

ACT 3

(Heideggers hut on the mountain at Todnauburg, they enter together with thick snow outside)

Martin. A good walk eh! I'm so glad you could see my little hut. It's where I do all my real philosophy.

Paul. No need for a speech. It's exactly as I thought.

Martin. Here I am safe and free from people.

Paul. Exactly.

Martin. Even from my wife.

Paul. I understand.

Martin. There are just a few peasant houses near by and they come in for a smoke.

Paul. It all ties in.

Martin. Up here one seems to breathe a different air and my brain responds.

Paul. Compared to Paris it seems idyllic.

Martin. Until I have to return down there and earn my living.

Paul. Here you could feel you were among the gods. They might appear at any moment as the snow closes in.

Martin. Sometimes there seems to be knocking at the door but when I open it, it is only the wind.

Paul. Perhaps a divine wind?

Martin. Yes, that's it a divine source from which the world issues.

Paul. I too have tried to erase my guilt.

Martin. What do you mean?

Paul. When I was separated from my parents I could have sought them out, perhaps even saved them in some way.

Martin. It would be immoral of you to feel guilt on something you could not change.

Paul. Maybe.

Martin. Before I forget do write something in the visitors book before you go.

Paul. Did Hitler precede me in the book?

Martin. Rest assured I was never of any significance then.

Paul. I am so tired.

Martin. There is no need to stay long.

Paul. Very tired.

Martin. Sit here by the fire and have some Schnapps.

Paul. Thank you.

Martin. The reading was wonderful.

Paul. Was it?

Martin.Oh yes!You clip your lines just so and your tone ...perfect.

Paul. I find all this public appreciation difficult...and in Germany of all places.

Martin.We cannot make amends for what has happened but you are now famous.

Paul. Exactly.

Martin.I see.

Paul. Everything I have done has been in obscurity.Yes I have picked up a few prizes but nobody would recognise me...thank god.

Martin.Now is the time to come out and like a prophet give us the poetry we need.

Paul. Martin do I sense your heroic temptations?

Martin.I am thinking of a new beginning for you.Freed of teaching in Paris.

Paul. No, I work best alone and alone in my struggle with myself.

Martin.Your wife and child?

Paul. Thank you for reminding me,with them too.

Martin.But I fear you will be ill.

Paul. I've already had the electric therapy to my brain.

Martin.I'm sorry.

Paul. No,it produced some interesting poems which would never have come to light without it.

Martin.We cannot think of ourselves.

Paul. And if I may finish "for the holy image we are shaping".

Martin and Paul together.Holderlin!

Paul. They label me now,the holocaust poet,the jews try to appropriate me to their religion and none see that I am only trying to make sense of reality,my reality,but I am going downhill,my poetry will never find its upland.

Martin."Grow strong again and shine
O star of ox-eyed heaven"

Paul. "And you,flying fish of chance
And you,O water saying yes".

Together.Mandelstam!

Paul. What a wonderful poet.We are not alone.

Martin.Exactly.

Paul. Well I must learn to live only figuratively like your Christ.

Martin.That yearning has never left me.

Paul. Could it be Being?

Martin.The messenger from another world,it seems impossible now.

Paul. Yes,we have evolution,logic,reason,DNA,quantum theory,why on earth should we need anything else?

Martin.May I add a sixth,the genius of Paul Celan.

Paul. I'm just a wordsmith.

Martin.We began with language and I believe it will see us through.

Paul. I can see nothing else.

Martin. Still a little success will give you independence.

Paul. It will block me.

Martin. The true artist.

Paul. No, it is just the way I work.

Martin. Blocked is how I felt after the war.

Paul. Yes but you supported a system which shot my mother in the back of the neck.
Silence.

Martin. From which we can never recover.

Paul. Exactly.

Martin. It is twenty years since the war..a long time to suffer.

Paul. In your ideas I felt a correspondence, that's why I'm here.

Martin. That is something.

Paul. As you know German is my tongue and at the same time it feels cut off.

Martin. Can you forgive us?

Paul. You will have to ask my mother.

Martin. Could you?

Paul. No, but if your sacred clearing does exist and is not just a collection of sticks,
we may find Being there.

Martin. I have tried to start there.

Paul. You succumbed to power but who is to say I would not have done so.

Martin. No, we are different animals.

Paul. *These contradictions have become too much.*

Martin. Out of them comes the masterpiece.

Paul. Let me not be confounded.

Martin. You are giving voice to these feelings that will live long after my Being and Time
has disappeared.

Paul. Modesty does not become you Martin. You are a man of power, it suits you. You love
powerful men, power came, it is perfectly understandable. In another era you might
have won.

Martin. If I had thought it would lead to this.

Paul. As Hannah Arendt said, the banality of it all.

Martin. We were lovers in 1924.

Paul. Dark is your horse.

Martin. She returned to defend me in the denazification trial in 1945.

Paul. True love, the Jewish community would be righteous.

Martin. We keep in touch.

Paul. This helps me as she knew your work perhaps better than anybody else.

Martin.Yes,I can say she was one of my star pupils and has become famous.

Paul. A great democrat.

Martin.It was when I first heard of you through Todesfugue.

Paul. That poem has followed me all my life.

Martin.Can I hear it again.

Paul. I adapted it again,as a variation for our meeting.....

"Now there's no way out
the longing shadows swarms like bees
without togetherness
what blessed times were those
when all our coins of happiness were free,
but that black milk of which I spoke
rises in my throat before our master
death from Germany.
why did the working class
look for that something
a god in tweeds!
o repulsive being
that any man of taste could see
mistake that smell for perfume?
trust your nose
not bleating intellect
and now your leafless forest
full of hobgoblin memories
raise strange statues in your mind
until a sign from Holderlin
companion of our dreams
grant you peace and absolution,
we meet in a forest clearing
the poem of past and future
grows beside us
the secret word among the people grows
distilled by me O Germany
a language saved by secrets spread
to keep them awake forever."

Martin. Bravo!

Paul. Yes,I have pinched a few lines, I'll leave you to find them.

Martin.I know already.

Paul. You know my work by heart.

Martin.A form of respect.My way not to say sorry.

Paul. Thanks.

Martin.We must arrange an outing when the weather is good,retrace the Neckar in Holderlin's footsteps?

Paul. Yes,but meanwhile I want to hear where you are taking Being.

Martin.There will be no second volume.

Paul. Pity I felt you were just getting into your stride.

Martin.So did I but the war changed things.

Paul. The fundamentals remain the same.

Martin.What is time?

Paul. Certainly it is our horizon,you were right there.

Martin. Since nature's reality can be changed into something more profound ie art, the clue must lie in that transformation.

Paul. Go on.

Martin. The interesting thing is this does not produce truth in any ordinary meaning of the word. It just uncovers new realities. Only we can do this. These new realities become immortal.

Paul. Yes somewhere I think the Buchner speech I talked of the eternalisation of our mortality.

Martin. That is a product of Being and only occurs because of our physical limitation in time. If we were immortal what would be the point.

Paul. In every day terms everybody would like to leave their mark.

Martin. Exactly.

Paul. How will we meet Kafka's objection, the assumption of the superior power of the objectivised world.

Martin. It is only one reality and from the personal point of view not the most important.

Paul. But the technology dominates all.

Martin. Yes and we both know where people as objects leads to.

Paul. Hitler was at least consistent—he had thought it through to the end.

Martin. We can return to our hexameters and within a structure make sense of it all.

Paul. Talking of hexameters which I long gave up I must read you a short postcard by Radnoti, the Hungarian jew shot at the end of the war, literally as he fell into the ditch.

"I fell beside his body, it turned over
and lay there tight in death as cord
'shot in the nape—you, too will end up like that'
I told myself 'just lie there calm and still'
Deaths flower opens in my patience here
'Der Springt nochauf' over me I hear
Blood mixed with dirt grew clotted in my ear"

Martin. This we cannot do in philosophy.

Paul. Through Being then.

Martin. Through Being.

Paul. It's snowing outside.

Martin. It happens here.

Paul. Should we go before it thickens?

Martin. Here is the visitor's book

Paul. I know we have not touched on many matters but there is one request.
(sits and writes)

Martin. Thank you.

Paul. There.

Martin. We must go it's getting thicker and affecting the light.

Pause in darkness as the scene changes to Heideggers study five years later.

Hannah (bursting in) Martin!

Martin.I've been expecting you.(rising to greet her).

Hannah.Have you heard!

Martin.Heard what?

Hannah.Celan was found in the Seine this morning.

Martin.(sinking back into his chair motionless)

Hannah.Are you alright?

Martin.(muttering) "And you,O water saying yes",

Hannah.What!?

Martin.I'm too late.

Hannah.He'd had some ECT but apparently had become very difficult.His wife had already moved out.

Martin.And the child?

Hannah.Quite safe.

Martin.We were due to take a holiday together.

Hannah.Your joking!

Martin.Not at all.Down the Danube in the footsteps of Holderlin.It was all arranged.

Hannah.Two most unlikely friends.

Martin.This is the joy of Being,it can overcome everything.

Hannah.I had no idea you were so close.

Martin.Not close but getting closer.A great poet.

Hannah.Was.

Martin.Is! O most definitely Is.

Hannah.I cannot understand it.

Martin.Really?

Hannah.He was becoming so well recognised.A Nobel would certainly be coming one day.

Martin.Awards awards they're meaningless.

Hannah.They give confidence.

Martin.Only in a capitalist age.

Hannah.Nobody refuses such an honour.

Martin.Sartre did,the only one I think,he went up in my estimation no end.

Hannah.BUT he admits he owes you and Husserl the inspiration.

Martin.Yes, in refusing he has learnt my lessons well.I feel vindicated, though I must admit I never cared for him personally.

Hannah.Why?

Martin.The sort of man who could only see a collection of sticks in what is a sacred grove.

Hannah.Horace.

Martin.Yes,I used the same line with Paul.

Hannah.That he should go before us.

Martin.How old was he?

Hannah.Forty-nine I think

Martin.I'm old enough to be his father.

Hannah.We are sounding banal.

Martin.A favourite word of yours.

Hannah.What can one say?

Martin.Certainly religions the last thing one thinks of at a time like this.

Hannah.Yes.

Martin.I will not go to the funeral.

Hannah.It's too much.

Martin.Yes,can you send something from me.

Hannah.Yes.

Martin.You're smoking far too many cigarettes.

Hannah.They keep me alive.

Martin.You'll go before me if you're not careful.

Hannah.You look well.

Martin.I'm not ready to go yet.

Hannah.It's true I'm not well

Martin.Look I can't have my pupils dying before me,it's in bad taste.

Hannah.What led to the holiday.

Martin."As on a holiday" do you know that late poem of Holderlins.

Hannah.No.

Martin.You really must get into him.

Hannah.I cannot take his religious alliance.

Martin.It is only figurative.

Hannah.The longing and the loss.

Martin.Exactly.

Hannah.I am constitutionally atheistic,it got me into trouble with my jewish compatriots.Another reason they dislike me.

Martin.You seem to be upsetting everybody.

Hannah.Except you.

Martin.I am beyond all that now.

Hannah.Beyond evil?

Martin.And beyond good.

Hannah.We were talking of the holiday.

Martin.Yes,I suggested and he agreed.

Hannah.So he has forgiven you.

Martin.No, but he was interested in my strength.After all he turned out to be in the right party and I in the wrong.It is I who should be on my right-angled knees.

Hannah.He never recovered from the murder of his mother.

Martin.Yes, you are right neither would I.

Hannah.Trying to make sense of all that through the language of your murderers,he admitted defeat.

Martin.No,I think it was biochemical,of course not helped by his preoccupations.I have seen him joyful.

Hannah.It is an immense blow.

Martin.Yes,I don't have many friends.

Hannah.You have me.

Martin.Thank you (kisses her).

Hannah.How is the family?

Martin.Elfride knew you were coming.The boys, well grown up of course ,teased me.

Hannah.They all know.

Martin.O yes they all know.

Hannah.And?

Martin.I couldn't care less now.

Hannah.You're beyond it all.

Martin.Exactly.

Hannah.I could not summon the courage to meet her again after last time.It completely drained me trying to be polite.She was much worse than you.

Martin.True.

Hannah.I think you went awry because of her,women have that effect.

Martin.You had the opposite effect.

Hannah.Still not enough to prize you away.

Martin.Let's not start on that again.By the way I told Paul about us.

Hannah.What was his reaction.

Martin.Amused,I would say.

Hannah.This was at the hut.

Martin.Yes,1965 where has the time gone?

Hannah.But Being remains.

Martin.Inviolable.

Hannah.And God?

Martin.well he will emerge through Being.In any case it is only a sliver,the difference

between that final E flat and middle C in Bach's fifth cello suite.

Hannah.The sarabande?

Martin.Ah! what a pupil!

(the bell rings and a letter is delivered)

Martin.It's from Paul! (opens it).

reads slowly: My dear Heidegger,

Though we were planning our little tour down the Ister
In the footsteps of Holderlin,our divine,
you knew in your heart
I would be on another journey.

I have reached my absolute
New poems need new light

More questions,more claims!

An'act of betrayal'I hear them say,
It is the fulfilment of a promise
To those departed
Of course it was beyond an 18yr old then
But now...given the prospect ahead.

The real reason you ask
I have lost confidence in my future
why?
I hardly know myself
My meridian has faltered
The heart no longer a place made fast.

The messages will wash up onto many minds
I have signalled another way
Prefigured a new freedom
But when! where!

Hannah carries the king a little further
How fortunate you are,
May you be free of the past
And help the free society of tomorrow.

Let the automaton chatter
I will not turn to stone.

My dear Martin,poems as I said somewhere
Are often desperate conversations
And with another awkward bow
I cannot say god bless you

Paul Celan.

Hannah.A suicide note.

Martin.No just a goodbye.

Hannah.So much talent.

Martin.Still he has left us work which will keep us occupied for ever.

Hannah.One human being can outweigh the whole world didn't your Christ say somewhere.

Martin.Yes, against nature, against all we know in reality lies the human tragedy.

Hannah.It brings us back to what is reality?

Martin. Yes, it was a discussion we had and we were agreed that art/religion/feeling were as valid as science but since they are played out in the arena of Being could not be analysed.

Hannah. Where did that brilliant observation come from 'that art is to reality what wine is to grapes'.

Martin. Perfect. And religion too. Here we see in a nutshell the antithesis. Science discloses nature as one reality and art reveals the infinite transformations to other realities. We do not ask of wine whether it corresponds to a truer view of reality, such a question is absurd. Wine in all its infinite variety has only one criteria, taste, and who can measure that. How many new realities can art create? Nowhere do they correspond with nature for they touch on all those other aspects of Being which is beyond nature.

Hannah. It solves the problem, there are many realities.

Martin. Exactly what I said to him.

Hannah. But it is absurd, his death.

Martin. In his Buchner speech he used that very absurdity to bespeak the presence of human being. He has now confirmed it.

Hannah. Surely he had a duty to deliver his message.

Martin. He just has. Like Holderlin he may be broken by the contradiction but out of it a phoenix rises from the ashes.

Hannah. I'm not convinced.

Martin. Oh Hannah, ever the analyst. I remember his line from Radnoti 'deaths flower opens in my patience here'

Hannah. Goodbye Martin I hope we meet again before we die. (they kiss).

Martin. (alone addresses the audience)

What depths will he go to and submit
Just as I so many times have thought
My life is over, finished
Yet with a will and tenacity I held
Something in me keeps aloft
From the worlds failures,
Work is art it rises above self
And takes on a life of its own
With one as a priest to its demands
It goes on expanding after death
Even as one fails, the horizon
Continues to beckon.
So I hope with Celan
My philosophy seeks to show the immanence
Of Holderlin and Celan
A formal prose of poetry
The world of you and me
The whole minute intercourse
The interplay of life and love
Which setting best serves our cause,
Poor or rich it is achieved
This inner authority
From where you can direct a real life
Your life,
My view enables the care of the world
Every tree speaks this language
The botany of purpose through silence
Freeing your mind for human tasks
Rinsing the mind
And a clear ever more clear vision
Of your own progress
A feeling once attained
Not even illness or death can thwart

Since you are already on the path
Of becoming finer
More unknowable
Moving with sovereignty
Into the unknown country
where Being and Time disintegrate
Leaving open every imagination
Choose that confidence escaping yourself
Let them do the praying
You are free.

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