. Benjamin's view on history and historicity, which is molded around the figures of the collector, the translator (and the artist, and the critic), does not fit into such parameters. Benjamin's point is that being alive is experiencing history historically in the *Jetztzeit*, the now-time. The realization of time does not happen *by itself*: time as actualization needs those who are alive now. The point of view at stake is always *our* point of view, not the point of view of history 'itself', as it were, or of the Hegelian Absolute Spirit or of socialism. This is what is being shown in the *Arcades Project*. This is also a key to the theological inspiration of Benjamin's work. The model of writing for Benjamin is the commentary on the scriptures (Friedlander 2012), and the commentary on the scriptures is, at least at first glance, the very opposite of criticism: we do not make a critical comment on the scriptures. Commenting on the scriptures is rather a way of taking part in ('higher') reality. This is also Benjamin's ambition for the historical experience of history.

All these points about time, history and experience considered, it should be emphasized that Benjamin did not mean to be a historian writing history. He meant to be a critic, and criticism for him did not mean Marxist economic and political criticism: the object of the critic is our life in time. Yet, like Marx, Benjamin in fact had an eye on revolution (Benjamin 1969a) – not on revolutionary movements by the masses but on revelatory newness, which could be brought according to him, e.g. by technology in its relationship with the arts, as was the case of film, in his time (Benjamin 1969b). This is a very important point where Cavell and Benjamin converge in their work: they both seek this revelatory newness in 'our experience of the modern and the popular in the arts' (Cavell et al. 2022, 210). Under that guise, they both explore relations between art and the ordinary. Such a perspective would be utterly alien to Heidegger. Cavell, the philosopher of cinema (Cavell 2004), with his willingness to take seriously, philosophically, popular art and popular culture (Cavell et al. 2022), should feel close to Benjamin here. This is important for Cavell's conception of 'declining decline': unlike Heidegger (or, for that matter, Adorno), neither Benjamin nor Cavell sees popular art and popular culture as marks of decline of culture and thought and art in the present.

To strengthen the case for showing with whom Cavell has stronger affinities, I will now identify with some further contrasts between Heidegger and Cavell on the ordinary. What is important here is that the idea of decline is precisely what Cavell, in his philosophy for the future, wants to decline. But if Cavell intends to 'decline decline' through art and the

ordinary, then he cannot help but have some very deep divergences with Heidegger.

#### 4. Heidegger on Decline

Heidegger's approach to historicity is outlined in Part II of *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962). It extended not only through his work on Nietzsche on nihilism, but also through the later texts on art (Heidegger 1975b), where the view of art as 'letting truth happen', which so impressed Cavell, can be found. At the center of Heidegger's view on art is Being, originating history from the future, like a mysterious supra-human donation, which, we, humans, can only await, passively, to come upon us like destiny, or fate. The work of later Heidegger is often considered rather obscure. I will suggest, though, that a very mundane idea is at work in it, without which we cannot fully understand Heidegger. This is the idea of the degeneration of culture in the present, or, in other words, *decline*.

That our own times are times of decline was once expressed by Heidegger in a particularly sharp manner with the famous pronouncement 'Only a god could still save us', in the interview he gave to *Der Spiegel* in 1966 (Heidegger 2009). The idea of decline is also much present in the text that so interests Cavell, the *Origin of the Work of Art* (Heidegger 1975b), where Heidegger laments the loss, in his times, of the openness to Being that some past art represented. He uses a Greek temple and a pair of farmers' shoes in a painting by Van Gogh as examples of art that 'opened a world' and 'let truth happen'.<sup>28</sup> According to Heidegger, present times of nihilism, in which metaphysics presents itself as science and technology and domination of nature, are characterized by the loss of such openness. This is a view of decline. It is accompanied, in Heidegger, by an idea of salvation at least officially devoid of any theological traces. At some point at least, such view of 'salvation' was articulated around the destiny of a people (the German people) and the privilege of a particular language (German, as Greek before), in the receptiveness, the piety of thought, in relation to the donation by Being. The Rectorate Speech (Heidegger [1933] 1990, *The Self-Assertion of the German University*), delivered to students and faculty when Heidegger became the first National-Socialist rector of the University of Freiburg, expresses this conviction of privilege. It connects the themes of *Being and Time* (human existence, its temporality and historicity, the need for resolute decision for there to be authenticity in historic existence) to the spiritual mission and historic destiny of the German people and the German university in the 1930s. In the speech, Heidegger calls upon German academics and students to stand up to the historic times in which they find themselves, to stand up to destiny and act. In other words, he appeals to *Sein und Zeit's*

philosophic notions of authenticity and historicity and connects them with a political call for a particular time.

Benjamin's view of 'salvation' is very distant from such views of historic privilege and spiritual destiny. It is marked precisely by the absence of destiny, or privilege (of a people, or a language) (Benjamin 1969a). In fact, the rejection of decline is the other side of the coin of Benjamin's rejection of the positivist idea of progress, the view associated with 'time as empty container of facts aligned on a rope' which Benjamin criticizes. I want to suggest that in this Benjamin's converges with the theme of 'finding as founding' in Cavell's philosophy for the future. Cavell knew Heidegger's work better than he knew Benjamin's, so he did not explore such affinities with Benjamin. Still, one may identify them. When it comes to a view of history, Benjamin thought, like Cavell, that there is nothing superior to us, humans, who are now living. There is no 'Being' or 'dialectic march of history' to appeal to. Also, the disdainful disgust for the present, which in Heidegger accompanies the diagnosis of decline, is absent in both Benjamin and Cavell. In fact, in both Benjamin and Cavell we find the very opposite of disdain for the present – both express interest in 'our experience of the modern and the popular in the arts', in the arts of the present, rejecting the ideas that the only art deserving of philosophical attention is high art and that 'low cultural forms' are necessarily degenerated and inferior (Benjamin 1969a, 1999; Cavell 2004).

A number of further points of contrast between Heidegger and Cavell can be explored to show how much closer to Benjamin Cavell is. Looking at the past and at the history of philosophy Heidegger is inclined to think that *real* philosophy is done in the languages of high culture, such as Greek or German. Arguably, for Cavell, philosophy is done in whichever language we happen to speak. It could even be done in English, in America, by an immigrant. To the ordinary language philosopher, there is always language, if there are humans, and there will be a constant going back to it, philosophically, as they speak it. But this can be *any* language. If we start from what is contingently there, then there cannot be better or worse languages to 'express Being', as there definitely were for Heidegger.

As part of what I call his fascination with Heidegger, Cavell gave much importance to the theme of dwelling (Cavell 1989; Heidegger 1975e), relating it to the valuing of place, and of the near, by 'his' American philosophers, Emerson and Thoreau (Cavell 1989, 2003). Yet at the same time, he depicted Emerson and Thoreau, qua moral perfectionists, as appealing to leaving, abandoning our former selves, becoming, starting over. In fact, speaking about philosophy itself, Cavell claims explicitly that philosophy is at home simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, and *even in America*. In other words, his praise of the ordinary in philosophy is accompanied by an identification with the stranger and the immigrant. Such could not be

Heidegger's orientation, and that is another important contrast between the two. Cavell's is interested in «Using the particular words and concepts that happen to be on hand at a particular time» (Bauer, Crary, and Laugier 2022, 2); not in searching for roots or origins or in diagnosing decline.

## 5. Conclusion. Cavell's Philosophy for the Future: 'Declining Decline' Through Art and the Ordinary

All the above affinities and contrasts considered, I want to suggest that Cavell is, as an ordinary language philosopher and heir to Austin and Wittgenstein, well positioned to do what Heidegger, despite his permanent claims of doing it, never actually did: to 'overcome the intellectualization of Western philosophy' (Cavell 2005, 147). I also want to suggest that this is precisely what he did in his work on popular arts and popular culture (Cavell 2004), searching for their role in moral and political education as seen from a perfectionist perspective. In pursuing the Emersonian task of 'attracting the human to the work of becoming human' (Cavell 1989, 10), Cavell's injunction is that we look for 'what is there to be found at hand'. His philosophy for the future thus comes out as a claim 'against decline, based on the sole ground possible, a ground of poverty: the ordinary' (Cavell 1989, Prologue).

## Notes

1. « Philosophy as such is thinking for the future. » (Cavell et al. 2022, 23). Cavell's work is articulated in terms of both a *philosophy for the future* and a *future for philosophy*. As such, it contrasts with the views of Richard Rorty, who infamously diagnosed the end of philosophy. I have claimed (Miguens 2023) that differences between Cavell and Rorty in this respect ultimately have their roots in their respective views of language (Rorty's behaviorism, inspired by Quine, contrasts with Cavell's ordinary language approach, inspired by Wittgenstein and Austin). In their Introduction to Cavell et al. (2022), Bauer, Crary, and Laugier (2022, 7) identify the shape Cavell's ordinary language philosophy ultimately took, in his own eyes: Cavell's philosophy is a form of Emersonian perfectionism and an exploration of the uncanniness of the ordinary. These come together as a 'philosophy for the future'. Throughout this article I take Cavell et al. (2022) as touchstone for a global perspective of the author on his own work.
2. I use the term 'historicity' to translate the German *Geschichtlichkeit*. The term has also been translated in English as 'historicality'.
3. See Pippin (2024) for a current state of discussions, in English, of the philosophy of history issues dealt with in this article. Pippin's book is my reference also because of the central roles he gives to both Hegel and Heidegger. As Pippin puts it, when we are thinking about philosophy of history « (...) Hegel must be overcome by radicalizing the way the problem is put; and at the same time, he must be 'appropriated'. (...) German Idealism and especially the thought of Hegel represent the culmination of all philosophy and must be

overcome for philosophy to have a future.» (Pippin 2024, 140). According to Pippin, Heidegger himself thought along those lines and saw himself as working out such future for philosophy (even if under another name).

4. According to DiCaro and Macarthur, liberal naturalism is characterized by a more inclusive view of nature or reality, human life included, than the scientific image offers (Di Caro and Macarthur 2022, 2). Here I start from the idea that Cavell is a liberal naturalist in the sense of DiCaro and Macarthur to explore what such inclusiveness means when it comes to conceiving the historical dimension of human life. My suggestion is that Cavell's engagement with the philosophy of history issues I deal with in this article give shape to his liberal naturalism and to his view of human life.
5. The temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) of human existence (*Dasein*) and its historicity (*Geschichlichkeit*) are the two structuring themes of Divisions I and II of Heidegger's 1927 masterwork *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger 1962).
6. It is important to keep in mind that philosophy, for Cavell does not involve learning something new, as if it were a chapter of science. Philosophy, as Cavell's liberal naturalism has it, is *not* a chapter of science. This matters very much for how naturalism is conceived.
7. See e.g. Cavell (2005). Moral perfectionism centers our moral thinking not on action and decision but on the evaluation of one's stance towards oneself and one's way of life, reaching for our 'unattained but attainable self'. The future self (Emerson's and Nietzsche's 'further self') is seen by Cavell as 'the child of self-knowledge and of the dissatisfaction of each individual with their present self'.
8. In Emerson and Porte (1983). Quoted in Cavell (1989), 8.
9. For how moral perfectionism extends into an Emerson-inspired view of the nature and sources of democracy see Cavell (1979).
10. See Miguens (2022).
11. References in the Bibliography are to the editions of Nietzsche's work that Cavell himself used and cited (one exception is Nietzsche 1966).
12. Constâncio (2013) is my reference for Nietzsche's conception of what philosophy is and does.
13. Nietzsche (1966, 1986, 2001).
14. See Emerson and Porte (1983) for the essays *Self-Reliance* and *Circles*.
15. The subtitle of Nietzsche's *Human All Too Human* (Nietzsche 1986) is 'A Book for Free Spirits'.
16. This is something Nietzsche also does in his work, naturally, and in fact is more often present in naturalist readings of e.g. his moral philosophy.
17. The expression 'This new yet unapproachable America' appears in Emerson's essay *Experience*.
18. This is part of what attracts Cavell to Emerson and Thoreau. They are not usually considered philosophers by professional philosophers. Cavell wants to portray them as such.
19. Heidegger (1962), Heidegger (1975a). Here I take Heidegger (in *Sein und Zeit* but also after the *Kehre*, the turn in his thinking after the 1930s) to be a philosopher of history, always keeping in mind the views on history, and philosophy of history, of his contemporaries (namely Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger and Wilhelm Dilthey), as, of course, those of Hegel. I am grateful to my student Frederico Páscoa for having shown me the importance of this reading of Heidegger.

20. In Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche 1966) the 'next century' (the twentieth century) is said to bring a fight for the dominion of the Earth. There is an ongoing discussion on how this claim should be read politically. We know what it meant for Heidegger at some point. I will not discuss whether Heidegger's philosophical views of history and historicity (and of 'the close and the near', the familiar and the *Heimat*, the home) related to his adherence to National-Socialism; they simply did. The connection between historicity and *Entschlossenheit* (resolute decision) is clear already in *Sein und Zeit* (see §67).
21. Granted, this concerns mostly literature and philosophy – Cavell's musical training goes in a different direction.
22. I take as reference the editions of Heidegger's works Cavell worked with.
23. It is also important for Cavell that this familiarity is easily disrupted, and its uncanniness rendered 'visible' For yet further layers of the notion of 'ordinary' see Cavell (1988), *The Uncanniness of the Ordinary*.
24. My two examples above highlight the presence of the past in the present. The presence of the future in the present is also a very important issue for Benjamin and the role of French poet Charles Baudelaire in his writings is fundamental for addressing it. Baudelaire wrote about the painter of modern life (who runs, and runs, and searches), and asked: what is the painter of modern life looking for? He answered his own question by saying that he was looking for the modern in the historical, the eternal in the transitory. These issues are crucial for Benjamin: what is this modern-eternal that can be found in history? And how can such modern-eternal always be different and new? How can it disappear so quickly, to be immediately replaced by a new 'new'? For this see Portuguese philosopher Filomena Molder (Molder 2011, 2025).
25. There are metaphors used in (Benjamin 1969a) and Benjamin (1999), A, 14.
26. The 'image' in dialectic image is not, for Benjamin, a technically reproducible concrete material vehicle, such as a photography, although photographs are historic objects Benjamin was very much interested in, and can be analyzed in his terms.
27. Section N of the book (which is on epistemology, progress, and method) is the section most often appealed to for understanding Benjamin's conception of history in more epistemological and less imagistic terms.
28. The classical and rural nature of the two examples suits the political vision (National-Socialism) that Heidegger professed at the time and later.

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