

Mrs. Cohn's dissertation is an extremely interesting, and very successful attempt, to re-examine the entire structure of Heidegger's "earlier thought" from the viewpoint of the role played by the idea of Nothing. A number of critics have hinted at the role which this idea plays in Heidegger's "later thought," but up to the present no attempt had been made in order to ascertain to what extent the aforementioned idea has played a central role (and, as Mrs. Cohn argues, the central one) in Heidegger's philosophy.

To be sure, one might pick up the idea of Nothing from the "later Heidegger" and apply it, more or less "anachronistically," to the "earlier Heidegger," or to the entire thought of this philosopher, but this easy method is not the one that Mrs. Cohn has followed. Instead, she has examined carefully Sein und Zeit and found that the idea of Nothing permeates the entire range of the Daseinsanalytik. A considerable number of typically Heideggerian notions centered on the question of the structure of the Dasein are seen thus in a new light. The result is a most welcome clarification, as well as a "re-systematization" of Heidegger's Daseinsphilosophie.

What is Metaphysics and the Introduction to Metaphysics raised a number of difficult and delicate questions; the problem is to see whether any of them, or both of them, are still within the horizon of Sein und Zeit or, at any rate, within the horizon previous to Heidegger's Kehre. Mrs. Cohn has provided many strong arguments, supported on solid textual references, to prove that the aforementioned works belong, in Richardson's language, to Heidegger I, yet they are not incompatible with the post-Kehre development. The result is a re-interpretation of Heidegger's entire thought with as many references to the post-Kehre period as necessary for a clarification of Mrs. Cohn's main contentions.

The works which Mrs. Cohn has chosen as the material for her dissertation are among the most difficult ones in the entire history of philosophy. Merely understanding them is already a proof of philosophic competence and maturity. Interpreting them, as Mrs. Cohn has done, is a proof of philosophic originality. This originality goes hand in hand with a painstaking analysis and a rigorous scholarship.

Letter 1.

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It is most rewarding to notice that in the last two years our Department has seen the completion of two important pieces of research in Heideggerian scholarship: one is Mr. Caputo's, with his dissertation on Heidegger's idea of Grund; the other is Mrs. Cohn's, with her dissertation on Heidegger's (often merely implicit) idea of Nichts.

It gives me pleasure to recommend unreservedly that Mrs. Cohn's dissertation be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD in Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College.

April, 1969

*Ferrater Mora*

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