

***Herausdrehen*** (to unscrew, to turn out, to twist free of, to extricate oneself from, turning forth, turning-out-of).

“Einen Füller aus seiner Hülle herausdrehen” – “To screw a fountain pen out of its cap.”

*Herausdrehen* is a **Heideggerian term** useful for intercultural philosophy. David Krell translates it in his translation of Heidegger’s *Nietzsche* as “twisting free.”

Heidegger intends to overcome Platonism not by means of its simple “overturning” (which would be “*herumdrehen*”), but by what he called a “twisting out” (*herausdrehen*) of philosophy from a movement that he saw as an endless chain of overturnings of Platonism. In his first volume on Nietzsche he writes:

What happens when the true world is expunged? Does the apparent world still remain? No. For the apparent world can be what it is only as a counterpart of the true: if the true world collapses, so must the world of appearances. Only then is Platonism overcome, which is to say, inverted in such a way that philosophical thinking **twists free** of it. (Heidegger 1979: 201)

Was geschieht, wenn die wahre Welt abgeschafft wird? Bleibt dann noch die scheinbare Welt? Nein. Denn die scheinbare Welt kann das, was es ist, nur sein als Gegenstück zur wahren. Wenn diese fällt, muß auch die scheinbare fallen. Erst dann ist der Platonismus überwunden, d.h. so umgedreht, daß das philosophische Denken aus ihm **herausgedreht** wird. (Heidegger 1961: 233)

Platonic realism produces a purely general view of the world dealing only with “essences” and abstractions, which Nietzsche wants to “overturn” by calling the sensible the real and the non-sensible unreal.

See also Heidegger’s essay “Die Überwindung der Metaphysik” where he writes: “Die Umkehrung des Platonismus, dergemäß dann für Nietzsche das Sinnliche zur wahren Welt und das Übersinnliche zur unwahren wird, verharrt durchaus innerhalb der Metaphysik” (p. 75).

According to Heidegger, the entire history of philosophy is the history of such “overturnings.” Hegel’s metaphysics of certitude, for example, is generally said to have collapsed in the

nineteenth century, but in reality the movements opposing Hegelianism are continuations of Hegel's philosophy (Heidegger 1985: 72). Heidegger wants to abolish Platonism, but not in order to go for the other extreme, which would be scientific anthropology or (in the view of Nietzsche) "positivism," both of which remain restricted to the analysis of the concrete and individual. Instead, Heidegger's *Herausdrehen* of philosophy out of two extremes is supposed to result in a philosophical hermeneutics. The main characteristic of this approach is that it adheres neither to a generalist (Platonic) nor to an individualist (empirical) view, but strives for the simultaneous manipulation of the "individual" and the "general."

The hermeneutic approach is directly related to the paradox of the hermeneutic circle, which Heidegger understands as a methodological means of constantly holding back any final decision in favor of either a generalist or an individualist approach. Heidegger views the hermeneutic circle as a "positive possibility of understanding:"

But if interpretation must in any case already operate in that which is under-stood, and if it must draw its nurture from this, how is it to bring any scientific results to maturity without moving in a circle, especially if, moreover, the understanding which is presupposed still operates within our common information about man and the world? (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1980: 195)

Wenn aber Auslegung sich je schon im Verstandenen bewegen und aus ihm her sich nähren muß, wie soll sie dann wissenschaftliche Resultaten zeitigen, ohne sich in einem Zirkel zu bewegen, zumal wenn das vorausgesetzte Verständnis überdies noch in der gemeinen Menschen und Weltkenntnis sich bewegt? (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 1986: 152).

Heidegger's affirmation of the circle does not signify a resignation in the sense of an intellectual fatalism, which would be the belief that knowledge as such is impossible. The hermeneutic circle does not condemn us to eternally stay in the sphere of "common knowledge of man and the world." It is the scientist who sees the circle as a vitiosum that needs to be avoided. The person who simply "tolerates" (duldet) the circle has resigned from any possibility of positive understanding and develops an equally indifferent attitude toward everyday life. Opposed to this, Heidegger asks for an active affirmation of the circle because it negates everyday life. It helps us to *verwinden* the conventional character of Being (the "man" or the "durchschnittliche Seinsverständnis").

Related to the above reflections is the Heideggerian distinction between *Überwindung* and *Verwindung*. *Verwindung* is a sort of improper, twisted and distorted kind of “overcoming.” For **Gianni Vattimo** it represents the “declination of difference into weak thought” (Vattimo 2012: 45). *Verwindung* “marks the attitude which characterizes post-metaphysical thought in relation to the tradition handed down by metaphysics” (p. 46).

Heidegger uses the word *Verwindung* rather sparingly. It appears in one passage in “Der Spruch des Anaximander” (in *Holzwege*), in “Die Überwindung der Metaphysik” (in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*), and in *Identität und Differenz*.

See also **John Sallis**, *Echoes after Heidegger* (1990):

“The ontological question of the Being of the Being of the self must be twisted free of the fore-having that is constantly suggested by the prevalent I-saying, the fore-having of a persistently present-at-hand self-thing” (p. 323).

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### Sources:

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