



CONFRONTING HEIDEGGER

A CRITICAL DIALOGUE ON
POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY

EDITED BY

GREGORY FRIED

NEW HEIDEGGER
RESEARCH

Confronting Heidegger

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London • New York

Published by Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd
6 Tinworth Street, London, SE11 5AL, UK
www.rowmaninternational.com

Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd. is an affiliate of Rowman & Littlefield
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706, USA
With additional offices in Boulder, New York, Toronto (Canada), and Plymouth (UK)
www.rowman.com

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: HB 978-1-78661-190-1
PB 978-1-78661-191-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available

ISBN 978-1-78661-190-1 (cloth: alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-78661-191-8 (pbk: alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-78661-192-5 (electronic)

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48–1992.

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Acknowledgments

An edited volume of essays by multiple authors is necessarily a collaborative project, one whose complexity is amplified by differences in language and interpretive stances. For this reason, I am especially grateful to the contributors to this book, who have endeavored to make it a dialogue, within the limitations of the form, and who have been admirably forbearing with the interrogative editorial process I employed. Anyone reading this book will notice that Emmanuel Faye and I disagree strongly on matters that can evoke intense reactions, and so I thank him especially for the confidence he has placed in me to direct this project.

Sarah Campbell, Frankie Mace, and Rebecca Anastasi, editors at Rowman & Littlefield International, have demonstrated great skill and patience in assisting with the intricacies of bringing this volume to print. Alex Monteverdi and Zachary Willcut, research assistants at Boston College, did yeoman's work in preparing the manuscript for submission to the press. Richard Polt, my friend, coeditor of *New Heidegger Research*, and long-time collaborator in Heidegger scholarship, has been a tireless and generous adviser in matters ranging from planning the volume to translating passages in Heidegger to critical commentary on my own contribution. Vicente Muñoz-Reja provided valuable assistance in reviewing the page proofs and devising the index. Finally, I must thank *Philosophy Today*, which published the original exchange with Emmanuel Faye, and its editor, Peg Birmingham, who granted permission for republication, without which this volume would not have been possible.

Abbreviations and a Note on the Text

The editor gratefully acknowledges the journal *Philosophy Today* for granting permission to republish the initial 2011 exchange with Emmanuel Faye as chapters 1 and 2 in this volume. These have been republished largely unaltered, apart from corrections for errors and minor changes for sense and format.

As this volume engages in a dialogue among the contributors, all references by contributors to the chapters of the others will refer to such material by page number of this volume, in parentheses.

In a volume with multiple authors working in a range of languages, differences in the use of terminology are inevitable. Different authors have opted for different terms in some cases, although we have endeavored to maintain as much consistency as possible for key terms and their translations, and so these differences are minimal and should be clear to the attentive reader. An important example is the translation of the German *Sein*, which some of our authors choose to render as capitalized “Being” and others as “being”; the key point here is that Heidegger distinguishes between *Sein* (Being or being) and *Seiendes* (a being or beings, entities, or simply what is). *Sein* (Being or being) is what makes *Seiendes* (specific beings or entities) intelligible or meaningful. Context should make this distinction clear.

The following additional texts are cited parenthetically in this book. Other texts are cited in the notes to individual chapters. When authors employ translations of Heidegger’s works, the citation is provided after the reference

to the German edition; when a translation is the author's own, no translation reference is given.

All emphasis in quotations is in the original, unless otherwise noted.

BEING AND TIME

SZ: Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953). The pagination of this edition is included in GA 2; in *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); and in *Being and Time*, tr. Joan Stambaugh, rev. Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).

GESAMTAUSGABE

GA: Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975–). Cited in the following format: (GA volume number: German page/translation page). In cases where the English translation also provides the German pagination so that the reader may easily compare with the original, the English version is not cited; otherwise, and when an author relies on the translation, the English citation is listed. Not all translations listed here include the entire contents of the corresponding GA volumes. In cases where a text from a GA volume appears in more than one English volume, an abbreviation for the English volume is used.

GA 3 = *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 1991./*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Tr. Richard Taft. 5th, enlarged ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

GA 5 = *Holzwege* (1935–1946). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann, 1977./*Off the Beaten Track*. Tr. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. WoN = “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God Is Dead,’” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. William Lovitt (New York: Harper, 1977).

GA 6.2 = *Nietzsche II* (1939–1946). Ed. Brigitte Schillbach, 1997./N3 = *Nietzsche*, vol. 3: *Nihilism*. Tr. Joab Stambaugh, David F. Krell, Frank A. Capuzzi, ed. David F. Krell. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. N4 = *Nietzsche*, vol. 4: *Nihilism*. Tr. Frank A. Capuzzi, ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982.

GA 9 = *Wegmarken* (1919–1961). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 1976, 1996 (rev. ed.)./Pathmarks. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- GA 12 = *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1950–1959). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 1985./L = “Language.” *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Tr. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper, 1971. OWL = *On the Way to Language*. Tr. Peter D. Hertz and Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- GA 14 = *Zur Sache des Denkens* (1927–1968). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 2007./*On Time and Being*. Tr. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
- GA 16 = *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* (1910–1976). Ed. Hermann Heidegger, 2000.
- GA 17 = *Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung* (1923–1924). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann./*Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. Tr. Daniel O. Dahlstrom. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- GA 20 = *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (1925). Ed. Petra Jaeger, 1979, 1988 (2nd, rev. ed.), 1994 (3d, rev. ed.)./*History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. Tr. Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- GA 22 = *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (1926). Ed. Franz-Karl Blust, 1993.
- GA 24 = *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1927). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 1975./*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Tr. Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- GA 27 = *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928–1929). Ed. Otto Saame and Ina Saame-Speidel, 1996, 2001 (rev. ed.).
- GA 29/30 = *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit* (1929–1930). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 1983./*The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Tr. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- GA 31 = *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit. Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1930). Ed. Hartmut Tietjen, 1982, 1994 (rev. ed.)./*The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*. Tr. Ted Sadler. London: Continuum, 2002.
- GA 35 = *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie: Auslegung des Anaximander und Parmenides* (1932). Ed. Peter Trawny, 2011./*The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- GA 36/37 = *Sein und Wahrheit* (1933–1934). Ed. Hartmut Tietjen. 2001./*Being and Truth*. Tr. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

- GA 38 = *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache* (1934). Ed. Günter Seubold, 1998./*Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*. Tr. Wanda Torres Gregory and Yvonne Unna. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.
- GA 39 = *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein" (1934–1935)*. Ed. Susanne Ziegler, 1980, 1989 (rev. ed.)./*Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Tr. William McNeill and Julia Ireland. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- GA 40 = *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1935). Ed. Petra Jaeger. 1983./*Introduction to Metaphysics*. Tr. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. Revised and expanded ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.
- GA 43 = Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Die Wille zur Macht als Kunst* (1936–1937). Ed. Bernd Heimbüchel. 1985.
- GA 46 = *Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemäßer Betrachtung "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben" (1938–1939)*. Ed. Hans-Joachim Friedrich. 2003./*Interpretation of Nietzsche's Second Untimely Meditation*. Tr. Ullrich Haase and Mark Sinclair. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- GA 47 = *Nietzsches Lehre vom Willen zur Macht als Erkenntnis* (1939). Ed. Eberhard Hanser, 1989.
- GA 48 = *Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus* (1940). Ed. Petra Jaeger, 1986.
- GA 50 = *Nietzsches Metaphysik; Einleitung in die Philosophie—Denken und Dichten* (1941–1942, 1944–1945). Ed. Petra Jaeger, 1990, 2007 (2nd rev. ed.).
- GA 51 = *Grundbegriffe* (1938–39). Ed. Petra Jaeger, 1981./*Basic Concepts*, tr. Gary Aylesworth, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- GA 61. *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (1921–1922). Ed. Walter Bröcker und Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns, 1985, 1994 (rev. ed.)./*Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.
- GA 62 = *Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zu Ontologie und Logik*. (1922). Ed. Günther Neumann, 2005.
- GA 63 = *Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (1923). Ed. Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns, 1988./*Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Tr. John Van Buren. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- GA 64 = *Der Begriff der Zeit* (1924). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 2004./"The Concept of Time." Tr. William McNeill. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

- GA 65 = *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1936–1938). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1989, 1994, 2003./*Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- GA 66 = *Besinnung* (1938–1939). Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1997./*Mindfulness*. Tr. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary. London: Continuum, 2006.
- GA 68 = *Hegel* (1938–1939, 1942). Ed. Ingrid Schüßler, 1993./*Hegel*. Tr. Joseph Arel and Niels Feuerhahn. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- GA 69 = *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (1938–1940). Ed. Peter Trawny. 1998, 2012./*The History of Beyng*. Tr. William McNeill and Jeffrey Powell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- GA 77 = *Feldweg-Gespräche* (1944–1945). Ed. Ingrid Schüßler, 1995, 2007 (2nd rev. ed.)./ *Country Path Conversations*. Tr. Bret Davis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- GA 86 = *Seminare: Hegel—Schelling* (1927–1957). Ed. Peter Trawny, 2011./ Tr. of pp. 59–184 in *On Hegel's "Philosophy of Right": The 1934–5 Seminar and Interpretative Essays*, ed. Peter Trawny, Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, and Michael Marder, tr. Andrew Mitchell. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- GA 90 = *Zu Ernst Jünger* (1934–1954). Ed. Peter Trawny, 2004.
- GA 94 = *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014./*Ponderings II–VI: Black Notebooks 1931–1938*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- GA 95 = *Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938–1939)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014./*Ponderings VII–XI: Black Notebooks 1938–1939*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- GA 96 = *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014./*Ponderings XII–XV: Black Notebooks 1939–1941*. Tr. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- GA 97 = *Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*. Ed. Peter Trawny, 2015.

Introduction

Confronting Heidegger: A Critical Dialogue on Politics and Philosophy

This volume was born of a dialogue initiated by Emmanuel Faye with me and subsequently published by *Philosophy Today* in 2011.¹ Professor Faye and I later met in Siegen, Germany, in 2015, at one of the first international conferences on Martin Heidegger's so-called *Black Notebooks*, whose publication had occasioned tremendous controversy.² There we discussed the possibility of reprinting and expanding upon our initial exchange, both by composing our own new responses and by inviting other scholars into the conversation. It is best to allow the essays that follow to speak for themselves, and so I will not summarize them here. Instead, I will explain how the volume was assembled and what I hope it can achieve.

Professor Faye and I agreed to republish our initial exchange largely unedited, apart from minor corrections and changes.³ We then each proposed authors who could make constructive contributions to this dialogue: Richard Polt and Dieter Thomä were my suggestions; Matthew Sharpe and William Altman were Professor Faye's. On Professor Faye's recommendation, Sidonie Kellerer joined the project after the four original contributors, and her essay includes commentary on them. My own contribution, in turn, responds to the five contributors, as well as to what I take to be the larger themes in this controversy. Professor Faye then completes the exchange with an essay that surveys the whole dialogue. While a volume of essays cannot fully instantiate the give-and-take of a live debate or conversation, we have endeavored to compose this exchange in a manner that is fair to the poles of disagreement and that invites the reader to join in the spirit of dialogue in considering the arguments. I am grateful to all the contributors of the volume for being as willing as they were to revise their essays throughout the editorial process.

In the debates over the relationship between Heidegger's thought and politics, the issues may become so heated that genuine philosophical dialogue can

fall by the wayside. There are several reasons for this, beyond the famously thin skins of academics. In thirty years as a Heidegger scholar, it has been my experience that most scholars of his work in the English-speaking world are politically liberal or left, at least according to the conventional American understanding of these categories. So, even when open to considering how his thought might relate directly to his Nazi politics, they recoil at the notion that his thought *necessarily* does so. At stake, then, is a whole strand of doing what we call “Continental” philosophy, because if Heidegger’s thought is necessarily Nazi to the core, then that implies that careers, indeed whole departments in some cases, along with the futures of students entering this tradition, have been grossly misguided, at best, and have no proper prospects in philosophy. It is no surprise, then, that the debates have often been so acrimonious. It gives nothing away to say that I am one who defends Heidegger as a thinker worth studying as a philosopher and not as a specimen in the history of National Socialist propaganda, but I also believe that this can be done and should be done by taking very seriously the entanglements of his thought and his politics.

Furthermore, I think that Heidegger has brought opprobrium upon himself. After the Second World War, he failed to account honestly for his actions: he refused to apologize or take responsibility for his role in cheerleading the Nazi movement; he never confronted the meaning of the Holocaust in depth or with candor, although he did allude to it in ways that deflected his own and Germany’s responsibility; he manipulated some of his texts to hide their political extremism; and he seems to have saved the worst for last by directing his estate to begin publishing his so-called *Black Notebooks* nearly forty years after his death, so that the reputation he had cultivated with so much care would have had time to sink its roots.⁴ The expressions of anti-Semitism in those journals and his clearly ardent support for National Socialism in the early 1930s have shaken the scholarly world.⁵ But who could honestly be surprised, given his mendacity?

Nevertheless, I think Heidegger must be taken seriously as a philosopher. Again, it gives nothing away to say that Professor Faye does not, even if he thinks it a philosophical project to explain *why* not. Despite this fundamental disagreement, what we have tried to do here is to cultivate a discourse that avoids acrimony so that the reader may consider the questions at issue, free from the distractions of unnecessary drama.

Some of my colleagues in Heidegger scholarship might disagree with this approach because they disagree vehemently with Professor Faye’s interpretations. In response, I would argue not only that Heidegger brought scandal upon himself by his mendacious practices in presenting his own work but also that the world of Heidegger scholarship shares, to greater and lesser

degrees, some of that responsibility. The very fact that many have been taken by surprise by the revelations of the *Black Notebooks*, both within and outside Heidegger scholarship, is some indication that not enough work had been done previously to think through the implications of his political thought and actions.

A worrisome insularity afflicts the world of Heidegger scholarship. It displays a surprising naivete to be shocked that other scholars in philosophy and other disciplines, as well as the broader public (at least in Europe), would be very angry with a figure who managed to get away with hiding the extent of his Nazism and anti-Semitism and with rebuilding his own reputation as successfully as Heidegger did after the war. Can we really be surprised that those not previously impressed or inspired by whatever some take to be worthwhile in Heidegger would be at the very least deeply suspicious, if not provoked to expose him even further?

So, I think those who do find Heidegger inspiring, or at least philosophically important, owe it to the larger philosophical community to engage forthrightly with a critique as fierce as Professor Faye's. If Heidegger deserves attention as a philosopher, and not as an ideologue or a charlatan, then perhaps it is high time that we make that case to a wider audience than ourselves, recognizing with some humility that Professor Faye's critique must strike many as entirely deserved. It is an indication of our insularity that we have largely failed to meta-translate what is worthwhile in Heidegger's thought beyond the hermetic conceptual vocabulary that he employed. I do not mean to say that there have not been excellent, independent-minded English-language works in the tradition based in Heidegger and related authors, only that this quite particular philosophical discourse has not yet truly succeeded in coming into dialogue with the larger academic community or the world beyond it. If it had done, it would not be so easy for those we think have misunderstood Heidegger to seize the day. It is too simple and self-indulgent to ward off criticism by saying that great philosophy is always untimely and misunderstood. The present controversy is a kind of omen that Heidegger scholarship has reached a point of crisis beyond which it has so far failed to progress on its own terms and speak to an audience in its own voice, rather than ventriloquizing Heidegger. Whatever else happens, that must change.

Gregory Fried

Auburndale, Massachusetts

May 28, 2019

NOTES

1. My initial letter and Faye's response are reproduced as the first two contributions to this volume. They were published in *Philosophy Today* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2011), 219–52 and 253–67.

2. That conference resulted in a volume of participant essays: Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer, eds., *Martin Heideggers 'Schwarze Hefte': Eine philosophisch-politische Debatte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016).

3. Emmanuel Faye published a second article, not directly part of our exchange, in the same issue of the journal: "Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger's Writings," *Philosophy Today* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2011), 268–81.

4. The literature on Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism is voluminous, and so only some key texts can be indicated. For a compilation of Heidegger's Nazi-era speeches and related writings, see Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993). For works challenging Heidegger's own narrative about this era, see Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (New York: Basic Books, 1993), Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), and Emmanuel Faye, *Martin Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011). For an early example of Heidegger's prevarications about the Holocaust, see his 1953 exchange of letters with Jürgen Habermas in Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*, 152–64, and for discussion of Heidegger's more recently published remarks on the Holocaust in the *Black Notebooks* and elsewhere, see footnote 5. For Heidegger's publishing strategy and manipulation of his own Nazi-era texts, see Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's *Gesamt-ausgabe*: An International Scandal of Scholarship," *Philosophy Today* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 3–15, the Appendix to Gregory Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos: From Being to Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), and the essays in this volume by Sidonie Kellerer and Emmanuel Faye, which cite further scholarship on the topic.

5. In the second volume of Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*, published in English as *Ponderings VII–XII: Black Notebooks 1938–1939*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), Heidegger attests that "during the years 1930–1934 I saw in National Socialism the possibility of a transition to another beginning" (318). For Christmas 1931, he sent his brother Fritz a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, writing to him thus: "That this man [Hitler] has an unusual and sure-footed political instinct, and that he had it when we were still lost in the fog, no one with insight can any longer dispute"; see Walter Homolka and Arnulf Heidegger, eds., *Heidegger und der Antisemitismus* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 22. There has been considerable scholarly discussion of Heidegger's anti-Semitism as well as the *Black Notebooks* since 2014. Some examples in English include Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016) and Elad Lapidot and Micha Brumlik, eds., *Heidegger and Jewish Thought: Difficult Others*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017); Andrew J. Mitchell and Peter Trawny, ed., *Heidegger's Black Notebooks: Responses to Anti-Semitism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Chapter 1

A Letter to Emmanuel Faye

Gregory Fried

Dear Professor Faye,

Let me begin by thanking you for taking the initiative to send me your book, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*. You contacted me because I had contributed to the on-line debate in the commentary to Carlin Romano's review of your book in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.¹

I owe you an apology. When I commented upon that review, your book was not yet available in English except to reviewers, and so I was reacting not so much to your work as to what I took to be the intellectual glibness and laziness of the review, which struck me as inappropriate to both the scope and the seriousness of the philosophical, ethical, and political questions at stake.² After having read your book with care, I must now acknowledge that some of what I wrote then I would no longer write today. In my first post to the discussion, I claimed, "To a very large extent, [the furor surrounding your book and Romano's review] is simply a repeat of the scandal that erupted 22 years ago when the work of Victor Farías and Hugo Ott was published. There is nothing really new here, except perhaps an increase of the 'data' of Heidegger's loathsomeness as a human being."³ I also wrote:

We have known that [Heidegger was a dedicated National Socialist] for a long time now. But the devil is in the details. It has long been well known that Heidegger was *opposed* to biological racism and *opposed* to global imperialism. He was what we might now call a multiculturalist, but between nations, not within them. He thought Nazism would allow national cultures and historical traditions to maintain themselves in their own bounds. But note, in my view this still leaves room for what might be called a metaphysical or ontological racism (see the work of Berel

Lang or Robert Bernasconi for a responsible treatment of this point), and I believe Heidegger was guilty of that. But it was by no means orthodox Nazism.⁴

After reading your book, I would no longer say all of this. Indeed, this is one of your most important contributions: to set out in great detail the intricacies of the developments and the battles between strands of Nazism about precisely what should and would count for orthodoxy. I wrote:

[Romano's] article wants to paint Heidegger as a hack, who dressed up his Nazism in philosophical clothing. That is a crude dodge that avoids what is seriously at issue for real thought. Heidegger was never an orthodox Nazi and the orthodox soon came to suspect him of deviationism. It is absurd to claim that Heidegger somehow was an architect of Nazi ideology, in the way, say, that Lenin or Marx were of Communism, or that Locke or Jefferson were of liberalism. . . . Yes, Heidegger lent his respected name to the movement, but little to its content or direction.⁵

Having read your book, I now believe much of this to be false: he was orthodox (to the extent that there was an orthodox Nazism), and he did have a significant impact. The verdict is clear: never again can anyone say that Heidegger, who played a passionate role in the debates over the core meaning and direction of the movement, who subscribed to a form of non-biologicistic racism that was in fact by no means alien to National Socialism, who lent his voice and his weight as a thinker, as an administrator, and as an educator to the consolidation (*Gleichschaltung*) of Hitler's dictatorship, was not fully in the ambit of orthodox Nazism, because Nazism contained many strands, especially in the first years after the revolution, and Heidegger fit within the scope of this diversity. While some of the elements of this picture have been known since Fariás and Ott, this issue is too important to be digested piecemeal, with a biographical detail leaking out here, a new text there, as they do over the years. While you also contribute some decisive new information, I find that it is the *totality* of what you assemble that is impossible to ignore: it conveys the portrait of a man entirely dedicated to the cause of Nazism, and not just in a fit of temporary madness or enthusiasm, but as an enduring mission. (Just how long that devotion remained in full force may be open to continued debate; you argue that it never diminished, but only went under-ground after the war.) So, even if there is some well-known material here, your argument cannot and should not be ignored, both because you have added to the factual base and, more importantly, because we need to confront anew our understanding of

Heidegger's political engagement as a whole, and your study demands this confrontation of any honest reader.

There is more, and I will outline what I take to be your contribution below. In brief, though, your thesis has several interwoven strands. The first is that Heidegger was much more of an engaged, aggressive, and *effective* Nazi than we have understood before, and that his commitment to the cause started even earlier than previously realized and endured until the end of his life. Furthermore, you see that activism is very much alive not just in his political speeches of 1933–1934 but in the lectures and seminars extending through the Second World War and indeed beyond it. In addition, you argue that Heidegger's thought is so profoundly motivated and contaminated by his Nazism that we cannot view it as anything more than propaganda for that movement, and indeed that his whole ambition, in setting up the publication of his collected works, the *Gesamtausgabe*, is to preserve his path of thinking as a path that leads into Nazism. For this reason, you conclude that we can—indeed, that we must—no longer call Heidegger a “philosopher,” because his work constitutes the domination of thought by politics, and because nothing that preaches the inhumanity and unreason embodied by National Socialism deserves the name of philosophy. To crown your argument, you advocate something that is quite alien to an American reader such as myself, at least, namely, the removal of Heidegger from the philosophy section of the libraries and from the philosophy curriculum of the schools, due to the extreme danger that you discern in his work.⁶

I must confess that when I began reading your book, I was prejudiced against it by the disdainful thoughtlessness of the Romano review and by your own ironically illiberal thesis that we should, in effect, ban Heidegger. Nevertheless, while I do still disagree with you seriously on a number of points, I must now also acknowledge that I found your book devastating. I am unable to respond to it in the form of a traditional academic review, in part because you appealed to me personally to give your work a fair hearing, in part because the portrait you paint of the man and his times is truly appalling. The shock comes not from the realization that Heidegger was a Nazi; you are familiar with my book, *Heidegger's Polemos*,⁷ published ten years ago, so you know that I have long argued that Heidegger's philosophy and politics are intimately entwined. The effect is more of an existential horror at the scale of Heidegger's ambition, a scale I had not entirely grasped before in the full context of the cultural world of Nazi Germany. That may have been due to naivete on my part, or perhaps to an inability to imagine the worst that human nature can bring us to, but if so, I must

share that naivete and lack of imagination with many other scholars, and, alas, with the multitudes of the victims of many forms of twentieth-century politics unhinged from human decency: we just do not expect such things, even though history teaches us that we should.

And so I also agree with you that there is a looming if hidden danger here, one we must respond to, and not simply as scholars, although we must not discard the tools and methods of scholarship. The questions seem to me at once both too personal and too important for mere academicism. That is why I am writing to you in this way, in the form of an open letter. I have engaged in a confrontation with Heidegger and the meaning of his politics, with greater and lesser intensity, for nearly twenty-five years. Your book, for me, was like the turn of a kaleidoscope: familiar elements, combined with new pieces, suddenly take on a new and startling form. After a quarter century, it is time to take stock of what it is that I am seeing. In the Introduction to your book, you write: “Only on the condition that we recognize that reality [namely, as you say in the sentence before, ‘the introduction into philosophy of the very content of Nazism and Hitlerism’] can we become fully cognizant of the dangers to humanity and to thought involved in any attempt to further the acceptance of legitimation of those works [of Martin Heidegger].”⁸ Those who have not read your book might be forgiven for thinking that this double challenge to our humanity and to philosophy itself is overstated or even absurd, but in truth that challenge is now unavoidable.

“MY ‘I AM’”

In one of his letters to Karl Löwith from the early 1920s, Heidegger writes, “I work concretely and factually out of my ‘I am’—my intellectual and, in general, my factual origin—milieu—life-context—out of that which is accessible to me from these as the living experience within which I live.”⁹

Ignoring the ironically Cartesian echoes of his declaration, let’s start by taking Heidegger seriously on this point: that philosophy begins with the questions that confront us out of our own individual lived experience. Surely this is no less than what Socrates describes in the hours before his death when he looks back over the story of his own life of philosophy in Plato’s *Phaedo*. It would be strange indeed if philosophy were a mere hobby of the mind, intent on problems as a purely abstract exercise, divorced from what is fully human. I think that it is important to clarify the context from which our respective engagements with Heidegger emerge.

Une pensée vichysoise

To even the most casual reader, it must be abundantly clear that your book marks a phase in a debate that reaches back many decades in France, as far back as the years immediately following the Second World War. Tom Rockmore's Preface to the translation helps the English-speaking reader to understand just how polemical those debates have been at times. They have involved your own father, Jean-Pierre Faye, who did battle with François Fédier, the ever-vigilant defender of Heidegger, in the cycle of debate that erupted in the 1960s (the tide of scandal seems to ebb and flow every twenty years or so).

I think it is worth underlining just how foreign the French context is to an American reader, because understanding that context goes a long way to explaining the extremity of your proposal to ban Heidegger from the philosophy shelves. Americans may forget, but a Frenchman never, that Nazi Germany invaded and defeated France and then installed a collaborationist government, based in Vichy, as a puppet ally of the Third Reich. Several times in your book you return to Germany's invasion and Heidegger's support for it at the level of the history of Being. Vichy France assisted the Nazis in carrying out the collection, deportation, and murder of tens of thousands of French Jews.¹⁰ Yes, there was a *Résistance*, but the Jews of France were not saved from the vicious fury of the *Endlösung*. Furthermore, France's coming to grips with its own history of collaboration has hardly been a smooth process.

This is, in part, why the story of the reception of Heidegger in France is so galling. As you and Rockmore explain in detail, very shortly after the end of the war Heidegger targeted France as the arena for his rehabilitation for a variety of reasons, not least because France was the occupying Allied power in Freiburg, and it was the French who would decide his fate as an academic: his ability to teach and even his private library were at risk. His first foray was with Sartre, whom he invited to his hut in Todtnauberg. When Sartre refused, Heidegger turned to Jean Beaufret, then a nearly unknown scholar, whom he also invited to Todtnauberg. It was Beaufret to whom he wrote the "Letter on Humanism" in 1947, which eviscerated Sartre and sealed Heidegger's luminary reputation in France. Beaufret then became the leading figure in a generation of orthodox Heidegger scholars; both he and his students fended off attacks on the master in the subsequent cycles of accusations concerning Heidegger's Nazism. For them, Heidegger's self-exculpation after the war—that he had made a very stupid mistake typical of an unworldly academic, that he was never a true Nazi and certainly never an antisemite¹¹ or racist, and that he had only wanted to defend the independence of the university—quickly became "the official story" and all the explanation ever needed.¹²

Although known to me in outline, the story that you and Rockmore relate is still shocking: Beaufret himself was not just an anti-Semite but also a Holocaust revisionist who lent moral support to his student and fellow Holocaust denier, Robert Faurisson. You know all the details, so I won't catalogue them.¹³ The point of all this is that your reaction against Heidegger seems in part a patriotic indignation at his success in penetrating the French intellectual scene so completely: his most damning texts are not translated into French,¹⁴ and so the orthodox Heideggerians can stand guard over the interpretation of his work; the orthodox refuse to concede any ground, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that Heidegger was an ardent Nazi; the orthodox dominate the teaching of philosophy in France, at least in the Continental tradition, as it is called here in the United States, and so they pass on what you claim is a veiled Nazi ideology.

In short, for you, Heideggerianism in France is a humiliating and repugnant continuation of the Nazi occupation. Heidegger has succeeded completely in his strategy. It is the Vichy of the spirit, *une pensée vichyssoise*, if I may coin a sarcastic phrase. If this portrait of philosophy in France is correct, it is a deplorable situation. More disturbing still, while France had trouble enough with the military expulsion of the Germans during the war, and further problems fully denazifying after the war on the political plane, it seems that for you, the denazification of French philosophical life has hardly even begun, because the need for it has not ever been properly recognized. Such is the power and the victory of Heidegger suggested by your account.

No wonder then that you press for a denazification of the libraries and the curriculum by cordoning off the word "philosophy" from the name "Heidegger." I will return to your strategy later in this letter, but I hope I have done justice to a "life-context" that animates what, for an American, seems like a very strange thing to advocate as a response to Nazism: the banning of books and intrusion upon the educational curriculum.

As you no doubt know, the reception of Heidegger in the United States has a different history than in France, and therefore many readers here will be puzzled by the radical conclusions you reach.¹⁵ There is not the same dynamic of defeat and complicity with an occupying power that lends the French debates their special edge of mortal combat. Certainly there are orthodox Heideggerians in the United States, but their orthodoxy is not the dominant school of American philosophy (far from it!), and their orthodoxy does not commit them in the same way to the shame, if sufficiently proven, of Heidegger's Nazism. This is not to say that there is no potential for bitter dispute! But in general, the question simply does not enflame the same set of broad historical wounds, nor does it have any serious resonance with the broader public, and so the debates are cooler and more academic in the petty sense.

Some American Heidegger scholars, I expect, will be deeply troubled by your book, not because they are orthodox defenders of Heidegger, whatever

the costs, but because your book forcefully argues that taking Heidegger seriously *at all*, as a *philosopher*, is to contribute to his cunning program of converting philosophy to an organ of Nazism itself. You claim, in effect, that Heidegger intends his naive readers to become *unwitting carriers* of a Nazi ideology inherent to his thought. I think American Heidegger scholars, who are generally liberal, as are most American academics, will be concerned that one consequence of this may be to brand anyone as an “objective” collaborator with Nazism who does not dismiss Heidegger’s work out hand, whatever his or her subjective intentions. As I wrote in my response to the Romano review, this will smell of the Inquisition to many, even those most critical of Heidegger. Nevertheless, I take your challenge seriously, because it does raise questions anyone interested in Heidegger, as well as the broader implications, should confront.

MY PATH TO HEIDEGGER

Just as you, like Polemarchus in Plato’s *Republic*, have inherited the argument from your father, so have I in a sense from my family.

My mother’s father was a diplomat in the British foreign service. When I was a child, he and my grandmother let me read from letters kept in a great metal trunk, letters they had written home to their parents from their service postings. Those letters detailed their increasing alarm at the rise of Adolf Hitler and then their resolve that he must be resisted. My mother was born in the United States while her parents were attached to the British embassy in Washington. They were social democrats of the British Labor variety, and my grandmother especially impressed on me the disaster that Nazi Germany had inflicted upon Europe.

My father was born in Prague, a few years before the invasion of 1939. His parents were secular Jews, steeped in German language and culture, as were so many of the Jews of Czechoslovakia. My grandfather was an engineer who worked for Skoda, and then as general manager for Vitkovice, another important steel and iron manufacturer in the republic. By the grace of good luck and nerve, they made their escape in 1939 with only their two young sons. With the help of French business colleagues, they found their way to London, and from there, to New York City in 1941. All the family who remained were killed in the Shoah. It was only in 1990, when I traveled to the Jewish Community Center in Prague soon after the Velvet Revolution, that I found the small file cards detailing their deportations to the death camps.

I tell you this not to establish my credentials or my authority, or to prove that I must be immune to Heidegger’s worst tendencies, but rather to review for myself the context of my own engagement with Heidegger and to give

you a snapshot of how at least one American student of Heidegger came to read him and take him seriously.

In college, I was immediately drawn to philosophy. I began my studies in the fall of 1979, the time of the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (so the world turns—we find ourselves back in the same places, with different actors). I was gripped by the sense of planetary crisis and the need for new thinking and new action. I ended up writing a thesis on Mahatma Gandhi under John Rawls and Robert Nozick, and when I went on to the University of Chicago for my PhD, my aim was to find an analogue in Western philosophy for the thought of Gandhi and to develop this trajectory in the context of the Western tradition.

My original plan was to work on Kant's ethics and his philosophy of history, but there was one thing I learned from Gandhi that ended up sending me on a quarter-century detour. It was this: Gandhi insisted that in any dispute over anything truly important, it is necessary, for the sake of both the truth and one's own integrity, to seek out the most powerful argument in the opponent's favor, to come to grips with it, and, if it has any merit, to let that move you, and if it does not, at least to make your understanding of that argument a pathway to understanding with the opponent. After all, we expect the opponent to be moved by us, if we possess the greater share of truth (in Sanskrit, *sat*, Being, an Indo-European cognate of the Greek *esti*, the German *ist*, the French *est*, the English *is*). The Gandhian idea is to engage in an openly resolute confrontation, to risk all for the truth, even one's own necessarily finite understanding of it.¹⁶ In that spirit, I sought out the Western philosopher who could make the most radical attack on Kant's conception of the person as an end in itself and his conception of history as the progressive unfolding of a rational order (to put it all rather crudely). At first, I thought that challenge would be Nietzsche. But in my first year of graduate study, I met Richard Polt, who would become my friend and collaborator on two Heidegger translation projects. He persuaded me to try Heidegger, and I had heard that Heidegger was in some way involved with the Nazis, but the "official story" was then still dominant of both sides of the Atlantic. A professor in college had given me a copy of *Being and Time* and told me to grit my teeth and just read it through, but I had been unable to make it past the first few pages. Now Richard and I read the first of Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures, *The Will to Power as Art* (using a translation based on Heidegger's strategically edited 1961 edition),¹⁷ in an informal class with Leszek Kołakowski—a man hardly to be mistaken for a Heideggerian, orthodox or otherwise! He would later become the director of my dissertation.

Very quickly I came to see that in Heidegger I had found an even more profound critique than in Nietzsche of the Enlightenment and its roots in Western thought. Heidegger indicated from the very start of his lectures that this

would be an *Auseinandersetzung*, a confrontation, not only with Nietzsche but with the entirety of the Western tradition reaching back to Plato, brought to its highest pitch of nihilism in and through Nietzsche. A fragment published in 1985 in the Appendix to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition of *The Will to Power as Art* seemed to confirm my hunch:

Auseinandersetzung is something completely different [from critique]: to choose the opponent and to bring oneself and him into position against one another, and indeed in a struggle [*Kampf*] over what is most essential. This “bringing-into-position of the opponent” demands the unfolding of the most essential questions; these must be developed from what is innermost in his work to what is outermost. But these positions of struggle must themselves be historical—those of Nietzsche and those of ours, and this in turn in the direction of the great trajectories of the essential history of philosophy.¹⁸

In my innocence, I interpreted this as a Heideggerian correlate to the Gandhian invocation to seek out what is most challenging and most powerful in the opponent. What I did not realize then was that this was but one *face* of the *polemos*, a face reserved for an opponent Heidegger could respect.

During the subsequent winter break, Richard and I read the *Introduction to Metaphysics* together, out loud, line by line in English, with Richard consulting the German as we went (I had not yet learned the language). From that collaboration, two projects were conceived. Richard and I realized that the existing English translation, by Ralph Manheim,¹⁹ was seriously inadequate, and the seed of a project to produce a new one was planted, something we brought to fruition more than a decade later with our translation published in 2000.²⁰ I also discovered that Heidegger’s notion of *Auseinandersetzung* was much more than a declaration of confrontation with a single author or even with a whole tradition: it was his word for the *polemos* of Heraclitus and another name for the life of Being itself, both in how individual human beings must confront their existence and in how peoples must confront their histories. I sensed that at the bottom of Heidegger’s conception of “the inner truth and greatness” of National Socialism must lie the *polemos*.²¹

So began the research that would become my doctoral thesis and then my book, *Heidegger’s Polemos: From Being to Politics*. That was in late 1986, early 1987, just before the eruption of “the Heidegger affair” ignited by Victor Fariás’s *Heidegger and Nazism*. I began intensive studies of German and then went to study in Germany for a year, mainly in Bochum at the Ruhr University, because I had heard that Otto Pöggeler, the head of the Hegel Archive there, was one of the few German Heidegger scholars willing to address his politics. By a strange providence it was, in 1989 and 1990, the centennial of Heidegger’s birth, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet empire, and the Velvet Revolution in my father’s native land.

HEIDEGGER'S POLEMOS

You know my book, and so I will not argue in detail for what I attempt to show there through textual analysis of Heidegger's works from the 1920s to the end of the Second World War, but I will summarize it so that I can compare my understanding with your analysis of Heidegger's politics. My aim was to come to terms with that politics mainly on the basis of Heidegger's thought as expressed in his texts (including speeches and letters), turning to biography only when needed to make sense of a text's context. The book's title—*Heidegger's Polemos: From Being to Politics*—is meant to evoke a number of things.

First, it points to what I claim is the centrality of the notion of *polemos* to Heidegger's thinking, and that he elevates it to the status of the highest ontological principle, based on his reading of Heraclitus's fragment 53: "*Polemos* is the father of all things, and the king of all, and it reveals some as gods, others as human beings; it makes some slaves, others free."²² For Heidegger, *polemos* describes the unfolding of Being itself, as well as the human relationship to Being, for they are inseparable. It is significant that, in this word of a "pre-Socratic" thinker, Heidegger finds an understanding of Being that precedes the distortion and decline whose origins Heidegger locates in Plato. Indeed, as an opponent of Platonic idealism, Heidegger is seeking an alternative to the Platonic *idea* or *eidos* as that which grants the manifest intelligibility of things as what they distinctly *are* (as this, rather than that, etc.); for Heidegger, it is *polemos* that takes the place of *idea* as what bestows upon beings their meaning—a meaning that is entirely wedded to the struggles and flux of *being-here* as enmeshed in historical existence, rather than in a timeless, unchanging realm of ideas that lies beyond us.

Second, while Heidegger turns explicitly to fragment 53 and *polemos* in the rectoral period of the 1930s, I also try to show that the origins of this thinking can be found very early in his work: in his treatment of the temporality of Dasein as an *Auseinandersetzung* (confrontation) with the world of meaning into which it finds itself thrown. This language of *Auseinandersetzung* can already be discerned in his treatment of the life-context, as he calls it in the early 1920s. My reading of *Being and Time* endeavors to show that Dasein's authentic temporality is precisely such an *Auseinandersetzung* with its own thrown-projecting existence. Furthermore, I focus on that same passage in *Being and Time* that you do, in section 74, where Heidegger says, "In communication [*Mitteilung*] and in struggle [*Kampf*] the power of destiny first becomes free" (SZ, 384): it is not just individual Dasein, for Heidegger, but the whole spirit of a people

that must engage in the *polemos* with its own history (both inherited past and rising future) in order to live up to its communal destiny. Of course, it is not the people itself that conducts this confrontation, but the triad of its great poets, statesmen, and thinkers—in this case, Hölderlin, Hitler, and Heidegger himself.

Third, my title, *Heidegger's Polemos*, means to recall the title of the most infamous book of that time: Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. We both have noted Heidegger's correspondence with Carl Schmitt in 1933, where Heidegger writes, "Your quote from Heraclitus[']s Frag. 53] particularly pleased me in that you did not forget the *basileus* [the king, the absolute ruler], which gives the fragment its full meaning, if one interprets it completely. I have had such an interpretation with respect to the concept of truth set down for years. . . . But now I myself stand in the midst of the *polemos* [that is, in his role as rector] and all literary projects must give way."²³ There are two things here to emphasize. One is something that you bring out in much greater detail than I did in my book, namely, the intense interest at the time among Nazi thinkers and fellow travelers (so, Jünger, Schmitt, Baeumler, Heidegger) with the theme of *Kampf* (battle, combat, struggle), and more particularly with Heraclitus's *polemos*-fragment itself.²⁴ And so the fascination with both *Kampf* and the *basileus* is a clear indication of Heidegger's fascination with the work of Hitler, the cult of combat following the *Fronterlebnis* of the First World War, and the role of the *Führer*.²⁵ But the second point goes even further, and it is one as old as the observation of Otto Pöggeler (in 1985), following the earlier historical work of Ott, that Heidegger sought *den Führer führen*, that is, to lead the *Führer* by becoming the spiritual leader of the National Socialist revolution.²⁶ Heidegger's *polemos* matches, in its ambition, the titanic grandiosity of Hitler's *Kampf*.

Fourth and last, the title points to the *content* of that ambition: what Heidegger sought to accomplish in thought and thereby in both deed and influence as an educator, as an administrator, and above all as *the* (aspiring!) spiritual leader of the Nazi revolution. Very briefly, I argue that for Heidegger, the *polemos* must not take place only in the authentic temporality of individual *Dasein*, nor simply in the historicity of a whole people. It must also take place in the whole history of the West, because that history has played itself out as a history of nihilism beginning with the ancients and culminating with Nietzsche. *Heidegger's* struggle is to ignite that *polemos*, to lead the Germans to *den anderen Anfang*, the other inception, in a revolutionary confrontation with the first inception (*der erste Anfang*) among the Greeks. For Heidegger, this revolution means a rejection of the universalism, the egalitarianism, and the idealism that he sees as rooted in the thinking inaugurated by Plato, adopted into the Judeo-Christian

tradition, and culminating in the secular liberalism of the Enlightenment and the radical socialism of Marx. For Heidegger, this means resolutely belonging to a *particular* place, a *particular* time, and a *particular* people with its *particular* destiny. It means embracing the radical finitude of being human and a radical boundedness to human community. It means *polemos* as *Aus-einander-setzung*: setting oneself out and apart from other peoples in confrontation, the self-assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*) of a people as distinct, separate, and incommensurable with other peoples. It means the end of humanist universalism, human rights, and respect for persons as created in the image of God (or secularized correlates, such as Kant's respect for persons as ends in themselves). Furthermore, for Heidegger, this means that it must be the German destiny to carry out this *polemos* for the sake of every people worthy of that name (so, not the "negroes" or the Jews):²⁷ to recover the radical rootedness of historical belonging and to reject the universal homogenization and leveling that he designated with the name of *liberalism*. So, in the end, Karl Löwith's report from 1936 is dispositive: "Heidegger agreed with me without reservation [that his Nazism was grounded in his philosophy], and added that his concept of 'historicity' was the basis of his political 'engagement.'" What my book tries to do is to show in detail *how* his radical, indeed his *extreme*, historicism informed his politics. I had then and have now no doubt about what Löwith added: "[Heidegger] was convinced now [that is, in 1936, after his resignation as rector, and after his supposed underground rejection of and then resistance to Nazism] as before [that is, in 1933–1934] that National Socialism was the right course for Germany; one had only to 'hold out' for long enough."²⁸

I cannot close this section without agreeing with what you suggested to me: that the long section on the *polemos*-fragment, published in 2001 (so, after my book) in GA 36/37 as part of Heidegger's Winter Semester course of 1933–1934 (so, while he was in the deepest grip of his political engagement as rector), confirms my interpretation of the decisive role of the *polemos* in Heidegger's political thinking. As you know, I have translated this volume with Richard Polt.²⁹ You call attention to one of the most terrifying sections of that text, and it is worth repeating in full:

One word stands great and simple at the beginning of the saying: *polemos*, war. This does not mean the outward occurrence of war and the celebration of what is "military," but rather what is decisive: standing against the enemy. We have translated this word with "struggle" to hold on to what is essential; but on the other hand, it is important to think over that it does not mean *agón*, a competition in which two friendly opponents measure their strengths, but rather the struggle of "*polemos*," war. This means that the struggle is in earnest; the

opponent is not a partner but an enemy. Struggle as standing against the enemy, or more plainly: standing firm in confrontation.

An enemy is each and every person who poses an essential threat to the Dasein of the people and its individual members. The enemy does not have to be external, and the external enemy is not even always the more dangerous one. And it can seem as if there were no enemy. Then it is a fundamental requirement to find the enemy, to expose the enemy to the light, or even first to make the enemy, so that this standing against the enemy may happen and so that Dasein may not lose its edge.

The enemy can have attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people and can set itself against this people's own essence and act against it. The struggle is all the fiercer and harder and tougher, for the least of it consists in coming to blows with one another; it is often far more difficult and wearisome to catch sight of the enemy as such, to bring the enemy into the open, to harbor no illusions about the enemy, to keep oneself ready for attack, to cultivate and intensify a constant readiness and to prepare the attack looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation.³⁰

Heidegger emphasizes that *polemos* is not the *equivalent* of war (*Krieg*), but he makes equally clear that it *drives* the most elemental, existential struggle (*Kampf*), and so, clearly, it must at times *manifest* itself in war as conventionally understood. As you underline in your book, Heidegger is deeply indebted to Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction here: the adversary is not a mere opponent (*Gegner*) but a true enemy (*Feind*) who poses an existential threat to the Being of the people. Gone, then, my gentler understanding of *polemos* as chivalric encounter between truth-seeking adversaries. Most disturbing of all is Heidegger's contention here that the truest enemy may be one that is invisible, that has "attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people" and "set itself against this people's own essence." In 1933–1934, can there be any doubt whatsoever about the identity of such an enemy, whom Heidegger is both too sly and too fastidious to name openly? As you correctly conclude, for any German speaker using such language, as well as for any German audience hearing it, so soon after the Nazi rise to power, that enemy would unmistakably be the Jew, whose insinuation into the roots of the *Volk* requires a tireless and vigilant struggle to counteract, "looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation [*der völligen Vernichtung*]." With such words in a university lecture course, how can we doubt Heidegger's indirect but still intimate *philosophical* responsibility for the mentality that gave rise to the Final Solution?

I find that I cannot leave this extraordinary passage behind without further comment. Because I am the co-translator of the lectures assembled in *Being and Truth*, I have had the opportunity to present and discuss this "total annihilation" passage at a number of academic venues for specialists in Heidegger over the past year. I have been struck by how many respondents have said

something like the following: But Heidegger does not *name* the Jews here. What allows you to make that leap? Surely there are other candidates for the hidden enemy. Perhaps the enemy he means is not even human, but a mode of thinking, such as subjectivist metaphysics. Perhaps he means to make the very meaning of “the enemy” into a problem for his students. For such reasons, perhaps we should avoid moralizing about this passage.

Such questions have given me some pause, not least because many of those asking them are hardly apologists for fascism. For the most part, they are scholars and teachers who instinctively recoil at the horrendous implications of this passage and who tend to find inspiration in what they take to be the later Heidegger’s critique of the will and voluntarism, of hubristic modernity, and of totalizing thinking of any kind. Perhaps because I find that this resistance to what I take to be the plain meaning of the text is often made in good faith, it is worth saying more against such interpretations now.

First of all, Heidegger is clearly referring to a human, rather than a conceptual enemy here: he mentions actual opponents who are a true enemy of the people and with whom one might come to blows, not ideas or traditions, such as Platonic metaphysics or Cartesian subjectivism (ideas that must also have actual human beings as their bearers, in any case). Furthermore, whatever his own intentions, it is inconceivable that a grown man in his forties, lecturing to an audience of students in an introductory philosophy course, would not realize what this kind of language would evoke for his young audience in the Germany of 1933, exposed as they already were to Hitler’s antisemitic rhetoric and to the Nazi state’s antisemitic actions: that speaking of a hidden enemy, burrowing into the roots of the people, would immediately conjure up the image of the Jew, especially the assimilated Jew of the university, industrial commerce, and high culture.

On top of this, we know more now about Heidegger’s own attitude toward this hidden enemy. You are aware that in a 1929 letter of recommendation about a former student, Heidegger wrote,

What I could say only indirectly in my report [on Eduard Baumgarten], I can say more clearly here: it has to do with nothing less than the reflection, which cannot be put off, that we stand before a choice, either again to provide for our *German* spiritual life genuine forces and educators that are rooted in the soil [*bodenständige*], or finally to surrender this spiritual life to the growing Jewification [*Verjudung*] in the broader and narrower sense.³¹

Hitler himself, in *Mein Kampf* (1925), had regretted “how far the inner *Verjudung* of our people has already progressed.”³² Some have wanted to argue that Heidegger’s 1929 letter is an anomaly. Now we know, as you have pointed out, that Heidegger’s fear of the Jewification of Germany goes at least as far back as a letter of October 18, 1916, to his wife, Elfride, where he writes: “The Jewification of our culture and universities is certainly frightful,

and I trust that the German race will still be able to summon enough inner strength to come out on top.”³³ So, it seems decisively clear that when Heidegger spoke of an inner enemy of the German people, culture, and spirit, he meant the Jews.

If that weren’t enough, there is the following exchange with his wife in 1932. On June 9, he writes to Elfride: “Baeumler ordered the ‘Jüdische Rundschau’ for me, and it is very well laid out and of high quality. I will send you the issues.”³⁴ If one did not know that Alfred Baeumler was a close ally of Heidegger’s at the time and a major ideological supporter of the Nazis, one might think that Heidegger was admirably trying to broaden his own and his wife’s views by reading a leading German-language Zionist newspaper. But then on June 20, he responds to his wife: “What you write about the Jewish paper and Tick was already my way of thinking, too. On this issue, one cannot be too mistrustful.”³⁵ Can there be any doubt that from 1916 to the dawn of the Nazi rise to power in the early 1930s, Heidegger’s mistrust of the Jews as an alien presence among the Germans was constant, and that when he spoke of an enemy worming its way into the people’s roots, he meant the Jews?³⁶

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

“National Socialism was the right course for Germany; one had only to ‘hold out’ for long enough,” Löwith reports Heidegger saying in 1936. Thanks to your book, we now have a better sense of how long that might be. As you document again and again, Heidegger measured his own spiritual influence over the Third Reich by decades, well past the death of Hitler, and then perhaps even by centuries.³⁷ I will return to the implications of this later. For now, I would like to summarize those elements of your research that I found most significant in adding to my own understanding of Heidegger’s politics. It will not be an exhaustive or even an adequate account. To be clear, and to risk repetition, I think that contribution is threefold: (1) you unearth important new historical details; (2) you integrate those details into a portrait of what has already been known about Heidegger’s politics, but which has not been synthesized anew in the past twenty years; and (3) you confront us with unavoidable questions about the significance of this emerging portrait of Heidegger and the political implications of his thought.

I will confess that when I first started reading your book, its prosecutorial tone and its inquisitorial policy recommendation (to ban books from zones of the library and to relegate them to an “index” of proscribed works!) put me off considerably. It seemed to me at first that you were drawing too many conclusions on the basis of guilt by association, or versions of the genetic fallacy—namely, that the intellectual origins or precursors of an idea wholly determine the meaning of all developments of that idea. However, as

I made my way through the work, both the historical context for Heidegger's thought and the facts that you document and the texts you muster succeeded in consolidating a portrait that I now find largely convincing, even though your methodology left me in serious doubt about some of your specific interpretations of his texts and his historical role (more on this further). Yes, you rely in many places on the work of others, such as Fariás and Ott, but that is inevitable in a project with the scope of yours. No doubt some will continue to say that there is nothing new here. But there is, both in individual details and in the picture taken as a whole, and we must come to terms again with what that whole means.

The first "official story" of Heidegger's political adventure, decisively disproved by Fariás and Ott in the late 1980s, was that he made a stupid mistake that he regretted and then opposed. But I think a *second* official story has since emerged, a more subtle one to which I myself have subscribed in part. It goes something like this: yes, Heidegger was indeed a real Nazi, and he believed in *his own version* of what the "inner truth and greatness" of that movement must mean, but that involved a repudiation of what we ordinarily think of as orthodox Nazism, namely, biological racism and global imperial ambitions, because the former is supposedly enmeshed in the metaphysics of modern science and the latter is but another form of aggressive and uprooted modern universalism. That is why he would come to criticize actual National Socialism, while remaining true to his own vision of the "inner truth and greatness" of the movement.

Your book puts this second line of defense in serious doubt. So, in no particular order, here are the elements that stand out for me.

- 1) *Racism*. In reading your book, I was at first taken aback by how you insist on translating a variety of words in Heidegger's texts of the 1930s as "race", so, not just *Rasse* but also words such as *Stamm*, *Geschlecht*, and *Artung*, as well as their various compound usages. At first I thought this was distorting the terminology to fit your theory in a way that was inflammatory and prejudicial. But the weight of the evidence, in the context of the racial theories and linguistic practices of the time that you detail, has convinced me that this is usually a legitimate rendering, *in this specific historical context*. It is clear that Heidegger is participating in a discourse with figures such as Rothacker, Baeumler, Schmitt, and Jünger, to name some of the most prominent ones that you discuss, a discourse in which all these terms are being used more or less interchangeably to refer to race in the sense of a group identity based on heritage, whether that heritage be biological (*Blut*, the blood-ties of kinship and tribal belonging) or historical and spiritual (*Boden*, the exclusive attachment to a particular tradition), or a combination of the two. Heidegger, with his characteristic prudence (if we may call it that), does indeed generally avoid the explicit

language of the most obscenely racist and antisemitic writers, such as Julius Streicher, but the multiple passages you reference where he does use the word *Rasse* make it clear that those related words, as he employs them, form part of a conceptual whole.³⁸

Furthermore, you explain something that had never been fully clear to me before. Yes, Heidegger does reject biological racism, yet not because he deplors race-thinking but rather because he rejects superficial biologism—and especially in what he takes to be its “liberal,” Darwinian, version—as a profoundly *reductive* way of understanding what it means to *be* human. For Heidegger, as we know, *to be* human means *to be* historical. To be historical is primarily a matter of the spirit, and so a people’s essence as a “race” is, for Heidegger, above all a historical-spiritual matter. As you make quite clear, this *spiritual* version of racism was very much a live strand in the Nazi movement, supported by Hitler himself in decisive speeches and embodied most fully in the ideology of the SS.³⁹ Furthermore, Heidegger is not opposed to the biological per se, so long as it is not understood in a Darwinian manner; hence his approving references to *Blut* and his affinity for the biology of form in Jakob von Uexküll and racial identity in Ludwig Clauß.⁴⁰

- 2) *Antisemitism*. Here, the situation is similar to that with racism. Heidegger’s defenders cite his many Jewish students, but we know well the distinction that many antisemites have made between particular individuals and the “problem” of an entire people insinuating itself into the life of the *Volk*, so there is no contradiction on this point, apart from the ugliness of the personal laid waste by supposedly world-historical imperatives. Heidegger certainly had no trouble casting aside those Jews to whom he owed the greatest debts, whether personal or professional. In this, Heidegger anticipated an attitude that Heinrich Himmler later enunciated in one of the most horrific documents of the era: his infamous Poznan speech of October 4, 1943, delivered to officers of the Waffen-SS, the military branch of the *Schutzstaffel*, Hitler’s elite corps entrusted with implementing the Final Solution. In the midst of carrying out the *Ausrottung*, the forcible removal and eradication, of the Jews, Himmler warns these troops against wavering by saying, “And then along they all come, all the 80 million upright Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. They say: all the others are swine, but here is a first-class Jew.”⁴¹ Himmler’s point is simply this: that the seeming virtues of any particular Jew, or indeed the personal affection one might feel for any particular Jew, must not stand in the way of the hard historical mission: total war against them, unto extermination, as an element alien to the *Volk*. In spirit, I now believe, Heidegger embodied precisely this attitude: he was perfectly willing to embrace (quite literally in some cases) specific individuals on a purely personal level, but he would do nothing if the wheel of fate

came to crush the Jews in general in the name of the destiny of the German *Volk*; indeed, he would gladly put his shoulder to that wheel.

I have noted the letters in which Heidegger lamented the *Verjudung*, the Jewification, of the German spirit, as an expression of an ontological antisemitism, and which you cite as some of the clearest expressions of Heidegger's unguarded views.⁴² Heidegger protects himself, in part, by avoiding the most coarsely discriminatory language of the period and by taking refuge in ontological abstraction. But the mask slips from time to time. We know about the *Verjudung* letters. But more telling than a word or phrase dropped here and there (and there are enough of these) is his participation in the *Gleichschaltung*, soon after the Nazis' rise to power in 1933, whereby—quite to the contrary of his later claims—he actively supported the efforts to purify the university by excluding its Jewish faculty and students and by giving at least tacit consent to the burning of “Jewish” books.⁴³ This is all in keeping with a determination to reverse the *Verjudung* of the German spirit, by way of an *Entjudung*, and to fulfill the *Aus-einander-setzung*, the self-assertion by separation, of the German people. And we know about the *Vernichtung* passage from Heidegger's lecture course of 1933–1934. The evidence now seems unassailable.

- 3) *Heidegger's Activism*. You detail in a very compelling way Heidegger's *engaged, aggressive, and continual* activism in the cause of National Socialism after 1933, and more to the point, after 1934, when Heidegger resigned as rector and, according to the official story, began his veiled critique of the regime. Again, that has been known to a certain extent since Ott and Farias, and even since Schneeberger published Heidegger's Nazi speeches in the early 1960s, but the extent of Heidegger's militancy has never really sunk in, most especially regarding the period after his resignation from the rectorship. By officially and ceremoniously joining the party on May 1, 1933—May Day, the workers' day—together with Carl Schmitt, Erich Rothacker, and other intellectual luminaries, Heidegger first of all lent credibility and respectability to the Nazi cause. As rector of Freiburg University, far from striving to protect the “independence” of the academy, he was an avid supporter and, as his university's rector, *implementer* of Hitler's *Gleichschaltung*, the first sallies of an aggressive totalitarianism that sought to bring all aspects of German political, educational, and cultural life into line with the party program and the *Führer*-principle.⁴⁴ The detail you provide about his political activism and his educational activism is decisive.⁴⁵ One cannot treat his speeches of the time as “compromises” made with the regime in order to maintain the “self-assertion” of the university. For example, his passionate speeches in favor of the plebiscite of November 12, 1933, to approve Hitler's domestic and foreign policies (including

renouncing the League of Nations), broadcast by radio to many thousands of listeners, were surely indicative of his ardor, and perhaps instrumental in swaying many voters and even more students to the cause.

This is only part of it, for as you show, his many speeches were directed at converting the people, especially the young, to Nazism. He participated eagerly in the indoctrination work of the paramilitary work camps and cultivated deep links with the Nazi youth and student movements.⁴⁶ Furthermore, I find convincing your argument that his resignation came as a result of resistance at the university to his militant radicalism, especially in his efforts to put his equally militant protégé, Erik Wolf, in control of the law faculty, with the help of Carl Schmitt.⁴⁷ Also, you make clear that his efforts after his resignation, far from providing evidence of a retreat from his embrace of the party, prove that he turned his activism in a more “spiritual” direction: to educational reform for the cultivation of the new nobility and to the reconstitution of the Nietzsche archives as a vehicle for entrenching his own notion of Nazism as the dominant one.⁴⁸ His militancy, his ambition, and his revolutionary radicalism were profound.

- 4) *Heidegger’s Hitlerism*. Heidegger’s political (not just intellectual) collaboration with Carl Schmitt,⁴⁹ his cultivation of his own devoted student Erik Wolf as a Nazi legal theorist and educator to take over the law faculty at Freiburg, and the many letters and other texts you bring together show how deeply committed Heidegger was to the Hitlerian cast of National Socialism: the understanding of law as grounded not in reason but in the person of the ruler, the rejection of parliamentarianism as the organ of legitimate sovereignty, the disdain for the rule of law in favor of the dictate of the Führer, and the quasi-erotic reverence for the person of the Führer as the bearer of the will and the destiny of the people—all these provide a fuller insight into what Heidegger meant by welcoming the advent of the *basileus* in 1933 in his letter to Schmitt.⁵⁰

As I wrote earlier, I had known parts of this before, as well as the outlines of the portrait as whole, as would have any serious scholar of Heidegger’s life and work. But it is the *distinctness* of the whole and the compelling nature of many of the new details you assemble that is so powerful. Most striking are the lectures and seminars from the rectoral period that you have unearthed, such as the seminar on Hegel and the state—ones that remain unpublished by the *Gesamtausgabe*—that cement the portrait of Heidegger as a vehement Hitler supporter, antisemite, and racist.⁵¹ The unavoidable conclusion is that Heidegger’s Nazism was more profound, more enduring, and more thoroughly wedded to his own understanding of the deepest currents of his philosophy than we had realized before.

SOME RESERVATIONS

Your book is primarily a work of history and biography. By this, I do not mean to belittle its accomplishments, for they are significant. To repeat: you uncover important new facts; you integrate these with what was known before to present a new portrait of Heidegger's political engagement as a whole; and you challenge us with the question of what that whole means for his work and for philosophy in general. A central thesis of your book is that Heidegger's thought should not be dignified with the name of philosophy, which you put in scare quotes when attached to his own name. I will say more below about your refusal of the name "philosophy" in connection with Heidegger, but my point here is that this means that while you trace the *intellectual development* of his ideas as they relate to Nazism and the historical context, you seldom engage Heidegger philosophically, except perhaps in a negative sense, such as when you defend Descartes against Heidegger's attacks.

I will admit that this approach put me off at first, even though I understood that your thesis is that Heidegger indeed should not be treated as a philosopher. This has to do, I think, with my own impulse to read an author generously, which goes back to that Gandhian principle I mentioned before. But if my fault has been to read Heidegger more generously than he deserves, then I would suggest that yours is to read him with such an intense hermeneutic of suspicion (if I may bend Ricœur's phrase to my use) that everything ends up getting drawn into the vortex of crypto-Nazi maneuverings. I don't think you need to go this far to make your most essential points about the depths of his allegiance to Nazism or about the need to reevaluate Heidegger's impact. I think this tendency constitutes a serious flaw in the book, because it leads you to overreach in some cases, and these missteps undermine the credibility of other portions of the book that otherwise deserve to be taken seriously.

So, for example, you analyze volume 90 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, which collects Heidegger's notes on Ernst Jünger, in order to develop your claim that Heidegger supports racial selection. I will quote a substantial passage from your book:

[Heidegger] relates "racial thought" (*Rassengedanke*) to the "soil of subjectivity" [GA 90: 38] and assures us that "man is no less subject, but on the contrary more essentially so, when he conceives of himself as a nation, a people, a race, a somehow self-dependent humanity" [GA 90: 38]. In the enumeration contained in that sentence, race is presented as a perfectly legitimate way to conceive of man. But in what follows in that statement Heidegger takes the same line of thought to even more hateful lengths. He continues: "But there is a world of difference between belonging to a race [*Rassenhaben*] and establishing a race particularly and intentionally, as a 'principle,' the result and goal of being-human; especially when racial selection is specifically conducted *not only as*

one condition for being-human, but when that being-race and domination qua that race are held up as the highest goal” [GA 90: 39].⁵²

At the risk of being taken as an apologist for Heidegger, I have to say that in this case, I found your interpretation of the text implausible. In his notes on Jünger, Heidegger is attempting to come to grips with how Jünger defines the spirit of the age, namely, the age of advanced nihilism. Heidegger claims that Jünger sees even more clearly than Nietzsche the *implications* of the domination of the will to power *in the form* of technology engaged in the battle for material and the total mobilization of man and machine. Jünger, Heidegger says, is the age’s preeminent *observer* and *describer* of the most intense form of nihilism, and so of the final dark apotheosis of Western metaphysics. But Heidegger denies to Jünger the title of genuine *thinker*: “Because Jünger does *not* see what can only be ‘thought,’ he therefore considers this fulfillment of meta-physics in the essence of the will to power to be the onset of a new era, whereas it is only the start of the rapid antiquation of everything that is the newest of the new in the tedium of the null, in which gestates the abandonment of beings by Being.”⁵³

Returning to the passages you cite, it seems to me quite clear that rather than celebrating that “man is no less a subject” when taken as a “race,” he is *criticizing* (as he almost always does) subjectivism as manifested in these forms, particularly because they advocate a notion of being-human as a “self-dependent humanity”—clearly a fault, for Heidegger, because such humanism forgets our indebtedness to Being by raising us up to a self-creating, self-affirming subject. *To be clear*: this leaves open the possibility Heidegger might still (here, in the late 1930s) hold to a non-subjectivist view of race or of the *Volk* as the ultimate touchstone of political meaning. But in *this* passage, it is misleading to translate *Boden* as “soil” in the phrase “*Boden der Subjektivität*”: here, *Boden* means simply “basis,” as it certainly *can* in ordinary German. In this same passage, Heidegger defines subjectivism in a very critical manner (as usual): “The essence of *subjectivity* has been laid out; it means: man is the ground and the goal, not just of himself, rather he *is* himself only in that he is and to the extent that he is the ground and goal of beings as a whole—and asserts himself as such” (GA 90: 38).⁵⁴

So, it seems to me entirely and clearly in keeping with his critique of metaphysical subjectivism and of Jünger in this volume, that Heidegger, in the passage you then cite, *condemns* “establishing a race particularly and intentionally, as a ‘principle,’ the result and goal of being-human.” Furthermore, when he writes that this is true “especially when racial selection is specifically conducted *not only as one* condition for being-human, but when that being-race and domination qua that race are held up as the highest goal,” I find the rendering of *Rassenzüchtung* as “racial selection” problematic. Yes,

in some circumstances, this might involve selection (in the horrific sense used in the Final Solution), but here at least it seems clear to me that Heidegger is speaking more broadly of *racial breeding and cultivation* (in Nietzsche's sense of *Züchtung*) as part of the modernist problem, because it elevates human beings as the source of their own Being. This is confirmed by the sentence directly following the passage you cite, which clearly condemns what Heidegger has been describing: "Therefore, the much-advocated priority of community-interest over self-interest is merely a semblance and stands fully in the service of the most extreme and most explicit *self-interest*, one which—thought in relation to 'man' as animal—can be thought metaphysically."⁵⁵

All this is not to deny what you point out about the Jünger volume: that Heidegger in 1939–1940 sees the coming war with "the democratic 'empires' (England, America)" as the battle for the power over the next century.

For supposing the possession of power in the sense of the imperial dictatorship of absolute armament for armament's sake [this is Heidegger's characterization, as filtered through Jünger, of Germany under Nazism] harbors at the same time within itself the essential possibility of the total devastation of the world, the question arises as to whether the highest possession of power with a view to supreme power becomes capable of going beyond power itself as essence of reality, and, if not of founding a new truth of being, at least of preparing it in its foundations. That the strength of the essence, hidden and not yet purified, of the Germans, should extend this far, such is *our* belief.⁵⁶

You are right, then, I think, to argue that Heidegger supports (at least in 1939–1940) a global war for domination.⁵⁷ His view here is complex: on the one hand, he thinks Jünger has seen Nazism for what it is, a dictatorship of armament for armament's sake, but Heidegger considers this as still part of the extreme stage of metaphysical nihilism, a reverse image of the "democratic" empires of the West; nevertheless, and on the other hand, Heidegger holds out the hope—at the risk of "the total devastation of the world"!—that a German victory will seed the ground for a new understanding of power that will transcend power for power's sake and thereby found "a new truth of *Sein*," one that will be non-metaphysical and non-subjectivist, one that may take a century to achieve.⁵⁸ You are also right about this being a clear indication of his enduring dedication to Nazism after his resignation as rector, *despite* his own reservations about the metaphysical impurities of the movement, as well as a proof that he sees the leadership of his own thinking of the question of Being as essential to that ultimate and as yet hidden victory.

So, while your intense hermeneutic of suspicion is to an extent justified, considering Heidegger's mendaciousness, it sometimes leads you to make the texts say even more than what is there; you don't need to do that to make clear the depths of Heidegger's commitments. Your zeal to convict Heidegger of

the most serious offenses leads you to other, similar difficulties. Your hypothesis that Heidegger may have served as a ghostwriter for Hitler's speeches struck me as no more than a hunch, and for a claim as historically significant as this, more substantial proof is needed. And, without going into interpretive detail, I found your interpretation of the Bremen lectures unconvincing for similar reasons.

To cite another example may seem tangential, since it is not obviously about your reading of Heidegger, I was also not convinced by at least some of your defense of Descartes. You refer to the famous passage in the *Discourse on Method* where Descartes advocates that we become "the masters and owners of nature," and you want to deny that this implies a Baconian program of human domination over all that is, as Heidegger would have it. On your reading, Descartes here is primarily concerned with preserving health, a goal that "does not convey any will to exploit nature unreservedly, but on the contrary a deep attention to life, with a view to preserving man's unity."⁵⁹

The passage in question begins with Descartes proclaiming his goal of uncovering principles that will allow us "to procure, as much as is in our power, the common good of all men." He goes on:

For these notions made me see that it is possible to arrive at knowledge that would be very useful in life and that, in place of that speculative philosophy taught in the schools, it is possible to find a practical philosophy, by means of which, knowing the force and the actions of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, just as distinctly as we know the various skills of our craftsmen, we might be able, in the same way, to use them for all the purposes for which they are appropriate, and thus render ourselves, as it were, masters and possessors of nature. This is desirable not only for the invention of an infinity of devices that would enable one to enjoy trouble-free the fruits of the earth and the goods found there, but also principally for the maintenance of health, which unquestionably is the first good and the foundation of all other goods in this life.⁶⁰

The concern for health is there, clearly, but also unmistakable is Descartes's soaring ambition for the modern project in which improvement to medicine is just a subsidiary. We see, in embryo, the "infinity of devices" of modern technology, as well as the capture of the fundamental elements and energies of nature itself: "the force and actions of fire, water, air." What is this but a prefiguration of Einstein's discovery of $E = mc^2$ as the key to unlocking the power of the sun, and indeed the fundamental energies and components of the universe, which we have used both to power and to annihilate entire cities?

I raise this point about Descartes because it seems to me that whatever else one might say about the accuracy of Heidegger's interpretation of him, Heidegger's discussions of subjectivity and the Faustian aspirations of modernity

are not utterly without merit. To the extent that you are right that something *like* the Cartesian subject must be defended to preserve the individual and the individual moral conscience from being submerged in the collective identity and demands of a historical people, I also think that we can only make that defense by taking seriously the great dangers of what Jan Patočka called the “titanism” of the modern project.⁶¹ By insisting that nothing Heidegger says can possibly have philosophical merit, that it is all manipulation and opportunism for the sake of a deeply rooted Nazism, you miss an opportunity to rethink the foundations of modernity in a way that might both preserve its best tendencies and ward off its worst. Surely no student of our past century can deny that its barbarisms demand precisely such a reconstruction of the tradition. You fear that giving Heidegger any credit in such a reevaluation of our situation will promote what is nothing more than a Nazi ideology. But the simple fact is that Heidegger has so deeply influenced sixty years of philosophy that we would have to discard many other genuinely serious thinkers in order to root him out entirely. Far better to take him on directly as a philosopher, despite and indeed because of his politics.

LESSONS

What might all this have to teach us about fascism? For Nazism is but a species of that larger genus of tyranny.

First, I would say that it helps us to see that fascism is a *modern* phenomenon, because it is a reaction against a universalism that could only become *actual* as a global possibility in the modern era, even if this universalism was implicit in the ancient world in the thought of a Plato, for example, and prepared for the modern world by the evangelical soteriology and eschatology of Christianity (that is, in the catholicity, strictly speaking, of a mission to persons inhabiting a cosmos whose ultimate meaning as a whole lies beyond this world). We might detect protofascist elements in the premodern world, such as in the cult of the emperor in Rome, but for the most part, these are anachronisms, because in the ancient world, there was no *viable* universalist politics or culture against which a political movement might have reacted. Christianity, in its infancy, was a prophetic and otherworldly universalism, not a political one, and it was soon co-opted by the Roman Empire. Christianity’s universalism became truly political when its egalitarianism became secularized in the Enlightenment. The passage from the *Beiträge* that you cite is dispositive here, where Heidegger declares that “inasmuch as the dominance of reason as an equalizing of everyone is but the consequence of Christianity and as

the latter is fundamentally of Jewish origin (cf. Nietzsche's thought on the slave revolt with respect to morality), Bolshevism is in fact Jewish; but then Christianity is also fundamentally Bolshevik!"⁶² Heidegger lays the blame of liberal modernity squarely at the feet of democratic universalism, which, no matter how secular its contemporary forms, has its roots in Platonism, Judaism, and Christianity.

Second, because it rejects universalism, fascism reverts to an *atavistic* and *exclusive* belonging to a group. The touchstone of that belonging may be almost anything, such as a shared history, or a language, or a religion, or a putative racial identity. The key to the atavism is that the belonging must connect to something that is irrational, or at least nonrational; otherwise it risks lapsing into the universalism it opposes and finds no grounds for *exclusive* belonging. That is because, if the basis for belonging to the group is some esoteric insight, some exclusive characteristic, or some exceptional accomplishment, rather than simple free choice informed by reason, then the belonging must be something one discovers, or that one simply *is*, rather than something one can *choose* on the basis of rational reflection. That is why race, defined either biologically or spiritually (but especially biologically), has been such an attractive cathexis for fascist belonging. Setting aside the problem of racial purity, race is supposedly a clear boundary marker: one either *is* or is *not* a member of the race. You cannot choose or think your way into such a belonging. Of course, the actual boundary of race, and of racial purity, is always a serious conceptual problem for race-based fascists, as you show in your discussion of the fights between the Nordic and the pan-Germanic notions of racial purity under Nazism.⁶³ We see this problem also in the "one drop rule" in American racial ideology, whereby a person has traditionally been defined as "black" no matter how far back the African "blood" might originate, and no matter how "white" that person looks or seems.⁶⁴ In Heidegger's case, we know, the matter is complicated, but there seems little question now that he held a radically exclusivist view of what it must mean *to be* German, and that being German must entail a vigilant *Aus-einander-setzung* with both foreign and domestic enemies.

Third, because fascism denies universalism, it also subverts the rule of law and tends to rely on the cult of a supreme leader. By its nature, law appeals to rational principles that transcend the particulars of time and circumstance, and those principles quickly make their claim to universal application. But once one denies that a community's true principles of belonging and identity are rational or universal, the *bond of community* itself, not universal right, becomes the touchstone for judgment and justice. Furthermore, because the needs of the community demand interpretation by means that are more prophetic than rational, the law loses its pride of

place as the final arbiter in favor of the leader who makes decisions in the exceptional case. Very soon, the leader who adopts the power to decide beyond established law in exceptional cases becomes the arbiter of what constitutes an exceptional case in the first place. The leader then *is* the law, for the exception becomes the rule. This was certainly the view of Schmitt—and of Heidegger, who proclaimed in public speeches that “the Führer and he alone *is* the present and future German reality and its law.”⁶⁵

Fourth, because it renounces the rule of law, fascism also tends to glorify violence and to despise “liberal” formalism in the procedures and institutions of government. Along with the rule of law itself, fascism holds parliamentarianism, checks and balances, and the like all in contempt as expressions of a notion of political life incapable of decisive action and truly organic unity. Emergencies and revolutionary acts of founding require great acts of violence and decision, and fascism treats the petty give-and-take of rule-bound processes as inadequate to the urgency of the moment. Great leaders seize that moment, cutting the Gordian knot of indecisiveness with acts of institutional or physical violence, or both. Furthermore, this violent spirit extends to breaking down the barriers between civil society and the state, so that the state’s claims to supervise and order all aspects of a people’s life become ever more totalitarian. We see this in Heidegger’s utter disdain for liberalism, his welcoming of the Nazi seizure of power and the brutality of the *Gleichschaltung*, his veneration of warriors such as Ernst Jünger, and his fascination with the violence and terribleness (*to deinon*) of Being itself.

Fifth, the renunciation of law and the detached rationalism it implies lead to fascism’s contempt for truth. Fascists follow Nietzsche’s advice to prefer art to truth, but the art they create is a statecraft wedded to the atavistic principle of belonging. The truth itself suffers violence for the sake of a higher—or, more properly speaking—a *rooted* Truth, understood as the needs of the collective as revealed exclusively to those who lay claim to leading the people and interpreting their mission in the world. Hence fascism’s penchant for propaganda and lies, as well as its hostility to free inquiry, and, at the most extreme, its mania for book-burning, censorship, and outright distortion or fabrication of history. Heidegger’s extraordinary mendacity as an individual might seem a separate matter here, except that we know (in greater detail now, in part thanks to you), that he fabricated a story after the war to minimize his Nazi involvement and that he also interfered systematically with his own texts published after the war, to sanitize and to spin them so that the most extreme expressions of his Nazism would remain hidden, at least for a time.⁶⁶ Perhaps one might even go so far as to say that his understanding of truth as *a-lêtheia*, as *Unverborgenheit*, unconcealment, may undermine the very notion of truthfulness as a kind of honesty about the facts, because what truth as unconcealment

reveals is a world of meaning that takes precedence over any truth claims in the traditional sense.

Sixth, fascism finds its momentum in mass movements. This is a paradox, and it has to do with fascism's distinctively *modern* nature as an *anti-modern* phenomenon. In resisting modern universalism, fascism takes up the tools and the conditions of modernity itself: it relies on technology to reach a mass audience that has been uprooted and left insecure by modernity, made restless and full of nostalgia for it knows not what. Fascism therefore does not have at its disposal what the ancient world took for granted: a people's immediate sense of belonging. Instead, fascism finds and exploits a much more ambiguous, and for that reason, a much more dangerously fertile, situation: one where a mere *mass* of alienated humanity may be molded by invoking their yearning for a lost sense of belonging as a genuine *people* with an exclusive identity and mission. Hence, all the dark eroticism for the leader, the state, and the people, with the individual subsumed into a greater whole. Hence Heidegger's willingness to put his arcane language of the destiny of Being at the disposal of the Reich, giving speeches to students, to workers, and, most tellingly, to the people in general when he spoke on the radio in ardent favor of Hitler's decisive November 12, 1933, plebiscite to confirm his domestic and foreign policies, which by that time included withdrawal from the League of Nations, the *Gleichschaltung*, and measures against Jews and other undesirables in the professions and universities.

Finally, another paradox: While fascism rejects ethical and political universalism as championed most clearly by the Enlightenment (at its best), fascism, in turn, tends to locate its own narrative in a mission with universal significance. This has to do with the scale of the clash with universalism, for it requires a sense of destiny that transcends the merely parochial replanting of roots: it demands an epic combat against the forces that have putatively uprooted the people and which threaten to continue to do so, perhaps on a global scale. Hence Nazism's obsession with the Jews as a dramatic but sinister international conspiracy. Hence Heidegger's grandiose vision that the Germans alone are the metaphysical people, entrusted with a great mission to carry out, for the sake of Being itself, a confrontation with the history of the West as inaugurated with the Greeks. The old slogan of the empire was "Gott mit uns" (God with Us)—it was inscribed on every soldier's belt buckle, even under the Nazis. For Heidegger, we might say this became "Sein mit uns"—because after the death of God, Being is no longer transcendent, it is purely immanent, and providence has become a purely particular destiny for a particular people. If fascism exists as a combination, greater or lesser to some degree, of these elements (and I do not pretend that my list is exhaustive), then to be on our guard against it, we must learn to see it where it might be lurking in developments or in forms that might otherwise elude us.

Le Revenant

This is a horror story. Every twenty years or so, Heidegger returns from the dead to torment us with the specter of his Nazi involvement and the lurid spectacle of scholars squabbling over the significance of his words and deeds for his philosophy. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida coined the term “hauntology” (an audible pun on *ontology*) to describe an absence that intrudes upon the present so unavoidably, and yet so ambiguously and indeterminately, that our smug certainties are shaken and we fall open to old questions made new again. In 1993, for Derrida, the specter haunting Europe was Marx, precisely because of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Empire, and the manifest death of Marxism, but the poltergeist making the noise now is Heidegger. As you and others (Ted Kiesel deserving special mention)⁶⁷ have demonstrated, this legacy is in large part the fault of the *Gesamtausgabe*, the project of publishing Heidegger’s collected work, and of the executors of his literary estate, primarily his family, who refuse to open up the Heidegger archives to research by qualified independent scholars. Because of this, it is inevitable that new details about his past slowly leak out, accumulate, and then burst forth in cycles of revelation, recrimination, and defensiveness. You are right in saying that given past experience, as well as the insularity, secrecy, and inadequacy of the *Gesamtausgabe* project,⁶⁸ we can be quite sure that there is still much more to be revealed—troves of letters, seminar transcripts, notes, and the like—that will be highly inflammatory when they do appear, assuming that they have not been or will not be destroyed.⁶⁹ Heidegger’s revenant will never be put to rest until the crypt is laid open for thorough and complete examination.⁷⁰ This is a great scandal for contemporary philosophy, and a disgrace to scholarship, because whatever else we might think of him, Heidegger is indeed a world-historical figure, with a following and an influence that is planetary in its reach. As you declare in many places, in a case such as this, where the most serious questions of thought and history are at stake, there is a “*droit à l’histoire*”: the world has a right to the historical truth in its entirety.

But this ghastly situation is not simply the fault of an overly protective literary estate. You have convinced me that it is also the result of a calculated strategy on Heidegger’s part. We have known for some time now that, after the war and in an attempt to prevent his complete ostracism (or worse) from the intellectual scene, Heidegger misrepresented the degree of his political support and activism for National Socialism as well as the extent to which he bound his own thinking to the aspirations of the movement. Your research contributes to our understanding of the lengths to which he *systematically lied* about his reasons for joining the party (he did so as someone dedicated to Hitler and *Volk*-thinking), his reasons for taking on the rectorship (he saw

this as his way to achieve prominence as a, if not *the* spiritual, leader of the revolution), his support of the *Gleichschaltung* and anti-Jewish measures in the university, and his activities in support of the revolution well after his resignation as rector in 1934. As you know, given the lecture courses published in 2001 as GA 36/37, we understand now that Heidegger lied about the place of the *polemos* in his political thought, when he claimed, in “The Rectorate: Facts and Thoughts,” that “the word *polemos* with which the fragment begins does not mean ‘war’ [*Krieg*].”⁷¹ Heidegger tried to portray his thought of the *polemos* as purely “ontological,” and in no way political, but the lectures of GA 36/37 now decisively give the lie to that defense: for Heidegger, the *polemos* is indeed an ontological name for the way Being unfolds for a people, but it does so as the necessity of *Aus-einander-setzung*, as the *Kampf*, the struggle, *through which* a people asserts itself by distinguishing itself from and separating itself out from other peoples—and by expelling from within whatever is alien to the people.

Given Heidegger’s spectacular cunning and mendacity directly after the war, given his tactic, worthy of an Odysseus, of seducing a generation of French scholars to his cause in order to ward off the destruction of his career and to propagate his thought, given his second seduction of Hannah Arendt to serve as his defender and promoter in the United States, I now find quite plausible your further conclusion: that Heidegger’s strategy in publishing his writings (e.g., the heavily sanitized Nietzsche lectures of 1961, as I also note in an appendix to my book) and setting up the principles of the so-called collected works, the *Gesamtausgabe*, has been to protect his reputation as fully as possible while fending off the release of compromising material for as long as possible so that his international stature could grow to the point that it would be unassailable.⁷² And now we face the prospect of his most Nazi-inspired works finally being published, only to integrate themselves into the discourse of respectable philosophy. If so, his victory will be complete.

It is worse than absurd; it is obscene to suggest that Heidegger ever regretted his decision for National Socialism and that his “silence” concerning the Shoah somehow constitutes the only thing a thoughtful person could say about an “event” so incalculable. No. Given what we now know about the depth of his commitment, we must see that Heidegger’s adamant and defensive refusal to explain or to apologize for his Nazi involvement, both political and intellectual, when given ample opportunity after the war by Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, and Paul Celan (among others), his mendacious editing of his own published texts, his refusal to explain what cannot be sanitized, does not point to simple personal cowardice on his part: it points to his continued, if carefully guarded, dedication to “the inner truth and greatness of the movement.” Scholars may quibble over the extent to which he criticized *aspects* of the movement’s politics and policies, but that criticism was not

against his vision of what Nazism represented as a historical event and what it should be; such criticisms were part of his struggle to lead the movement's development. There is no *Kehre*, no turning away, from what he understood to be his lasting contribution, and now that contribution is wending its way, in an ever more virulent form, to the libraries of the world. The revenant is here to stay.

The significance of Heidegger's *seductiveness* struck me forcefully in reading your book. There is something pathological, even sociopathic, in his deceitful and manipulative conduct, in the way he drew in and used women like Arendt and followers like Wolf and Beaufret, who fell victim to his spirit and let it take possession of them. As you and others have noted, that seductiveness is present in the work itself: in its oracular style, its towering abstraction, its extraordinarily ambitious scope. I have known students who have been drawn to Heidegger simply because of his reputation as *the* most difficult and challenging thinker. And surely others are drawn to him by the specter of evil itself, like Slavoj Žižek, who flirts with the shadow and commends Heidegger for taking "the right step (albeit in the wrong direction) in 1933."⁷³ The thrill of proximity to evil lures them, like moths to a flame of darkness.

For myself, the most horrifying aspect of this horror story is that by following Gandhi's advice, by granting Heidegger the rights of a philosopher to be taken seriously, to be read generously, even in the midst of a thoroughgoing critique, I may somehow have played a part in his plan to make his thought respectable. In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger writes "Dasein is the constant urgency of defeat and of the renewed resurgence of the act of violence against Being, in such a way that the almighty reign of Being violates Dasein (in the literal sense), makes Dasein into the site of its appearing, envelops and pervades Dasein in its reign, and thereby holds it within Being."⁷⁴ The word for "violates" is *vergewaltigt*, which, "in the literal sense," means *rapes*. How much more explicit does Heidegger need to be? Do those of us who study Heidegger, who teach him, who write about him, however critically, become *carriers*, however unwillingly and unconsciously, of the seed of a fascism that lies at the core of his question of Being?

But in the end, this is not a question about scholars, whatever their good or bad intentions. The revenant we must watch for most scrupulously is fascism itself, not Heidegger, although I grant you that his work might indeed lend that return some intellectual cover, as it did in 1933. The true horror would be if fascism, either openly or wearing one of its many masks, were to overtake us again. This is why I believe that studying Heidegger, taking his questions seriously even in disagreeing with him, is one way to think about the dangers confronting us now. According to the typology I suggested above, for example, the so-called communist regime of North Korea would more

appropriately be identified as fascist, because of its cult of the leader, its complete suppression of civil society and the rule of law, and its fetishization of racial purity, among many other clear parallels.⁷⁵ Closer to home, it is deeply worrying to me that under the Bush administration, the government of the United States engaged wholeheartedly in torture—a tool of dictatorships, not of free republics—and that to provide legal cover for such acts, members of the Bush administration advanced a theory of executive power which effectively claims that the president, in his role as commander in chief in times of war, is above the law entirely.⁷⁶ That jurisprudential interpretation of the president as a wartime elected dictator has not been challenged by the Obama administration, even if the Obama administration has moved away from some of the most unlawful practices of the former administration; the precedent remains dangerously in place, ready for an ambitious and unscrupulous leader to seize and wield, emboldened by an everlasting “War on Terror” or populist rage against illegal immigrants in a time of economic collapse.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

You sum up the Heideggerian horror story with a question: “If [Heidegger’s] writings continue to proliferate without our being able to stop this intrusion of Nazism into human education, how can we not expect them to lead to yet another translation into facts and acts, from which this time humanity might not be able to recover?”⁷⁷ Your response to the predicament is clear: “We must acknowledge that an author who has espoused the foundations of Nazism cannot be considered a philosopher.”⁷⁸ You want to see Heidegger restricted to the sections of the library devoted to Nazism; you want him removed from the philosophy curriculum of the schools and universities.

Having read your book, and taking into account the French situation, I can better understand your position. Nevertheless, and despite the dangers, I cannot follow you this far. There are two reasons for this.

The first reason is pragmatic. If there is *any* philosophical merit to Heidegger’s work (and surely it is unbelievable that there be none whatsoever), then this strategy of putting him on the index and walling him up safely in an academic dungeon is bound to backfire. Wayward students who fall upon his work and who find it convincing will be forced to conclude, “Well, if this is somehow right, and also somehow Nazi, then I suppose I must be a Nazi, too!” You are laying the groundwork for a martyred hero and for a cult that will fester underground with him in his dungeon. It means that efforts to combat such developments will have to be inquisitorial: placing questionable works on an index of proscribed writings and sniffing out

apostates and destroying their careers. Perhaps because I am an American, whose nation never had to cope with a process of de-Nazification or the rooting out of collaborators, this all seems deeply ill-advised, for it partakes in the methods of exactly the enemy you oppose. Far better, then, to expose the danger to the light, to confront it head on, and to allow it to dissipate in open debate—as you yourself do, and for that I commend you. The second reason is far more troubling, for it goes to the heart of philosophy itself: I believe that a philosophy may be evil and still be philosophy. Would that it were so simple as to say, “The results of this thinking are evil, and so there must be something wrong with the thinking itself.” Would that we could dismiss philosophers out of hand for their sinister deeds and their sinister thoughts—it would save us a great deal of trouble. But the permanent and unavoidable danger of philosophy is that it is absolute freedom; its spirit and its element are the ability to question anything, to explore anything. The promise of philosophy is the flip side to its danger. Socrates died *for* and *because of* that danger, as well as the promise. To deny this freedom is to side with Athens and piety against Socrates and philosophy.

Very well, then—maybe Athens had a point, one might say. But taking that side has its costs, too. You identify philosophy with humanism, with reason, with progress, and with the institutions of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, your allegiance to these things is one of *faith*, not of philosophy; you posit them unequivocally, without argument. Make no mistake: I share your humanist and your Enlightenment piety, but I also recognize that (to paraphrase Heidegger) a faith unquestioned is no faith at all.⁷⁹ Furthermore, after the horror of the twentieth century, we cannot act as if that faith has not been shaken to its roots. We must confront head-on the sources of the challenge, and any effort to contain the threat behind a philosophical *cordon sanitaire* will only end up amplifying its mystique and its potency. Piety *alone* cannot defend itself except by a violence, either intellectual or actual, that will ultimately undermine its own legitimacy, for such measures are a sign of fear and weakness, not of strength.

This brings me to one of the themes of my responses to Carlin Romano’s review of your book. The question raised there was: If I agree (as I do) that Heidegger’s political commitments arose from his thinking itself, and not from some arbitrary accident (his wife’s influence, his naivete, his misplaced ambition, etc.), how can I defend that thinking at all, since by my own admission it led Heidegger into Nazism?

This question goes to the very heart of philosophy itself. Let me expand here on some of my comments to the Romano review.

I am not the first to point out that philosophy is the one discipline whose very name is also a subject of its inquiry. There is no consensus about what constitutes “philosophy,” as there is about chemistry or mathematics.

As for me, I would suggest that philosophy has three essential moments. The first is Aristotle’s observation in the *Metaphysics* that philosophy begins in wonder, *thaumazein* (1.982b). This wonder precedes even questioning: it is the primary, raw experience of something as deserving, indeed demanding our attention because it is wonderful and puzzling and enticing. Is it not fundamental to the spirit of philosophy to wonder at the sheer givenness of the world or of the self, even before we articulate that wonder in the form of a question, such as “Why is there something rather than nothing?”—or “Why am I someone rather than no one?”⁸⁰ The formulation of a question, the second stage of philosophy, is only possible on the basis of this first one, for otherwise, the “Why?” is unhinged and purely academic or frivolous. The formulation of a genuine philosophical question is no mere preliminary act or formality: it requires an intense focus on precisely what is at issue in our wonder, and because we wonder at what we often find ourselves most unable to articulate in our ordinary language and concepts, the formulation of a good philosophical question is also the work of philosophy. In this sense, Heidegger was right to say that philosophy begins in the embeddedness of the self in the lifeworld, just as Socrates began his work in the *agora*. We begin to philosophize through what *seizes* us, what challenges the *meaning* of our world.

The third moment in philosophy, naturally, is answering the question. For most of us, most of the time, philosophy operates at this level. Particularly in modern philosophy, especially in so-called analytic philosophy and those traditions that take their bearings from the natural sciences, the proper work of philosophy seems to be to produce *results* in the form of rigorous arguments with clear conclusions. This is all right and proper—as far as it goes: the question at hand seems self-evident, and we present and challenge each other’s arguments by analyzing their logic and scouring their premises.

But fixating on the moment of *giving answers*, in the form of arguments, as the sole or primary work of philosophy distorts the full scope of what thinking demands of us. Failure to reflect on the question *as question* risks entrenching us in a way of addressing a problem that is blinkered and restricted, blinding us to other, perhaps more fruitful, avenues of thought. Failure to meditate on what is worth wondering about in the first place risks setting us loose in a questioning that is simply arbitrary and naive, or at least inadequate to the challenge genuinely facing us.

As I said, most philosophers that we are familiar with today, and certainly the philosophical practice of the academy, focuses on the third moment.

Heidegger is one of the rarer thinkers who work at all three levels, sometimes all at once. At the second level, for example, he tries to sharpen what is at stake conceptually in the question of the meaning of Being; at the third level, he provides his answers (almost always couched in provisional terms), such as his existential analytic in *Being and Time*—or, if you prefer, more darkly, in his determination that the counterforce to Western nihilism is the “inner truth and greatness” of National Socialism. But he also strives to express the experience of pure wonder that animates philosophy in the first place. We see this, for example, in his essays on the Presocratics, or in his emphasis on *Besinnung* (mindfulness), *Gelassenheit* (releasement), and an “other thinking”—and in what you and so many others (perhaps rightfully at times) condemn as oracular pretension. But such pretension is the risk of a thinking that tries to articulate the pure wonder that precedes any determinate, articulated philosophy, because it necessarily attempts to put into words something that escapes and challenges our everyday experience and language. To cite other examples of philosophers who try to do this: there is Heraclitus, of course, but also Nietzsche, particularly in *Zarathustra*. “Common sense” has lampooned this tendency of philosophy ever since the Thracian maid laughed at Thales for falling into a well and Aristophanes hung Socrates in a basket.

I will say it again: Heidegger’s political commitment came as a result of his thinking, and not accidentally so. The serious question is: Did it derive *necessarily* and *essentially* from his thinking? I say no. As I wrote in my comments to the Romano review, a philosopher does not *own* his questions, and still less his wonder, in the way that Disney owns Mickey Mouse. It strikes me as the abandonment of serious philosophical work to claim that the question of Being is purely a fantasy, that it has no philosophical merit, that *Being and Time* is a mere poem, as my dear, late teacher, Leszek Kołakowski liked to quip. Furthermore, I was *not* convinced by your book that *Being and Time* is *obviously* implicated in Heidegger’s option for fascism; nor, as Mark Blitz points out in his review,⁸¹ do you take on Heidegger’s arguments there in any substantive way, which is the natural consequence of denying that he is a philosopher at all, for then there can be no arguments to refute, only his seduction and ideology to unmask and dismiss. Yes, there are the disquieting passages on the destiny of a people in section 74; yes, there is the reliance on the antisemite Count Yorck.⁸² But all that proves, to me, is that Heidegger’s questioning arose in the context of the anti-urban, anti-cosmopolitan spirit that was common to a nationalistic and anti-modern conservatism that was by no means unique to Germany (consider only the brilliant but vitriolic novels of Evelyn Waugh, or, for that matter, Céline). Yes, that spirit led many to Nazism, but it is not yet itself Nazism, and you do not prove that Heidegger was a Nazi in the period of *Being and Time*, even if he clearly was a conservative German nationalist. Otherwise, how *do* we explain the shock of

students (and even colleagues) such as Emmanuel Levinas, Herbert Marcuse, and so many others, many of whom were Jewish, who knew as much as we do now of the spirit of the time, but who did not recognize *Being and Time* as a “blubo” text? Marcuse testified that Heidegger’s “openly declared Nazism came as a complete surprise to us.”⁸³ You argue that some of his colleagues and peers *did* detect extremism in Heidegger in the 1920s and that Heidegger hid his true views well to make his career;⁸⁴ after all the other lies and masks that you uncover (in addition to those we knew of before), I can understand that interpretation. But still: the text speaks for itself, and it is by no means an outright paean to National Socialism, whatever the *family resemblances* of some of its themes might be. If it were, how are we to account for the so many great minds that took Heidegger seriously: Sartre, Levinas, Patočka, Habermas, to name but a few? Were they truly all simply dupes? To go this far, I think, is to fall victim to the genetic fallacy and to treat a work purely as a product of its intellectual influences and milieu. Again: would that it were so easy.

In my comments on the Romano review, I compared Heidegger to other philosophers whose ideas are very distasteful to us. Plato, some would say (Popper, most obviously), advocated many of the most terrible ideas that would take wing in modern totalitarianism: infanticide, eugenics, the elimination of civil society, the rule of absolute “kings” wielding “noble” lies to enforce a sham unity among the people. Aristotle, on the basis of his most serious conceptions of the human soul and the nature of reason, justified the treatment of women as second-class human beings, and he justified the treatment of lesser human beings as natural slaves (an argument that some defenders of slavery adopted in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century). The Enlightenment was shot through with antisemitism. Take, for example, Voltaire’s excoriation of the Jews as miserable enemies of progress and human brotherhood. Kant justified both racism and antisemitism on the basis of his philosophical anthropology and his understanding of religion within the limits of reason alone (from which the Jews must be excluded, even if they once played a part). Locke, the intellectual godfather of American democracy in its classical liberal form, also justified slavery in some circumstances and the expropriation of the land of the Native Americans because they failed in their God-appointed duty to make that land as productive as its potential promise. Jefferson founded our nation on the principle that “all men are created equal” while owning slaves and arguing that Africans are racially inferior to Europeans. Sartre at times vehemently supported a political movement, even (in Sartre’s dialectically ambiguous way)⁸⁵ the Great Leader Stalin, long after the crimes were manifest, crimes that claimed millions of lives.

We could drag each of these thinkers, and many more, before the bar of justice. We could quibble about just how deeply their evil ideas and their

actual crimes are linked to what is essentially “philosophical” in their work. Some might be proven innocent, but I submit that many would be found guilty. Should we put them on the index, too? Shall we cordon off their writings in a special section of the libraries? Shall we forbid them from being taught in the schools and universities? Surely that would be an assault upon the very freedom of philosophy that I believe you and I would otherwise wish to uphold. To return to the three moments of philosophy: what is most significant in any genuinely important thinker, in the end, is not the moment of answers, but how those answers compel us to revisit the questions—questions which belong to no one but to philosophy itself. You assert a *droit à l’histoire*, a right to history, to unearth and publish Heidegger’s works even against the wishes of his estate, but is there not also a *droit à la pensée*, a right to thinking, to turn to “his” questions and answers, and to wrest them from him? If we fixate too much on the *person* of the philosopher, or on the *system* of his or her answers, what lives as philosophy, *in* and *through* the work, is lost. Philosophy then becomes a matter of orthodoxy and heresy.

In every case where a philosophy leads to conclusions in thought or deed that we find reprehensible, the question must always be: How *much* of the philosophy is implicated in these abhorrent results? Is it what the thinker inspires us to wonder about? Is it the questions the thinker formulates? Is it some, much, or all of what the thinker argues in response to those questions? Surely this is always something that we must address in detail, in a careful confrontation with a thinker’s work. While you are certainly right that deep currents in Heidegger’s thinking led him to Nazism, I would argue that this connection, while by no means accidental, is also by no means *proven* to be *necessary*—and this is so *even if* we were able to prove that it was biographically or psychologically inevitable *for him*. This is a subtle but essential distinction if we are to avoid crude reductionism in philosophy. While I am no postmodernist, and I believe in the importance of taking into account the question of the coherence of a philosophic enterprise in the light of a thinker’s intentions, I also believe that a genuinely philosophical body of work points beyond itself. We must have the right, after giving the author his or her due, to take on that work’s wonder, its questions, and its answers for our own, which means engaging them, reflecting on them, and refuting or intensifying them, in whole or in part. We see this spirit alive in the fact that many serious readers have taken up Heidegger’s *questions*, and even *portions* of his way of *responding* to those questions, without becoming Nazis. Nevertheless, this is complicated and perilous in the case of Heidegger. You are right to warn that there is a danger, and I believe that we should never read or indeed teach Heidegger without taking that danger very seriously into account. It has to do with his radical historicism, his rejection of Platonism in the broad sense, and, as a result, his attempt to destroy the entire tradition of universalism in

ethics and politics.⁸⁶ But as you well know, Heidegger is not the only radical historicist, and not all historicists are Nazis—although I would emphasize the great danger in all radical historicism, for it tends to gravitate to the particular in denying the universal.

I realize that you think that Heidegger is a special case. In an interview that you directed me to, where you take up precisely this question of the guilt of figures such as Plato and Locke, you give an eloquent summary of your position:

It is not only Heidegger's political engagement, but also his will to the destruction of logical thought, his perverted usage of philosophical language, his explicit rejection of contemporary philosophy as if it had come to an end with Hegel and Nietzsche, and his affirmation of the empty character of ethics, that constitutes the gravity of the problem. In Heidegger, all the dimensions of philosophy are progressively destroyed. This is something serious, which goes a long way in explaining the hold and the fascination that he has exercised over so many minds. One thought that Heidegger had the ability to surpass everything, because he had the ambition of destroying the entire Western philosophical tradition, but one did not see that by this means he strived to realize in philosophy an equivalent of what Hitlerism had wanted to realize in history.⁸⁷

For you, the crimes of Nazism are so horrific, Heidegger's subjection of "philosophy" to politics is so extreme, and his ideological project so nihilistic, that we simply cannot call him a philosopher at all any more; he is truly only a dangerous propagandist, a wily hack, a brilliant charlatan, and a pretentious seducer, who aided in the *realization* of Hitlerism and of "the invention of a barbarism without a name."⁸⁸ At one point, you refer to the "irreducible specificity of the Nazi genocide,"⁸⁹ which Heidegger refuses to contemplate. For you, Nazism is incommensurable, for its crimes transcend what we can even articulate in language.

I understand your point: in Heidegger, it is not just a difference in degree, but in kind. He does more than Marx, for example, who also renounces philosophy and espouses a theory that ultimately leads to decisive and disastrous action, but Marx at least only renounces philosophy as the life of contemplation—he does not renounce reason itself. (Although I would also note that Marx also identifies a version of the *polemos* as the engine of history and the essence of what it means to *be* human: *class war*—that is, until the eradication of classes after the achievement of communism at the end of history. The parallel does not end there, either.) The grandeur of Heidegger's ambition both seduces his readers and undermines every last barrier in the philosophical tradition to the unleashing of an unprecedented barbarity.

But even if I grant you all of this, I do not think the way to counteract it is to dismiss it as an evil that cannot and should not be met on the plane of

philosophy. Heidegger is not the first, and nor will he be the last, thinker to renounce reason. One need only mention Nietzsche. Nor is he the first to flirt with the Nothing. One need only mention Gorgias. Nor to renounce justice. One need only mention Thrasymachus. Socrates, through Plato, confronts both Gorgias and Thrasymachus, and he does so on the field of philosophy. That is the only place where the battle can be won. You challenge Heidegger's reading of Descartes, as a way to defend the modern understanding of the individual, against Heidegger's collectivist embrace of the *Volk*. Very well. That's a good start, if it works. I have challenged Heidegger's reading of Plato as the onset of nihilistic metaphysics.⁹⁰ To answer Heidegger, we must do our work and reconstruct the tradition he has deconstructed, but we must do so on the field of philosophy.

BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY

It is not uncommon to treat the rise of Nazism and the genocide that followed as an incommensurable event, a unique "caesura"⁹¹ in history without parallel in horror and barbarity. Given the scope of the Nazi crimes, this is understandable, and yet, as I have argued in *Heidegger's Polemos*, this way of thinking has its dangers, too. If we treat Nazism as utterly incommensurable, as without any parallel or comparison in human history, then it becomes impossible to understand Nazism and its consequences as human phenomena that bear any relation to us and to a danger that we bear within us as both individuals and societies. It becomes a demonic eruption in history, something entirely alien to who we have been, to who we are, and to what we, too, *might* become. I am not sure whether you subscribe entirely to such a view, but by treating Heidegger as a "philosopher" (always in scare quotes), you participate in this way of thinking, and the result is that we are prevented from taking seriously how a genuine philosopher might have made the choice for Nazism. The issue is not preserving Heidegger's reputation—he was a sorry specimen as a person, no doubt; the issue is how Nazism was part of *our* history, as a Western "civilization," and how it *remains* a threat, wearing many masks, both familiar and unfamiliar, in our world today. Its potential is still part of who we are, and we are fools if we refuse to confront the fact that fascism grows from within our most venerated traditions, not from some alien infection.

One way to see this is through a theme that you identify early in your book: Heidegger's interest in *Boden*: the *soil*, as in the conventional German nationalist and National Socialist fascination with "blood and soil." While I do think that Heidegger often uses the term *Boden* in a less specific way than this to refer to a "basis" or "ground" for something, you make a convincing

case for his use of it as part of a “*Blut und Boden*” discourse that merges his philosophical interest in the “grounds” for Dasein’s existential situatedness (and homelessness) and his engagement with National Socialism.

My question to you is: To what extent does showing *any* affinity for the metaphor, or even the literal advocacy, of rootedness implicate a thinker in fascism? I bring this up not to exculpate Heidegger but rather to underline that there is an issue at work here that goes beyond Heidegger himself.

Consider the following lines from Hesiod’s *Theogony*, where the poet describes the origin of the world:

For truly *Khaos* came first into being, and then
Broad-bosomed Earth, steady abode of all things forever
...
And Earth first gave birth to starry Sky,
Equal to herself, so that he would cover her all over,
And so that he would be a steady abode for the blessed gods forever.⁹²

Though separated by ten lines, these verses have a remarkable symmetry in word and syntax, as if confirming the equality between *Gaia* (Earth) and *Ouranos* (Sky, or Heaven). Sky covers (*kalyptoi*) Earth entirely, the domed vault that embraces everything that lives in this world. For the Greeks, we mortal human beings live in the finite world entirely bounded by the shared horizon of Earth and Sky, with everlasting death and the underworld below us, concealed in Earth, and the immortality of the heavens above us, beyond the Sky. We belong to the Earth, we are born from it and will return to it, but, while we live, we are also opened up to the Sky, wondering at what is beyond us, yearning for flight to break from the gravity of the given. But it is only because we have the Earth that we have a place, a home to live in and upon, an abode (*hedos*) that is meaningful and our own, even if, because of our finitude, it can never be steady (*asphales*) like the abode of the gods. We *are* the *between*, situated in the world opened up between Earth and Sky.

I call as my witness Simone Weil, whom no one would accuse of complicity with Nazism. In 1943, as she was dying in England in the service of the Free French cause, Weil wrote *L’enracinement*, translated into English as *The Need for Roots*. There she proclaims:

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future. This participation is a natural one, in the sense that it is automatically brought about by the place, conditions of birth, professions and social surroundings. Every human being needs to have multiple roots.

It is necessary for him to draw *wellnigh* the whole of his moral, intellectual, and spiritual life by way of the environment of which he forms a natural part.⁹³

The affinities here with Heidegger are striking: that same sense that a meaningful existence must be grounded in communal belonging that mediates between past and future. But there is a difference as well, signaled by one word: “wellnigh” (*presque*, “nearly”). For Weil, although human existence depends upon rootedness, it does not define the entirety of the human being. There is something more, an essential dimension that transcends our situated belonging, without which that belonging goes blind. You refer often to that dimension in your book as that which Heidegger rejects utterly: the universal. I think you are on to something, and it is something that Heidegger seeks to destroy above all else.

At the time of his *Kunstwerk* lecture (so, in the mid-1930s), and motivated by his work on Hölderlin, Heidegger takes on a new notion that subsumes *Boden*: the *Erde*, the earth, and more precisely the *Streit*—the strife, the *polemos*, between Earth and World, with the earth as what harbors, shelters, and conceals, the world as what opens, reveals, and makes accessible. When Heidegger reads those lines from Hesiod, he notices the divine *Khaos* that precedes both Earth and Sky. For Heidegger, “Chaos does not just mean [for us moderns now] the unordered, but this as well: the disturbed in its disturbance, the muddled together [*das Durcheinander*] in its convolution” (GA 47: 150). Against this modern notion of chaos as mere random disorder, and with Hölderlin, Heidegger wants to restore a sense of the divinity of *Khaos*:

Khaos means above all the yawning, the gaping cleft, the primally self-opening Open, wherein all is swallowed. The cleft denies every support for the distinct and the grounded. And therefore, for all experience that knows only what is derivative, chaos seems to be the undifferentiated, and thus mere disturbance. Nevertheless, the “chaotic” in this sense is only the degraded and contrary essence to what “chaos” means. Thought in accord with “nature” (*phusis*), chaos remains that gaping apart out of which the Open opens itself and by which this Open grants truth to each differentiated thing in a bounded presencing. Hence Hölderlin names “chaos” and “disorder” as “holy.” Chaos is the holy itself.⁹⁴

When Heidegger replaces Sky, or Heaven, with World, he understands the latter in his existential, hermeneutic sense as the domain of meaning within which we abide and make sense of our lives. This world opens up only *on the basis* (*auf dem Grund, auf dem Boden*, as Heidegger might put it) of Earth. It is born from Earth, as Hesiod says; we are thrown into the world from darkness and return to darkness in death. That is why, for Heidegger, the Earth is preceded by *Khaos*. Beneath every *Grund* lies an *Abgrund*: our belonging to a place, our having a home, rests on an abyss. And that is why, for Heidegger,

the triad of poet, thinker, and statesman must paradoxically ground the abyss, as he says in the *Beiträge*: “At times those who ground the abyss [*jene Gründer des Abgrundes*] must be immolated in the fire of what is brought to endure as truth in order that Da-sein become possible for human beings and constancy in the midst of beings be saved, so that beings themselves undergo a restoration in the Open of the strife between Earth and World” (GA 65: 7). Because we are mortal, such founding is always tragic, always finite, never “steady,” like the home of the gods. There is no transcendence, no sky, no heaven, to provide an a-temporal, a-historical Archimedean point of rest and security. That is why the act of founding a home, the political act of making a home for a people must always be an *Aus-einander-setzung*, a setting-out-and-apart-from-one-another, to prevent the universalizing *Durcheinander-setzung* (the muddled interspersion with one another) in which we would be homogenized, placeless, and homeless. Platonism, idealism, universalism: these are all names for an other-worldly transcendence that denies the finitude and historicity of this world. For Heidegger, then, Platonism is sacrilege against “holy Chaos” and a refusal to become rooted in the only ground we will ever have, as fleeting as it must ever be.

Our planet has lived through horrendous devastation in the twentieth century. We may face even worse in this new one. We stand on the edge of a knife. Is it too much to claim that one great cause for this predicament is the confrontation between the claim of belonging to a particular place and time, with its particular community and tradition, and the claim of transcending that rootedness to a vision of universal justice and rights, irrespective of time, place, and tradition? I realize that you want to resist reading Heidegger’s politics this way. In “Heidegger gegen alle Moral,” you write:

I do not agree with the conception, no matter how critical it may be, of National Socialism as a defense of a people’s distinctness [*Eigenheit*] against universalism. With this, one risks providing the kind of arguments that work towards a kind of rehabilitation of National Socialism in the name of the defense of “identities,” which are then rebaptized as “differences.” It appeared significant to me in this respect that precisely an outspoken revisionist like Christian Tilitzki, a student of Heidegger’s and Nolte’s, presents National Socialism as a defense of particularism in order to give it the semblance of legitimacy.⁹⁵

I understand the danger. I will admit that there have been times in my reading of Heidegger that I have been inclined to say “Good-bye to all that.” Why dignify this with the name of philosophy? But as appealing as saying goodbye to Heidegger might be, what Heidegger represents, beyond his own character and person, is the inevitability of the confrontation with our planetary politics. Not he but his questions are unavoidable, alas. I return to the conviction that we must confront this kind of argument, even if its source

is deplorable, because it arises from a crisis that is inherent to the human condition today and that won't go away by simply refusing to engage it. Nor is all of Heidegger so easy to dismiss as mere propaganda and opportunism, even though there is some of that, too. It is not a matter of avoiding giving legitimacy to fascist arguments but of understanding and responding fully and effectively to a fundamental challenge to human decency and even to human existence on a global scale.

Consider Europe today, with legislation in Switzerland to ban minarets, or in France itself to ban the veil. Consider the alarming rise of hate crimes across Europe against perceived outsiders, such as the Roma. Consider the state institutions in France or Quebec to preserve the French language against contamination by other tongues, especially English. Consider the concern among many in France that American-style fast food will destroy indigenous French forms of agriculture and French traditions of preparing and eating food. And to be clear, this is not just a French or European problem—I mention these as what might be closest to you, but we see it in the United States, too: in the recent hysteria about the “Ground-Zero Mosque” as well as in the opposition to building new mosques in many communities across the country;⁹⁶ we see it in the English-only movement, in the growing resentment of immigrants, and in our escalating culture wars, fanned by media demagogues. Consider similar fears across the planet that everything that is radically one's own, all the precious “particular treasures” as Weil calls them, of local customs, language, religion, art, and so on, will be homogenized and obliterated in the great, amalgamating *Durcheinandersetzung* of globalization. What is all this but a concern for roots and the earth? But surely we are not committing ourselves to fascism by noticing this.

As I have argued in *Heidegger's Polemos*, the problem *announced* by fascism, but not *exhausted* by its various forms defeated in the Second World War, is the escalating clash between particularism and universalism. *This* is the crisis of our age, and either we will find a way through or we will not survive. I would submit to you that it does no good to cordon Heidegger off as a Nazi, because part of the way through must be to confront the challenge that his thinking represents, in all its danger.

We are back to Löwith's insight that *historicity* is the key to Heidegger's Nazism. For Heidegger, universalism—beginning with Plato's idealism, passing through the Christian transformation of Judaism, and passing into secularized, democratic egalitarianism—is the engine of nihilism in history, because it uproots all the “particular treasures” of human belonging to a people, place, and time. Following Nietzsche, Heidegger casts at Plato's feet the charge that his otherworldly metaphysics of the Idea, where true Being exists in a suprasensible realm beyond time and beyond all particulars, is the source of the nihilistic hatred of the world as it actually *is*: a churning rush of

becoming, to be embraced in its Dionysian tragedy. For Heidegger, there is no exit to the cave, for the heavenly domain of the Ideas is a falsification of Being: all we have is our Being-Here and our finitude; Platonic universalism, with its pretensions to raise us up to the sky to see it all from above, will only succeed in uprooting us from everything we *properly are*.

That is one charge of nihilism, the one launched by the Earth, by rootedness, and by belonging against Platonism in all its forms, from Socrates to Hegel. But there is a countercharge, one as ancient as Plato's rejoinders to Gorgias and Thrasymachus. Although he does not use the term, Plato clearly treats Gorgias as a metaphysical nihilist and Thrasymachus as an ethical one. When Nietzsche takes up the term "nihilist," he draws on a tradition reaching from Turgenev to Dostoevsky, but for Dostoevsky especially, nihilism is precisely the utter denial that there might be transcendent, sky-bound standards for human action and human thought, a denial we see acted out by the monsters of his novel *Demons*, modeled on Nechayev's band of ruthless revolutionaries. So there we have it: on the one hand, nihilism is the rejection of the radical particularity, finitude, and historicity of human existence in favor of a deracinated realm of Being that exists nowhere on Earth; on the other, it is the rejection of universal standards and eternal truth in favor of a Being that has been chopped down to blind becoming, the flux of sheer power, and the blind contingency of belonging.

As should be clear, I side with Plato against Heidegger, but I also believe that Heidegger's critique must be taken into account and subsumed in a full reconstruction of an idealist reply to nihilism. I take nihilism to be constituted by the refusal to see the universal instantiated in the particular, by the refusal to transcend the particular in matters of justice. In my own work, I have tried to defend a form of idealism as a situated transcendence, taking into account both our grounded finitude and the need for the universal to make sense of that finitude, against Heidegger's radical historicism.⁹⁷ But I do not believe that philosophy can ever permanently settle this battle between Earth and Sky and between conceptions of nihilism, for the conflict is rooted in us and will return in new forms. It is a terrible lesson, but once learned we must simply face it and do our best: nihilism is the truest revenant of all, and we must confront it ever anew, head-on through philosophy, in every generation.

Thank you again, Professor Faye, for providing me with the opportunity to respond personally to your work, and, by doing so, to revisit and reassess my own thinking. It is my sincere hope that your book may be an occasion for Heidegger scholars on both sides of the Atlantic to do the same, for in my opinion, our work has become too mired in the exposition and emulation of the work of the master. I believe that perhaps your most important contribution may be to serve as a wake-up call to Heidegger scholars, and in two ways. One is that we simply cannot ignore Heidegger's political biography

and its relation to his thought; there are likely to be more disturbing revelations in the coming years, and the court of public opinion will justly condemn us if all we do is circle the wagons and defend the master at all costs, leaving those who have no sympathy whatsoever for his thinking to make sense of his thought and actions. Furthermore (and in the end, this is the decisive matter), it is high time that Heidegger scholars working in English begin to do in earnest what he did himself, namely, to address enduring questions through our own language and through its literature and philosophical traditions. Your book, as well as the impact of your book, demonstrates to me how pressing this problem is, because there simply is not enough of a foundation, tied to the tradition of Anglophone literature and philosophy, that brings the urgent questions to life in a way that makes them truly *ours*, in a reconstructive retrieval of our own history, rather than as a explication or transliteration of Heidegger's Germanic idiom. If there is a *droit à la pensée*, as I have claimed, then we can only assert that right by making the questions properly our own and not by endlessly channeling the master's voice. And while there are some scholars laboring to accomplish this work of philosophical independence, it is still only in its infancy. At the same time, I would encourage you to reconsider your spirit of treating Heidegger as the absolute enemy, despite the undeniable outrages of his pronouncements and his actions. Then, perhaps, a door will open for you to reconstruct in more compelling way the thinkers and the questions of a tradition that we both believe to have greater resources than assumed by Heidegger's attempt at their destruction.

NOTES

1. Carlin Romano, "Heil Heidegger!" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 56, no. 2 (October 18, 2009), <http://chronicle.com/article/Heil-Heidegger-/48806/>. You contacted me on October 24, 2009, to invite me to read your book, and you kindly had the press send me an advance copy. The first version of my letter in response to you was sent on February 12, 2010. This present version is substantially the same, with some passages developed and footnotes added. Translations here are my own, unless another is cited.

2. A far more measured review, also targeted to a nonspecialist American audience, is Mark Blitz's "Natural Reich," *The Weekly Standard* 15, no. 20, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/natural-reich>.

3. Gregory Fried, post 69 to Carlin Romano, "Heil Heidegger!" All my posts can be found under the username "zmrzlina," my favorite Czech word.

4. Fried, post 69; see Berel Lang, *Heidegger's Silence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); also, Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger's Alleged Challenge to the Nazi Concepts of Race," in *Appropriating Heidegger*, ed. James E. Faulconer and Mark A. Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and "Race and Earth in

Heidegger's Thinking during the Late 1930s," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2010): 49–66.

5. Fried, post 69 to Carlin Romano, "Heil Heidegger!"

6. "Such a work [and by this, you mean Heidegger's whole body of work] cannot continue to be placed in the philosophy section of libraries; its pace is rather in the historical archives of Nazism and Hitlerism." Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 319.

7. Gregory Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos: From Being to Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

8. Faye, *Heidegger*, 7.

9. Martin Heidegger, "Drei Briefe Martin Heideggers an Karl Löwith," in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers*, vol. 2, *Im Gespräch der Zeit*, ed. Dietrich Papenfuss and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 29; my translation.

10. The number is approximately 75,000; see "Regarding French Deportations," Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database, United States Holocaust Museum, https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/source_view.php?SourceId=30034.

11. I follow the practice of writing the word "antisemite" without a hyphen, because it is not "Semites" in general who are the objects of this particular form of hatred, but the Jews. It was against the Jews that this word arose in the nineteenth century, when a traditionally Christian prejudice took on a secular form.

12. For a discussion of the history of the French debates over Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism, see Tom Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1995), especially chapter 8; Rockmore's account here is now over twenty years old, but it shows how early after the war the myth was established in France that Heidegger had stumbled naively into Nazism and that this accident had no real relation to his thought.

13. Faye, *Heidegger*, 312.

14. Faye, 89, 355–56n2.

15. Martin Woessner's *Heidegger in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) is the best and most comprehensive history of the Heidegger reception in the United States. This work shows how that reception was largely grounded in a rejection of the prevailing scientism of what became the "Analytic" school of Anglo-American philosophy after the Second World War.

16. For a comparative discussion of Gandhi and Heidegger, see Gregory Fried, "Heidegger and Gandhi: A Dialogue on Conflict and Enmity," in *In the Wake of Conflict: Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation*, ed. Allen Speight and Alice MacLachan (New York: Springer Publishing, forthcoming).

17. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979); this translation was produced before the original and unsanitized lectures were published as volume 43 of the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1985.

18. GA 43: 276. This text, published in 1985, differs in considerable ways from the version that Heidegger published in his lifetime as part of his two-volume *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961).

19. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959). I should note that this was the first book of Heidegger's translated into English, and so Manheim can hardly be faulted for at least some of its problems, given the lack of any scholarly consensus at the time for how to render Heidegger's idiosyncratic terminology.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

21. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 213/152.

22. I gratefully acknowledge the input of Martin Black to this rendering of the Greek. The Greek transliterated is: *polemos pantôn men patêr esti, pantôn de basileus, kai tous men theous edeixe tous de anthrôpous, tous men dohlous epoïêse tous de eleuthourous*.

23. "Letter of Aug. 22, 1933, Heidegger to Schmitt," trans. G. L. Ulmen, *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987): 132.

24. Faye, *Heidegger*, 81ff, 162ff.

25. Faye, 167ff.

26. Otto Pöggeler, "Den Führer führen? Heidegger und kein Ende," *Philosophische Rundschau* 32 (1985): 26–67.

27. Here, you are right to point to the passage in the 1934 "Logic" lectures, where he refers to "men and groups of men who have no history," and where, as an example, he points to "negroes, the Kaffirs for example" (GA 38: 81), quoted in Faye, *Heidegger*, 102.

28. Karl Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome, 1936," *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 142.

29. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

30. See GA 36/37: 90–91; *Being and Truth*, 72–73.

31. Ulrich Sieg, "'Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes': Ein unbekannter Brief Heideggers," *Die Zeit* (December 22, 1989), 40; my translation. I have written about this letter in *Heidegger's Polemos*, 227–28. Two sources are very valuable on this matter: Berel Lang's *Heidegger's Silence*, 36–37, 70–71, and 101–11, detailing Heidegger's later denunciation of Baumgarten for his association with "the Jew Fraenkel," and Paul Lawrence Rose's *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), especially 4–5 and 40–43, where he details the genesis of the term "*Verjudung*" in Wagner as a notion of spiritual contamination by a foreign body infesting its host and necessitating a corresponding *Entjudung*, a purifying de-Jewification. See also Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 52–53, and Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), chapter 4, "'The Jew Within': The Myth of 'Judaization' in Germany." As does Rose, Aschheim traces the first use of the term *Verjudung* to Wagner's 1850 essay "Judaism in Music," and he argues convincingly that the notion in Germany of a poisonous and corrupting Jewish influence had long been an idea in search of a name. Aschheim traces that idea

to the secular influences in German thought in the post-Kantian and post-Hegelian era, in writers as diverse as Jakob Fries and Karl Marx, and he makes the point that this secular myth of a corrupting Judaism has its roots deep in the Christian tradition, reaching as far back as the conflict between the following of St Peter and St Paul over “Judaizing” tendencies in the early church. So this is an ancient story indeed.

32. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), 348–49.

33. Gertrud Heidegger, ed., “*Mein liebes Seelchen!*” *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfride, 1915–1970* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2005), 51: “Die Verjudung unsrer Kultur u. Universitäten ist allerdings schreckerregend u. ich meine die deutsche Rasse sollte noch soviel innere Kraft aufbringen um in die Höhe zu kommen.” See also Emmanuel Faye, “Heidegger, der Nationalsozialismus, und die Zerstörung der Philosophie,” in *Politische Unschuld? In Sachen Martin Heidegger*, ed. Bernhard H. F. Taurek (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008), 59–60.

34. Heidegger, “*Mein liebes Seelchen!*” 176: “Baeumler hat für mich die ‘Jüdische Rundschau’ bestellt, die ausgezeichnet orientiert u. Niveau hat. Ich werde Dir die Nummern schicken.” I am grateful to Charles Bambach for calling my attention to this passage.

35. Heidegger, “*Mein liebes Seelchen!*” 180: “Was Du über das Judenblatt u. den Tick [?] schreibst, war auch schon mein Gedanke. Man kann hier nicht mißtrauisch genug sein.” The editor of the volume does not know who or what “Tick” was, hence the “[?]”

36. Richard Polt, my colleague in translating *Being and Truth*, with its *Vernichtung* passage, puts the matter as follows: “The deeper and more mysterious connection is the move from the casual, even tentative bigotry expressed in those quotes [from his letters to Elfride] to contemplating ‘*Vernichtung*.’ There is a moral abyss there. Either the enthusiasm of a moment of blindness leads one to jump into the abyss, or—and I think this is more likely—the open-eyed decision to jump into the abyss contributes to the enthusiasm. There is a kind of hyperexcitement that comes from a bad conscience converted into adrenalin—the thrill of evil.” Richard Polt, email message to author, December 6, 2010. I agree: there is a gulf between noticing a supposed *Verjudung* and deciding to reverse it through an *Entjudung*, but Heidegger made the decision to leap that gulf with his eyes open, and he never made amends in later years, when he had ample opportunity. Holger Zaborowski, in his balanced treatment of the question of Heidegger’s antisemitism, acknowledges that Heidegger’s antipathy to Jews was real, yet that it was not directed against individuals but against a cultural influence; in that sense, Heidegger was indeed not a rabid antisemite in the way of the most virulent biological racists, but Zaborowski fails to see that even this more courtly form of antisemitism might lead someone to conceive of the “complete annihilation” of an internal enemy, even if he never personally mistreated a Jewish friend or colleague. See Zaborowski, “*Eine Frage von Irre und Schuld?*” *Martin Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2010), 602–45.

37. Faye, *Heidegger*, 209–12.

38. Faye, 96–103.

39. Faye, 18–29, 178.

40. Faye, 36, 111–12.
41. The German reads: “Und dann kommen sie alle, alle die braven 80 Millionen Deutschen, und jeder hat seinen anständigen Juden. Sagt: alle anderen sind Schweine, und hier ist ein prima Jude.” See “The Complete Text of the Poznan Speech,” The Holocaust History Project, <http://www.holocaust-history.org/himmler-poznan/speech-text.shtml>.
42. Faye, *Heidegger*, 34.
43. Faye, 40–43, 52–53, 124.
44. Faye, 43–46, 157.
45. Faye, 49–86.
46. Faye, 49–70.
47. Faye, 157ff, 173–202.
48. Faye, 251ff.
49. Faye, 151–72, 228–42.
50. Faye, 121, 155ff.
51. This course was published as volume 86 of the *Gesamtausgabe*; see list of Heidegger texts cited in this volume.
52. Faye, *Heidegger*, 294.
53. “Weil Jünger nicht sieht, was nur ‘denkbar’ is, deshalb hält er diese Vollendung der Metaphysik im Wesen des Willens zur Macht für den Anbruch einer neuen Zeit, wogegen sie nur die Einleitung ist zum raschen Veralten alles Neuesten in der Langeweile des Nichtigen, in dem die Seinsverlassenheit des Seienden brütet” (GA 90: 264–65).
54. “Das Wesen der Subjektivität wurde dargelegt; sie besagt: Der Mensch ist der Grund und das Ziel nicht nur seiner selbst, sondern er is er selbst nur, indem er und sofern er Grund und Ziel des Seienden im Ganzen ist und als solcher sich behauptet.”
55. “Dann ist der vielgeforderte Vorrang des Geeinnutzes vor dem Eigennutz nur rein Schein und erstet ganz im Dienste des äußersten und äußerlichsten Eigennutzes, der, bezüglich des Tieres ‘Mensch’ gedacht, metaphysisch gedacht werden kann” (GA 90: 39).
56. See GA 90: 221–22; quoted in Faye, *Heidegger*, 292.
57. Faye, *Heidegger*, 270.
58. Faye, 209ff, 292–93.
59. Faye, 268.
60. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 35; see also René Descartes, *Oeuvres et lettres*, ed. André Bridoux (Paris: La Pléiade, 1953), 168.
61. See “Titanism” (1936) in Jan Patočka: *Philosophy and Selected Writings*, ed. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).
62. The passage is GA 65: 54, quoted in Faye, *Heidegger*, 277–78. The phrase in parenthesis is in square brackets in the German, but I have put it in parenthesis to make clear that it is Heidegger’s own interpolation.
63. Faye, *Heidegger*, 25–28, 255–56.
64. For a detailed study of the “one drop rule” in the history of racial typology in the United States, see F. James Davis, *Who Is Black?: One Nation’s Definition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

65. “Address to the Students,” November 3, 1933 (GA 16: 184), quoted in Faye, *Heidegger*, 71.

66. Faye, *Heidegger*, 253, 257, 271.

67. For example, see Theodore Kisiel, “Review and Overview of Recent Heidegger Translations and their German Originals: A Grassroots Archival Perspective,” *Studia Phaenomenologica* 5 (2005), 277–300.

68. Having said this, an explanation is in order. I have worked as a translator of Heidegger’s work, and indeed I have translated, with Richard Polt, one of the volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe*, volume 36/37. One might ask me: If you think the *Gesamtausgabe* is problematic, why associate yourself with it in any way? The answer is simple: because the material (at least the texts I have chosen to translate: the lectures of 1933–34) are so pivotally important to understanding Heidegger’s politics that we must make do with what is presently available, even if it is flawed.

69. As you have suggested, Heidegger’s correspondences with Max Scheler and with Alfred Bauemler, especially in the 1920s, will be especially illuminating, once they are made available—if they have not been destroyed. See Faye, “Heidegger gegen alle Moral,” in *Moralität des Bösen: Ethik und nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen*, ed. Werner Konitzer and Raphael Gross (Frankfurt: Campus, 2009). Gertrud Heidegger, in the Preface to her edited volume of letters from Heidegger to his wife, writes that she believes that some cards and letters, especially from the 1930s during Heidegger’s most intense involvement with politics, were destroyed, either by Elfriede or Martin; see “*Mein liebes Seelchen!*” 14.

70. There is some hope that the Heidegger estate may loosen its strictures on what gets published. As noted above, Gertrud Heidegger was willing to publish Heidegger’s letters to his wife, and Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski have been able to publish one of Heidegger’s seminars from the Nazi period that you cite in your book as one the most damning; see Martin Heidegger, “Über Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte und Statt.” Übung aus dem Wintersemester 1933/34, in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus I: Dokumente*, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag, 2009), 53–88. Richard and I have translated this seminar as *Nature, History, State* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

71. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität; Das Rektorat 1933–34*, ed. Hermann Heidegger (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 28; my translation. The full passage merits quoting: “The word *polemos* with which the fragment begins does not mean ‘war’ [*Krieg*], but rather what is meant by the word *eris*, which Heraclitus uses in the same sense. But this means ‘Strife’ [*Streit*]—but strife not as quarrel and squabble and mere discord, and most certainly not the violent treatment and repression of the opponent—but rather an *Aus-einander-setzung* of a kind in which the essence of those who step out against each other in confrontation [*die sich aus-einander-setzen*] exposes itself to the other [*sich aussetzt dem anderen*] and thus shows itself and comes into appearance, that is, in a Greek sense, into what is unconcealed and the true. Because struggle is the self-exposure to the essential that reciprocally recognizes itself, therefore, the [Rectoral] Address, which relates this questioning and reflecting to ‘struggle,’ continually speaks of ‘being exposed’ [*Ausgesetztheit*].”

72. Faye, *Heidegger*, 308–15.

73. See my critique of Žižek's championing of Heidegger and other monstrously failed heroes: Gregory Fried, "Where's the Point? Slavoj Žižek and the Broken Sword," in *The International Journal of Žižek Studies* 1, no. 4 (2007), <http://zizek.studies.org/index.php/ijzs/issue/view/6>.

74. See GA 40: 186–87/190.

75. See B. R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2010).

76. See my book, co-authored with my father, *Because It Is Wrong: Torture, Privacy, and Presidential Power in the Age of Terror* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

77. Faye, *Heidegger*, 322.

78. Faye, 321.

79. "On the other hand, if such a faith does not continually expose itself to unfaith, it is not faith but a convenience. It becomes an agreement with oneself to adhere in the future to a doctrine as something that has somehow been handed down. This is neither having faith nor questioning, but indifference—which can then, perhaps even with keen interest, busy itself with everything, with faith as well as questioning." Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Fried and Polt, 8.

80. Stephen Hawking's version of the first question shows that it still has life, long after Leibniz formulated it in its well-known version: "Why does the universe go to all of the bother of existing?" Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (New York: Bantam, 1990), 192.

81. Mark Blitz, "Natural Reich."

82. Faye, *Heidegger*, 12, 37–38.

83. See Frederick Olafson, "Heidegger's Politics: An Interview with Herbert Marcuse," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 6 (Winter 1977): 32–33. And Levinas, speaking many years later (1973) about his almost boundless admiration for Heidegger at the Davos Disputation with Cassirer in 1929, said, "I had no idea, we could not have known, what would take place in 1933," namely, Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi revolution; quoted in Peter Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 327. Hans-Georg Gadamer recalls a similar overwhelming shock, not only on his part but among all Heidegger's students, in the film *Human, All Too Human*, episode 2: *Thinking the Unthinkable*, produced and directed by Jeff Morgan (BBC, 1999).

84. See Faye, *Heidegger*, 29–32 and 10.

85. See Sartre's *The Ghost of Stalin*, where Sartre pivots between deploring the Stalinist repression of Hungary and honoring Stalin as the only possible source of unity in the Soviet Union during the time when it was still fighting the vestiges of bourgeois self-interest: "Actually, Stalin does not appear at first as an individual superior to others but fundamentally like all. It is not the dignity of the person which he represents, it is social integration pushed to the limit. This indissolubility—which happens to be that of the individual—makes him the sole possible agent of unification, for it is unity alone which can unify multiplicity. . . . No one enjoys this confidence except Stalin in person; but each one knows that up there, in Stalin, the bureaucratic collectivity exists under a form of superior integration and that it is reconciled." Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Ghost of Stalin*, trans. Martha H. Fletcher (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 76–77.

86. You argue this point even more forcefully in “Heidegger gegen alle Moral.”
87. Faye, *Heidegger*, 321.
88. Emmanuel Faye, “Martin Heidegger ou la traversée de la nuit: Questions à Emmanuel Faye. Gaëtan Pégny, Béatrice Fortin et Michèle Cohen-Halimi,” *Texto!* 13, no. 3 (July 2008), http://www.revue-texto.net/docannexe/file/1583/faye_heideggernuit.pdf; my translation.
89. Faye, *Heidegger*, 304.
90. Gregory Fried, “Back to the Cave: A Platonic Rejoinder to Heidegger,” in *Heidegger and the Greeks*, ed. Drew Hyland and John Manoussakis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
91. As does Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, in *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).
92. Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 116–17 and 126–28; my translation.
93. Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, trans. A. F. Wills (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1987), 41; emphasis added. Also, see Weil, *L’enracinement: Prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l’être humain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 45.
94. Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, fifth edition (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981), 62–63.
95. Faye, “Heidegger gegen alle Moral,” 222.
96. For example, see Laurie Goodstein, “Across Nation, Mosque Projects Meet Opposition,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/08/us/08mosque.html>.
97. See Fried, “Back to the Cave.”

Chapter 2

From *Polemos* to the Extermination of the Enemy: Response to the Open Letter of Gregory Fried

Emmanuel Faye

Dear Professor Fried,

For some time now I have adopted the policy of not publishing individual responses to the many critical reviews and written discussions of my book on Heidegger in numerous countries. But when you sent me the first version of your open letter, it seemed to me, as I read your self-criticism at the beginning of your letter and the deep reflection shown by your remarks—unusual on the part of Heidegger commentators—that the preconditions for a serious discussion were in place. You acknowledge with great honesty that after having read my book it would no longer be possible for you to write that Heidegger was a multiculturalist opposed to global imperialism and that there was nothing orthodox about his National Socialism. This sort of *retractatio* is too rare not to be deserving of recognition. That is why, somewhat imprudently, I promised to reply to your letter once it was published. Now that *Philosophy Today* has offered to publish your text together with my response, I cannot but keep my word. So I have just devoted my full attention to a careful reading of the completed version you recently sent me.

Before discussing certain theses and analyses of mine, you bring up in an extremely interesting and instructive way the hardships your father's side of the family suffered under the Nazis, and your own intellectual journey. Given these circumstances, it may be that you (as well as the readers of our correspondence, since this is a public exchange) expect me to proceed in a similar fashion. But in fact that would be difficult for me to do, since for me the Heidegger problem is not a personal one. It is a question that confronts philosophy today in a general sense. And it is when I see today's worthy students being taken in by Heidegger that

I have, for a little more than ten years now, resolved to try to clarify the situation, on the basis of hitherto unpublished texts. Certainly the way was paved for me by the example of Jean-Pierre Faye. But, contrary to what you seem to think, the thesis or main argument of my work has not been borrowed from anyone else. The international reception of my book proves,¹ if such a proof were necessary, that neither the conception nor what I believe to be the truth of that thesis depends narrowly on the history of the reception of Heidegger in France, although Tom Rockmore's preface to my book—albeit very didactic and in that sense useful—might lead the reader to think so. What I wanted to show, with the texts to back it up, was that the basis of Heidegger's work is too deeply grounded in the racist and exterminatory project of National Socialism and Hitlerism to make up a philosophy properly so called. If that thesis is true, the conclusion I draw from it is legitimate: namely, that the place for Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* is not among works of philosophy, but rather among the annals of the history of National Socialism, alongside the works of Alfred Baeumler, for example. I am speaking, of course, of a symbolic transfer, and not of a "placing on the index," and even less of a desire for censorship. On the contrary, the purpose of all my efforts is to make available to the public texts that, as a result of restrictions imposed on critical research by the literary heirs who control access to the archives, are hard to obtain. But I should probably begin by clarifying the question of Heidegger's relation to philosophy, a theme to which you return frequently in your letter, and with good reason.

HEIDEGGER AND PHILOSOPHY

Martin Heidegger was a professor at Freiburg University. He gave courses on Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and others during his entire career. He had had his teachers, and was to have his own disciples and adversaries. In this sense, he does indeed have his place in what Pierre Bourdieu calls the academic "field of philosophy" of the twentieth century, and no one can change that fact. But does that suffice to make of him an essential thinker, a philosopher on a par with Aristotle or Kant? That is the question a researcher may legitimately raise. Thus, what is required is to examine the foundations of his work in depth. We must assess what his writings contribute, or do not contribute, to human thought.

Now in Heidegger's work we find a destruction of human feeling by the exaltation of hatred and violence, a rejection of ethics, which are considered "obsolete," the denial of all free will, the destruction of reason, and the idea

of humanity.² We also find a language that is refined, appeasing, playing in the registers of the poetic-mystic and the esoteric (e.g., his constant praise of the “secret”)—abusing the figure of the question without answer—the effect of which is to neutralize the critical mind and make the reader receptive and ready to accept sudden, trenchant injunctions, often of extreme violence.

For example, in a course on “the essence of truth,” in the middle of a commentary involving the *polemos* of Heraclitus, Heidegger suddenly calls upon his students to “find the enemy” who “may have grafted himself onto the innermost root of the existence of a people,” to “bring him to light,” to face him, and to “initiate the attack on a long-term basis, with the goal of total extermination” (*mit dem Ziel der völligen Vernichtung*).³ Who, in 1934, are these inside “enemies” in Nazi Germany, if not, as you yourself rightly recognize in your open letter, the Jews assimilated into the German people and the political opponents of the National Socialist state? Now, it is a fact that in calling for their “total extermination,” Heidegger took the responsibility of inviting his students, many of whom were, during that period, active in the SA or the SS, to spring into action.

Most often what the disciples of Heidegger do in order not to tarnish the image of the “great thinker” is to keep silent about his violent outbursts. I, on the contrary, in my book, have tried to bring out the destructive violence that irrigates the entire work from below, like molten lava below a seemingly inactive volcano.

The conclusion of my book is obviously important. I do not consider Heidegger’s exterminatory doctrine to be a philosophy. It is my right to hold this view, and I submit my analyses to public debate. But the debate cannot be brought to focus on this point without the participants having taken the time to study and assimilate the over 300 pages of closely argued, and text-based, demonstrations, which alone can give full meaning to my conclusions.

The usual strategy of the Heideggerians consists in saying that I am a censor, a destroyer—that I would like to “burn Heidegger” and (why not?) reinstate the Nazi book burnings. It is a way of diverting attention from the content of the book and its quoted texts, which are never analyzed closely. And I must confess my disappointment when I see you take part in this game, ascribing intentions to me that I have never expressed, as when you assert that I would like “to relegate [books] to an ‘index’ of proscribed works!” which gives you license to say of my position that “it partakes in the methods of exactly the enemy you oppose.”

The reality is that my position, often set forth in numerous lectures and seminars, including those given in the United States (in 2006 at NYU and CUNY, and in 2010 at the University of Notre Dame) is the following. I think that Heidegger has had, and continues to have, an influence such that it is important for advanced students who so desire to be able to undertake critical

research on his work. I myself have given critical seminars on his writings. I have been perfectly clear about this in the conclusion to my book: “It is indispensable for us to inquire into the true nature of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*,” and “We must hope that that work, translated and commented on worldwide, will be the object of far deeper research.”⁴

It is rather dismaying, for example, to see my colleague Iain Thomson write, in an online comment in reaction to the article by Carlin Romano which appeared in *The Chronicle Review* section of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, that I would like to “criminalize” the teaching of Heidegger.⁵ The fact is, the only public petition I have published, which was in the newspaper *Le Monde*, is a demand for the opening of the Heidegger Archives to all scholars, so that critical research can be pursued freely.⁶

As Elie Wiesel emphasizes, there is indeed, due to his influence, a “greatness” of Heidegger just as there is a “greatness” of Carl Schmitt, the Nazi jurist, the author of *The Concept of the Political*, but also of *State, Movement, People*, and Goering’s protégé to the end. But that “greatness” comes from their power of destruction, and the force that seems to emanate from their works was nurtured from the depth of their rootedness in the exterminatory movement of the National Socialism from which they continue to be indissociable. Heidegger, with his program of destruction of Western metaphysics, explicitly tried to destroy all rational thought and reject all philosophy, just as Schmitt tried to destroy the very possibility of constitutional rights, those guarantors of a democratic society.

Heidegger, moreover, does not pretend otherwise. After having proclaimed the completion of metaphysics with Nietzsche (but then what of Whitehead, Bergson, and so many other major twentieth-century metaphysicians?) he asserts in 1946, in the conclusion of the *Letter on Humanism*: “The thinking of the future is no longer philosophy.” In 1955, at Cerisy, where he was invited by his French epigones, he himself makes a point of saying that “there is no philosophy of Heidegger.” And in *The Experience of Thought (Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens)*, published in 1955, he presents “philosophizing” (*das Philosophieren*) as “the bad danger, the confused danger” (GA 13: 80).

Indeed it is understandable that philosophizing may constitute a danger for Heidegger, because it remains the best way to hold one’s own and resist him, through research and deep critical analysis. As I see it, studying that author today is at once moving toward a better understanding of how the destructive dynamics of the National Socialist movement was introduced by him into the “philosophical field,” how, with the *Gesamtausgabe*, he has attempted to prepare, over the long haul, a return of this movement in human history in different guises, and why it is the task of present-day philosophy to oppose this *revival*, not by censorship or interdicts but by the critical work of thought.

Furthermore, you maintain that evil is perfectly compatible with the fact of being a philosopher. It is true that I do not believe, as was asserted by Boethius of Dacia, for example (a medieval philosopher too little known, persecuted in the thirteenth century), in his *De summo bono seu de vita philosophica*, that the philosopher who acts according to right reason “never sins” (*numquam peccat*).⁷ Philosophers are men. They can, like all of us, make mistakes. Certain among them may have used means that were destructive and, in this sense, have done evil. It is also difficult for them, as for all of us, to transcend the limitations of their era. But as a philosopher works to clarify his choices, to submit them to the discussion and discernment of thought—to open our eyes, in sum—he can play the role of revealer and transformer for his time.

I am aware of the fact that it is possible to find unacceptable things even among the most important philosophers. For example, the thesis of Aristotle’s *Politics* according to which certain persons are destined by nature to slavery is such a case. But we must not forget that Aristotle lived in a slave-holding society in which he himself, not being an Athenian, had to pay an annual tribute to avoid losing his freedom.

It is not at all the same thing when, twenty centuries later, in a European civilization surely not without defects but in which slavery was finally abolished, we see an author like Heidegger assert in 1934 that the great question today is to determine (he is speaking of the German people in relation to other peoples) who should dominate by his being (*Herrsein*) and who should be reduced to servitude (*Knechtsein*). One is a slave, Heidegger specifies, according to one’s “being.”⁸ Now we know what the Nazi camps that began being set up in 1933 were: not only places of slavery, but of extermination, accomplishing the dual Heideggerian injunction.

Tom Rockmore and Robert Norton, in the presentation of my book, and Patricia Cohen, in the review that appeared in the *New York Times*,⁹ rightly insist on the importance of the ethical dimension in philosophy, but the problem, with Heidegger as with National Socialism in general for that matter, is even more radical, and its solution does not seem to me to depend on any particular conception of philosophy any one of us may have. It is not just an ethical question; it is a question of survival for humanity.

Let me explain. In May–June 1940, at the moment of the invasion of Holland, Belgium, and France by the motorized armies of the Third Reich, Heidegger taught a course titled *Nietzsche, European Nihilism*, at the end of which he presented the motorization of the Wehrmacht as “a metaphysical act”! In this course, he was not yet the critic of world technology that he would present himself as being after the defeat of Nazism in 1945. On the contrary, he praised the “new humanity” (*neues Menschentum*), that of the German people under the Third Reich, which had succeeded in “letting itself

be totally dominated by technology” in order to dominate it in turn, and thus to dominate the other peoples, who were excluded from that “new humanity.”

Have we fully understood what it could mean *for humanity as a whole* if that Faustian fusion of a people, or (to use an expression borrowed from Jünger) of a “new race” (*neue Rasse*), carried away by the ambition for world domination and by a military technology of the sort that National Socialism tried to bring about, and with Heidegger’s worldview as its “theoretical” legitimation, were to reproduce itself in the future? This would not have to be in Germany; it might be in a country in Eastern Europe, in the Middle East, or in Asia (all these being regions of the world where Heidegger’s influence is currently considerable). What might this mean for humanity, with the technology now available? I would like to avoid any confusion here. If, in my conclusion, I gave some brief indications of my philosophical itinerary, because it seemed to me normal for an author who brings up several contemporary trends to share some of his own trajectory, the critical analyses of my book are as impersonal as it is possible to be. I have constantly given pride of place to *proof*: the textual references, very abundantly quoted in German so that the reader may consult the original texts and form his or her own judgment directly on the basis of the sources.

I am well aware that at the end of the book, especially in Chapter 9, I several times express strong reactions to texts of an insufferable racism. Here, too, it is a question of survival in a sense. When a research scholar has plunged deeply into the reality of Heidegger’s National Socialism for the purpose of seeing it clearly for what it is, he must then come up to the surface for a breath of fresh air, so to speak; and that is not possible without a deep reaction, involving his entire being. Indeed, experience shows that too many of Heidegger’s readers have never been able to escape from him, because they have been unwilling or unable to meet him with a liberating resistance. It is certain that an author who holds you so harshly captive is more like a “guru” than a thinker.

You are probably familiar with words of Hans Jonas, who had undergone the ascendancy of the Master of Messkirch, but could say, in a moment of great lucidity: “This wasn’t philosophy: it was more like a sect, almost a new religion.”¹⁰ The conclusions of my book tally with and deepen what he was able to see at that moment.

ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL STATUS OF MY BOOK

I shall now try to respond to the “Some Reservations” part of your letter. First, a general remark. It seems to me that you have neither accurately seen

nor well understood the intention and composition of my book. I say this because you write: “Your book is primarily a work of history and biography.” My book has nothing of the biographical about it. In an intellectual biography, one begins by studying the childhood and adolescence of one’s subject, those years during which a character and the beginning stages of a structured thought are being formed. On the contrary, my point of departure is late: 1923. Martin Heidegger was then twenty-four years old. That is the year Erich Rothacker proposed to him the publication of a review of the correspondence between Wilhelm Dilthey and Count Yorck von Wartenburg. Heidegger derived from his reading of Yorck the tactic of expressing by innuendos his anti-Semitic conception of enrootedness (*Bodenständigkeit*) and historicity. This may be observed first at the end of his 1925 lectures on *The Present Struggle for a Historical World-View (Weltanschauung)*, and then, two years later, in the last paragraph of the chapter in *Being and Time* devoted to historicity (§77).

To this day there is no satisfactory biography of Heidegger. That of the revisionist historian Ernst Nolte,¹¹ apparently deemed the “official” one by Hermann Heidegger, rightly criticized by Thomas Sheehan and not translated into English, is what one would expect of its author, namely, that it is apologetic and murky. Rüdiger Safranski’s biography,¹² fittingly redacted in such a way as to sustain the reader’s interest, and in fact very popular, is replete with second-hand anecdotes that are often damning of Heidegger the man, but the author draws no serious conclusion with respect to the work and thought of the former National-Socialist rector. And the highly exaggerated way Safranski identifies Adorno with Heidegger, and the students of May 1968 with the National Socialist student leagues seemed to me so unacceptable that I decided not to even include this work in my bibliography. The more recent study, by the Swiss psychologist Anton M. Fischer,¹³ is an interesting attempt at reinterpreting the political itinerary of Heidegger setting out from an initial trauma: that of 1911, occasioned by the rejection of his desire to become a priest and member of the Jesuit Order. But the age of twenty-two is a rather late date to find a formative traumatism. The most irrefutable contribution remains the study by the Freiburg historian Hugo Ott, titled *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie*,¹⁴ but as the author points out, and the German title indicates, it is not a complete biography. The most important element of Ott’s contribution consists in his having shown quite precisely that Heidegger’s account of his own intellectual journey in 1945, in the text titled “The Rectorate: Facts and Thoughts”¹⁵ published by Hermann Heidegger in 1983, was nothing but a pack of lies.

Whatever the case may be, my purpose is quite different. It is not the life of Martin Heidegger that constitutes my subject, but the question of the foundations of his entire work, or *Gesamtausgabe*, and the intention revealed by that

project. As I stress from the beginning of my book, but even more explicitly in a study published in Germany in 2009,¹⁶ it is the fact that Heidegger wished to have published, without self-criticism or expression of apology, the most explicitly National-Socialist courses in his *Gesamtausgabe*, that gives us the most patent proof of the persistence of his fundamental Nazism to the end. From this starting point, I have had to study how this Nazi basis of his thought expresses itself not only in the political discourses and proclamations but also *in his teaching itself*, both courses and seminars. The main body of my book (chapters 2 through 8) focuses on the courses and seminars in which this Nazi basis is most explicit, namely, those of the years 1933–1935. If the chronological aspect of my study is important, it is not for biographical reasons. The anti-Semitic and racist basis of Heidegger's thought goes far back, as is confirmed by his correspondence with his wife Elfride, which was unfortunately not available to me when I published my book in 2005, but of which I availed myself in the preface to the second French edition, which was not translated into English. And on this essential point Heidegger has not varied. Hence, there is no evolution to be studied in that respect. On the contrary, it is necessary to analyze closely how he situates his thought in relation to the historical advent and fall of the Third Reich: before, during, and after the years 1933–1945. This historical contextualization is therefore indispensable. In my book, given my topic, I was able to provide a sufficiently complete treatment of the years 1933–1955 (Chapter 2) only, and to do so the works of Hugo Ott, Victor Fariás, and Bernd Martin were indispensable references. Still, I myself am not a historian but a philosopher, and the textual critique I applied, first to the discourses and lectures (Chapter 3), then to the courses (Chapters 4 and 6), and finally to the seminars (Chapters 5 and 8) of the years 1933–1935, and to the writings of his disciple Erik Wolf (Chapter 7), could only be carried out by a philosopher. Indeed, I know of no historian of National Socialism who has undertaken anything comparable. At the same time, I have not tried to make the texts of Heidegger's courses and seminars more philosophical than they were. I wanted to bring to light rather than conceal their radicalness and virulence, contrary to what is normally done in the academic field of Heideggerian studies.

Thus, it is true that my work introduces few “new facts,” to borrow your expression, but many new *texts*, and what it brings to bear is not primarily historical, but rather philosophical criticism. What is at issue is the discernment of what is philosophical and what is not. The fact of characterizing my work as biographical and historical rather than as philosophical criticism is reminiscent of a long-standing tactic of Heideggerians of all countries, but it is particularly well represented in France. The technique consists in attempting to disqualify the adversary, for example, by designating the critical essays on Heidegger by such men as Theodor Adorno and Pierre Bourdieu

as “socio-linguistic” and nonphilosophical. In short, the only philosophers recognized as such by Heideggerians are those who see Heidegger as one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. I, on the other hand, am of the opinion that serious philosophical criticism of Heidegger cannot begin without first emerging from that apologetic circle within which what remains to be demonstrated is immediately affirmed as unarguably established.

SUBJECTIVITY AND RACE

I now come to your main objection, which concerns the way of understanding the relation established by Heidegger between “racial selection”¹⁷ and “the soil of subjectivity” in a text from the end of the 1930s, which is part of a group of notes on Jünger’s *Der Arbeiter* [*The Worker*]. I told you at the beginning of my response that it was with some imprudence that I took it upon myself to answer you. Indeed, in the very page of my conclusion on which I questioned the status of “philosophy” too quickly bestowed on Heidegger’s works, I launched an appeal for deeper research and a fundamental debate. I have tried, for the last seven years, to keep up the debate. But, having noticed that the Heideggerians always limit themselves to the same canon put in place by their master after 1945 and that they always raise exactly the same objections without consulting my published responses or undertaking that deeper research I called for, I must admit that the discussion has gotten bogged down and that it is time for me to turn the page. (I suspect that the discussions will continue, but it seems to me that my book and the different studies and responses published since then will suffice to sustain them without further intervention on my part.) The fact is, your objection is nearly identical to the one raised as far back as 2005 by Alexandre Franco de Sá, a follower of Schmitt from Coimbra,¹⁸ then, in 2008, in a more structured way, by Sonia Sikka in the journal *Dialogue*,¹⁹ to which I responded in a discussion published in the same journal and mentioned in the bibliography of the American edition of my book.²⁰ That objection surfaces once again in 2010, in an article written against me by Frans van Peperstraten.²¹ The simplest solution, then, to avoid repetitions, would be for me to refer you, as well as the reader, to what I have already said in response to Sonia Sikka. But as it happens I have recently undertaken and presented in Germany, then in France, new research on the question of subjectivity in the writings of Heidegger, that reinforce what I believe to be the truth of my commentary contested by Franco de Sa, Sikka, Peperstraten, and yourself. I therefore annex to the present response that unpublished study, titled “Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger’s Writings.”²² I publish it as a separate item because it represents more of a précis of the results of my research than a polemic.

Let me limit myself, then, in this response, to recalling the problem of interpretation such as it presents itself at the present time. Heidegger wanted to encourage the belief that his critique of what he called “the metaphysics of subjectivity,” developed it in his writings after 1945, had already been elaborated by him in the same terms as early as 1938, particularly in his lecture “The Age of the World Picture” (*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*). That is not the case, as the analyses in Chapter 9 of my book already indicated (268–70), but as has now been proven by the new research carried out by Sidonie Kellerer and myself on the basis of manuscripts of the 1938 lecture stored in the Heidegger Archives of Marbach.²³ That strategy on Heidegger’s part enabled him to pretend that through his rejection of subjectivity he had developed a critique of National Socialism at the end of the 1930s.

Like many other commentators on Heidegger before you, you seem to have let yourself be caught in that trap. You are right in recalling that Heidegger takes certain distances with respect to Jünger, but that relationship is of the same order as those he maintains—in his seminars and the preparatory notes that accompany them—with the concept of the political according to Carl Schmitt, when he goes so far as to reproach Schmitt for “liberal” thinking! (see GA 86, 174). Heidegger takes over Jünger’s idea of “total mobilization,” just as he does Schmitt’s conception of the enemy, while at the same time maintaining that his own conception of the political and of the enemy, or of selection and training of a new race, is more original than theirs. Heidegger’s way of taking his distances does not in the least involve the rejection of the theses of Jünger or Schmitt. In placing Heidegger’s notes on Jünger from the end of the 1930s beneath the sign of the question of *nihilism*—of which there is almost no mention in the notes of GA 90, where the word appears only incidentally, as for example on page 9 apropos the *Marble Cliffs*—you interpret these notes in a retrospective and anachronistic way. It was not until the 1950s that nihilism became the main theme of mutual contention between the two men.

I think I have brought forward a sufficient number of elements that show the falsity of the canon, popularized particularly by Silvio Vietta,²⁴ who presents a Heidegger who is critical at once of “the metaphysics of subjectivity,” of technology, and of National Socialism by the end of the 1930s. But it was not my intention to formulate in my book, in a premature fashion, a new overall interpretation, and that is why I proposed no more, in Chapter 9, than to sound out directions for future critical research (244). I think that a series of critical studies, like the ones realized on the 1938 lecture, remain to be carried out, and I have no doubt that in the wake of Sidonie Kellerer, other researchers, convinced of the complementary conjunction of philosophical criticism, history, and philology, will in turn take up the task. As for the

Heideggerians who do not wish to revisit their certainties, I leave them to their responsibilities.

I will, to conclude, address four important points from your letter, in an intentionally abbreviated and concise manner, in order to abandon controversy in favor of research, and to share my new investigations on subjectivity, community, and race.

DESCARTES, TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH, AND WISDOM

The second objection you elaborate on concerns the interpretation of the philosophy of Descartes and the passage that is frequently quoted by Heidegger and his disciples on the project of a practical philosophy, as opposed to the speculative philosophy that abounds in our schools, and which is intended to “make us, as it were, masters and proprietors of nature.” It is undeniable that this passage has a Baconian ring to it. Nevertheless, Descartes’s commentary indicates quite precisely that its intent is not mainly technological, but concerns the preservation of the health of the body in that it is indissoluble from the wisdom of the soul. This preoccupation is not “subsidiary,” as you maintain, but “principal,” as Descartes asserts in the very passage you cite. Further, you interrupt the quotation far too soon to be able to grasp his exact thought. His goal concerns human wisdom, and not the technological domination of nature by man.²⁵ The last thirteen years of Descartes’s life confirm this. We see him abandon mathematics for medicine, then the latter for moral research developed in his correspondence with Princess Elizabeth and Queen Christina (texts of critical importance that Heidegger never quotes and does not even appear to have read). Finally, it is anachronistic and abusive to establish any kind of link between Descartes’s philosophical thought and the production of nuclear energy from the splitting of the atom. There is no continuity between the physics of Descartes and that of Einstein, and if your intention is to stress the responsibility of the theory of relativity as making the invention of atomic arms feasible, you must question the 1925 lecture in which Heidegger evokes the theory of relativity in a very positive way, without, incidentally, mentioning the name Einstein, but only those of two German mathematicians.²⁶

Indeed, the threats that the excesses of technology cause to hang over the head of humanity represent a capital problem, but Heidegger is not alone in voicing it. We could just as well cite, for example, the analyses of Bergson, who warned in 1932 that “humanity groans, half crushed beneath the weight of the progress it has made.”²⁷

Moreover, it is less technology itself that is the problem than the use made of it when it is put by some at the service of profit and domination. Now in Heidegger there is no developed critique of the profit motive and the power of money. His rare analyses of technological production—a hydroelectric center on the Rhine, for example—are highly problematic.²⁸ And I would not be inclined to seek enlightenment from an author who continued to assert, after 1945, that the relation of man to technology in Nazism was the bearer of inner truth and greatness (GA 40: 208) and that as far as technology is concerned, National Socialism moved in the direction of a “satisfactory” or “sufficient” (*zureichendes*) relation of man to the essence of technology.²⁹

HEIDEGGER AND HITLER

You are not convinced by the hypothesis briefly suggested in my book according to which Heidegger may have participated (in 1932) in the drafting of memoranda (*Denkschrift*) for Hitler, and in a sense you are right: A working hypothesis is not intended to convince, but merely to suggest a new approach to certain problems. The remaining question, therefore, is whether it was reasonable to formulate such a supposition. In my view, only the future of the research will tell. In any case, the theses of my book are independent of the validation of that hypothesis, or lack thereof. For such reasons, I eventually cut this passage from the second Spanish edition of my book, published in 2018.³⁰

I gave a lot of thought, in writing my book, to the question of how to approach in a new way the relation Heidegger wanted to establish between himself and Hitler—a relationship of fascination that has no equivalent among the other “thinkers” of Nazism, even the most radical, such as Carl Schmitt or Alfred Baeumler, for example. The telegram in which Heidegger wants to dictate Hitler’s conduct to him is surprising, and equally so his praise, in his Winter 1933–1934 seminar, for Hitler’s speeches compared to the rhetoric of a Thucydides. And exactly what was it that Heidegger had been doing “for years,” “at the heart of his [Hitler’s] magnificent movement,” as reported in an article from 1933 in the Freiburg newspaper *Der Alemanne*?³¹ And what are the more than merely academic activities mysteriously alluded to in a letter to Elisabeth Blochman, dated December 22, 1932, at the moment we now know Heidegger voted for the NSDAP and was active in the National-Socialist circles who prepared the way for Hitler’s takeover? The vocabulary, style, and very Heideggerian tone of a fragment of the *Denkschrift* published by Ian Kershaw stood out to me, and I wanted to suggest, in order to get the attention of historians and linguists, that there might be something to be looked into in a comparative study of Heidegger’s writings during the first

half of the 1930s and Hitler's speeches. I wanted to open up a completely new research perspective, and while I admit that I formulated that hypothesis in a provocative way in order to get the attention of researchers, it seems to me imprudent to say that it will lead nowhere.³²

I will add that I am unable to follow you when you say, with no further explanation, that you "found [my] interpretation of the Bremen lectures unconvincing for similar reasons," because in this case we are not talking about a simple working hypothesis, but about a step-by-step, reasoned interpretation, based on textual analyses. That interpretation is only outlined in my book, but it is explicated and developed in my own "Bremen lecture," published in German by Felix Meiner Verlag, the text of which I sent you. So far it has met with no serious objections. An updated version of that study is to appear in 2012 in *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*.³³

ON "THE RIGHT TO HISTORY"

It seems that you have not grasped the significance of "the right to history." It is neither a philosophical idea nor a purely historical one. It is a legal expression deriving from European jurisprudence. There is probably no equivalent in the United States, where revisionism is not penalized as it is in Europe. In any case, the expression refers to the principle according to which, in the case of proven revisionism, it is possible to publish texts without requesting rights to do so, on the basis of there being documents for history. That is why I felt obligated, at the end of my book, to demonstrate the revisionism of the German heir (Hermann Heidegger) and his French representatives; from Nicole Parfait to Franco Volpi, the list of cases of censorship and injunctions not to publish that these persons have instigated would be long.³⁴ You must know, for example, that since 1984 it has been forbidden by the heirs to publish excerpts of Heidegger in a schoolbook, even though he is on the syllabus for the baccalaureate!

National Socialism, Heideggerianism, and Particularism

Your interpretation of Heidegger rests on a postulate that I believe to be erroneous, namely, that his thought represents a defense of particularity versus the universal. The analyses of my book, as well as the lecture I gave at the University of Frankfurt, the text of which I sent you, and which you quote in your letter (72n16), demonstrate sufficiently, in my view, that for Heidegger, as for the National Socialists, what is at issue is the formation of a "new humanity" (*neues Menschentum*), or even a "new race," destined to

achieve world domination. You say at the beginning of your letter that you have now understood that Heidegger is not a “multiculturalist” and that he was certainly not opposed to all forms of global imperialism, but it seems to me that you have not drawn all the consequences of this and that you revert to the conclusions reached in your book, without sufficiently examining their fragility. When you assert that “we *are* the *between*, situated in the world opened up between Earth and Sky,” I admit that I cannot follow you in that gnostic tension between Earth and Sky. Those assertions are not of the order of the rational and therefore of the refutable, but I do not think that Heidegger’s gnostic speculations on Hesiod’s *Theogony* pertain to philosophy, especially when one is aware of the ethnic and racist conception he proposes of “the Earth.” Reading the conclusions of your letter, it seems to me that your efforts to free yourself from Heideggerianism in seeking support in Plato are quite remarkable and worthy of being pursued, but that even now you remain too impressed by Heidegger’s way of thinking to succeed in disengaging yourself sufficiently from it. I will add that I do not approve of your use of Simone Weil’s employment of the word “enrootedness” to lend acceptability to the Heideggerian *Bodenständigkeit*, the anti-Semitic connotation of which is obvious for anyone who has studied the “spirit of Count Yorck,” under the auspices of whom Heidegger places the composition of *Sein und Zeit* at the end of the very decisive (§77).

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of your letter, following the example of Tom Rockmore, you emphasize the particular circumstances of the French reception of Heidegger, in a country that went through the Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance.³⁵ In this you are certainly not mistaken, and I myself evoke this particular historical situation in my preface to the French translation of a very instructive work by Hassan Givsan.³⁶ This historical past helps us to understand the fact that France is one of the countries in which the academic penetration of Heidegger was the strongest, but at the same time the country in which criticism and resistance to the penetration remain the most vigorous and developed. Still, I think it would be reductionist to present my work, as you do, as expressing “a patriotic indignation.” The problem of Nazi penetration into all the domains of culture—from philosophy with Heidegger to law with Carl Schmitt, for example, to theology with Gogarten and others, as well as to medicine, biology, architecture, poetry, history, and so on—has become a *planetary* problem, and one that is not solved. It is not by interdicts that we will overcome it, but by a fundamental critical investigation without complacency, such as is just now getting underway.³⁷ That such an effort of

research can be accompanied by a liberal discussion is indispensable. In that respect, your open letter will stand out by its honesty, openness, and balance. For that, I thank you.

Emmanuel Faye
Paris, June 7, 2011

POST-SCRIPT IN RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIONS OF A HEIDEGGERIAN

I would like to avail myself of the occasion of this open letter to add a few words in response to the criticism of an American Heideggerian that appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*. I had initially thought of writing a response that would address the entirety of the reviews that have appeared in the United States on my book, but I am so wearied of polemics that I will limit myself to defending my work vis-à-vis the attacks I thought most excessive. Gregory Fried maintains that in the United States “the debates are cooler and more academic in the petty sense. (6)” It seems that this is not always the case. It is true that in France my book was greeted with a virulence and attacks of a rare violence by the little group, or, to speak like Hans Jonas, the “sect” of radical Heideggerians who control the translations.³⁸ Having brought to the public forum the question of the revisionism of Heidegger’s heirs, I could not expect to be spared, and I consider these attacks, which have nothing philosophical about them, to be without great importance. They show nothing more than a great theoretical distress—the essential grievance being that my work has not been censored. As for the authors who are clearly of a different level, such as Jacques Derrida or Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, the reader of my book will be able to see that I have noted a few of what I consider to be their obvious errors, without any particular acrimony or personal attacks, even though our interpretations are worlds apart. I have, moreover, had the occasion to debate Lacoue-Labarthe publicly in the course of a broadcast that has been transcribed and posted on the Internet,³⁹ and the discussion continued privately during a luncheon. Minds evolve, and in my estimation the Heidegger specialists who accept free discussion are no longer entirely “Heideggerians” in the too often sectarian sense of the term.

But in the United States as elsewhere, I have noticed in certain authors a deterioration of tone. Let us not dwell on certain reactions to a vehement article by Carlin Romano, critical of Heidegger, on the website of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. That was just a blog, and it was quite astonishing, for a French reader, to see university professors lose their composure to such a degree, going into fits of rage on the Internet. Here I come to one

of the reviews of my book, the rather aggressive tone of which surprised me. The author in question is a certain Taylor Carman, a professor at Columbia formed in the school of Hubert Dreyfus.⁴⁰ Carman does not hesitate to qualify as “too silly to merit serious discussion” my warnings about the dangers to which Heidegger’s teachings expose thought and humanity. One would expect a pragmatist philosopher to know that calls for extermination like the ones we see in the courses published in 2001, particularly when justified before students as being “philosophically” motivated, prepare and legitimize their taking the next step: direct action. But since Carman does in fact take me on in a discussion of sorts, I will leave to him the responsibility of assessing whether it is “serious” or not, and restrict myself to responding to his three main criticisms.⁴¹

- 1) Carman begins by saying that I have misunderstood Heidegger’s attacks against Descartes. According to him, they were directed against his supposed dualism and not the individualism of the *I*.⁴² I think he is way off the mark. The texts I quote and comment on, both in *Sein und Zeit* and in a course from 1933, are indeed, through the name Descartes, directed against the philosophy of the *I* or the “the time of the *I*” (*Ich-Zeit*). It is the defense of human individuality that Heidegger rejects, and in none of the texts to which I refer does he develop a serious philosophical discussion on Descartes’s presumed “dualism.” Carman’s mistake here is to look at Descartes only through the prism of the mind-body problem, which is certainly important in Anglo-Saxon philosophy, but not within Heidegger’s perspective. The new texts published and analyzed in the study on subjectivity and race, which follows this response, will show sufficiently, I believe, that my taking into consideration of Heidegger’s opposition between individuality and community, with respect to Descartes, is well founded. Lastly, just because I show that the way Heidegger attacks Descartes during the 1930s is on more than one occasion of the Nazi sort—for example, when he qualifies the very fact of teaching him as a “spiritual degeneracy,” or when he speaks of “degradation” (*Entartung*—a term belonging to the vocabulary of Nazi racialism) apropos Cartesian egoity, that does not mean that I think all criticism of the philosophy of Descartes is invalid or that I consider it “to be harboring homicidal tendencies”! The consequence Carman draws here from my analyses in order to reject them is completely abusive and sophist. In short, if criticizing Descartes’s philosophy is a very widespread phenomenon, especially in the main currents of contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy, that does not justify propagating the false belief that Heidegger’s virulent and overdetermined way of attacking Descartes in the texts I have cited is also something ordinary and banal.

- 2) The author then risks denying the obvious when he maintains that there is nothing in §74 of *Sein und Zeit* to justify my assertion that Heidegger identifies the self with the community, with the people. Yet all we have to do is take a look at the German edition to see that this is indeed the case.⁴³ I can understand that Carman may prefer not to recognize the obvious here, because that would mean acknowledging the rejection of his own individualist and pragmatist interpretation of *Sein and Zeit*, which is so remarkably sweetened, decontextualized, and depoliticized. To assert, as he does, that “nowhere does the text [§74 of *Being and Time*] suggest that authentic historical existence favors any one form of political organization or legal institution over another,” is going a bit too far in denying the textual evidence. It is clear that Heidegger is promoting that totalizing form of political organization that constitutes community (*Gemeinschaft*) and not the individualist, contractual form that is called society (*Gesellschaft*). Moreover, it is patent that in launching a call in 1927—the year Hitler has the second part of his *Mein Kampf* published—for “the pursuit of combat” and the “choice of the hero,” Heidegger is playing on a political rhetoric that is far from neutral. Finally, it must be remarked that in emphasizing “destiny” (*Schicksal*) and the “common destiny” (*Geschick*) and in associating immediately afterward “community (*Gemeinschaft*) with the “people” (*Volk*), he is giving the reader all the necessary terms to form the concepts “community of the people” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and “community of destiny” (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*), which are two key expressions of National Socialism. This is clearly shown by the fact that neither Heidegger nor any other German author who was compromised by involvement in National Socialism ever risked using a vocabulary with such connotations after 1945. On this point, my criticism of *Being and Time* is not original. Among others who have recognized the *völkisch* significance §74, it will suffice to refer the reader to the great studies, quite different from one another, by the way, in method and intention, of Johannes Fritsche or Hassan Givsan; these studies are now classics.⁴⁴ Fritsche goes further than my book in the political translation of the program set forth by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, but upon reflection I find him convincing when he shows that Heidegger’s conception of community, in §74, is politically closer to Hitler than to Max Scheler. What I have contributed that is new is the accentuation of the importance of the references to the openly anti-Semitic spirit of Count Yorck, both at the end of the Cassel lectures and in §77 of *Sein und Zeit*, but this point is so compromising that Heideggerians have always avoided bringing the discussion onto this area.
- 3) The third point of discussion has been so often repeated by my critics that I would approach it with great weariness if the way Carman approached it did not have something of the comic of repetition about it. Here is the

background. Just beneath the heading of Chapter 9, in the French edition of my book, I quoted an excerpt of a sentence that I probably was wrong to consider very well known (Derrida, in particular, was rightly disturbed by it in his *De l'esprit*) on “the principle of the institution of racial selection” presented by Heidegger in 1941–1942 as being “metaphysically necessary” (GA 50: 56–57). During the broadcast mentioned earlier that brought Lacoue-Labarthe and me together, a member of the little group of radical Heideggerians, of which I have already spoken, attributed unworthy intentions to me, qualifying the quote as “adulterated.” In response, I pointed out that in my book I gave pride of place to the analysis of unpublished writings, or texts from the *Gesamtausgabe* recently published or still unknown in French (the texts from GA 90 and GA 69), whereas the text on racial selection had been very well known for half a century, since it appeared in the *Nietzsche* published in 1961—probably Heidegger’s most read work in France, and the one that has had the most influence on postmodern thought, from Foucault to Derrida. In these different writings, Heidegger presents what he calls the “*thought on race*” (*Rassengedanke*), or the doctrine of the preeminence of race, as an ineluctable necessity that proceeds from Western metaphysical thought, as soon as “the unconditioned subjectivity of the will to power becomes truth of the existent in its totality,” which appears to me to be an extremely problematic post-Nietzschean perspective. I promised myself at that time that I would come back to this point, which I did in the course of a public lecture at the Sorbonne, in which I quoted the sentence in question in its entirety and commented on it.⁴⁵ Furthermore, to cut short this endless inquisition, let me say that I quoted the sentence for the course *Nietzsche’s Metaphysics* in the Spanish (401), German (327), and American (243) editions of my book, published in 2009. These precautions were clearly insufficient, since other Heideggerians, undaunted, repeated the initial attack. A Dutch Heideggerian again reproached me in 2010 for not giving the full quotation. In his haste to repeat the earlier attack, he quoted the page of the German edition of my book (on which the quotation stands in its entirety!), while at the same time repeating the absurd accusation of “adulteration” (*Fälschung*)!⁴⁶ And now we have Taylor Carman following suit, reprimanding me for the incomplete quotation of the French edition, which he presents as “a gross misrepresentation.” Since he did notice that the American edition quoted the entire phrase,⁴⁷ he gets around the difficulty by crediting the translator, and not the author, with having “restored the text,” which is to underestimate the seriousness of Yale University Press and of the translator, who are not prone to introducing other modifications than those recommended by the author.

But let us get to the main issue. Carman is indeed wrong in maintaining that what Heidegger says here about the thought of the race and the principle of racial selection “is not Heidegger’s at all, but Nietzsche’s.” Heidegger took care to inform us at the beginning of his course that “the presentation of Nietzsche’s thought and its interpretation are worked together to the point of permeating one another” (GA 50: 8–9). Furthermore, at issue in 1941–1942 were not only the theses formulated by Nietzsche a century earlier but also the historical reality that National Socialism was about to effectuate. It is equally false to maintain that in this text Heidegger proceeds “to a systematic critique and repudiation of Nietzsche’s fundamental concepts.” The response that David Weissman published in the *TLS* of October 13, 2010, under the title “Heidegger and barbarism” is a detailed refutation—reinforced by numerous lengthy quotations—of Carman’s excessive separation of Heidegger’s thought from that of Nietzsche, to the point of putting them in opposition to one another. In plain language, Carman, like all the current Heidegger apologists, repeats the canon that Heidegger himself succeeded in imposing after 1945. In order to get beyond this, and to reassess entirely, on more serious philosophical foundations, the successive transformations in the way in which Heidegger put “thought about race” and “subjectivity” in relation to one another between 1938 and 1961, we must now abandon controversy; its incrimination of motives and repetition of the same litany of criticisms in almost identical language from Peperstraten to Carman have proven its sterility. We must now return to fundamental research. It is in this direction that I have chosen to move in the following study.

Translated by Michael B. Smith

NOTES

1. More than 150 articles and reviews of my book have appeared in various languages [as of 2011—Ed.]. Three translations, in Spanish (AKAL), German (Matthes & Seitz, Berlin), and English (Yale University Press), were published in 2009, and three more, in Italian, Portuguese, and Chinese, are in process. In 2011, the Brazilian Academy of Philosophy awarded me an honorary doctorate for my critical work on Heidegger’s writings.

2. In the sense of *Menschheit*, which Heidegger contrasts with *Menschentum*. I discuss this below.

3. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit* (GA 36/37: 90–91); translated in Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. By Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 168. The first works to draw the consequences of this terrifying text were that of Reinhard Linde, *Bin ich wenn ich nicht denke? Studien*

zur Entkräftung, *Wirkung und Struktur totalitären Denkens* (Herbolzheim: Centaurus Verlag, 2003), which appeared in a confidential way and which I found out about only because he sent it to me after the publication of my book. It is remarkable to observe that in the United States it was you yourself who, after having stressed the importance of the *polemos* in Heidegger in your book, published the course in question with Richard Polt (*Being and Truth*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

4. Faye, *Heidegger*, 319.

5. Iain Thomson, somewhat like yourself, has rethought his position in a private exchange subsequent to his declaration.

6. “Pour l’ouverture des archives Heidegger,” *Le Monde* (January 5, 2006), 22. Reprinted in *theologie.geschichte* 1 (2006), <http://aps.sulb.uni-saarland.de/theologie.geschichte/inhalt/2006/Faye,%20Heidegger.pdf>.

7. *Boethii Daci Opera*, Voluminis VI, Pars II (Copenhagen: Gad, 1976), 374; Boethius of Dacia, *On the Supreme Good*, trans. John F. Wippel (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987), 32.

8. “Man ist nicht Knecht, weil es so etwas unter vielen anderen auch gibt, sondern weil dieses Sein in sich eine Niederlage, ein Versagen, ein Ungenügen, eine Feigheit, ja vielleicht ein Gering—und Niedringswollen birgt” (GA 36/37: 94). In translating *Knecht* in this passage as “servant,” in spite of the fact that since Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Mind* the word has generally been translated as “slave,” you and R. Polt lessen the ontological violence of Heidegger’s text: see *Being and Truth*, 73.

9. Patricia Cohen, “An Ethical Question: Does a Nazi Deserve a Place among Philosophers?” *New York Times* (November 8, 2009), <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/books/09philosophy.html>.

10. Hans Jonas, *Memoirs*, trans. Krishna Winston (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 59.

11. Ernst Nolte, *Martin Heidegger: Politik und Geschichte im Leben und Denken* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1998).

12. Rüdiger Safranski, *Between Good and Evil* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

13. Anton M. Fischer, *Martin Heidegger—der gottlose Priester: Psychogramm eines Denkers* (Zurich: Rüffer & Rub, 2008).

14. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 1988; 2nd ed. 1992); *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

15. See GA 16: 372–94 and “The Rectorate: Facts and Thoughts,” *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (March 1985), 15–32.

16. Emmanuel Faye, “Der Nationalsozialismus in der Philosophie: Sein, Geschichtlichkeit, Technik und Vernichtung in Heideggers Werk,” in *Philosophie im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Hans Jörg Sandkühler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2009), 133–55.

17. On this topic, I have noticed that you challenge the translation of *Züchtung* by “selection.” The German word means both training and selection. It carries a strong connotation of constraint, as a result of which to translate it as “rearing” or “culture” amounts to watering it down. In French, the title of a chapter of *Will to Power* assembled from Nietzsche’s posthumous fragments, “*Zucht und Züchtung*” is normally

translated as “*dressage et selection*,” and “*rassische Züchtung*” in Heidegger’s *Nietzsche’s II* was translated in 1973 by Pierre Klossowski as “racial selection.”

18. Alexandre Franco de Sá, *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra* 14 (2005) : 419–25, http://www.martin-heidegger.net/Textos/RECENSAO_Faye.pdf.

19. Sonia Sikka, “Heidegger’s Ambiguous Nazism,” *Dialogue, Canadian Review of Philosophy* 47 (2008): 163–66.

20. Emmanuel Faye, “Pour un approfondissement des recherches sur le nazisme dans l’oeuvre de Heidegger,” *Dialogue, Canadian Review of Philosophy* 47 (2008): 167–79.

21. Frans van Peperstraten, “Der Nazismus-Vorwurf: Wo wird das Denken zur Ideologie ?” *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus, Interpretationen, Heidegger-Jahrbuch* 5, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2010), 294–97.

22. [This essay was published in the original exchange in *Philosophy Today*, but not included in this volume—Ed.]

23. Sidonie Kellerer, “Heideggers Maske: «Die Zeit des Weltbildes»—Metamorphose eines Textes,” *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 5 (Summer 2011): 109–20.

24. Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und an der Technik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1989).

25. For a more in-depth consideration of this point, I refer the reader to my developments in *Philosophie et perfection de l’homme: De la Renaissance à Descartes* (Paris: Vrin, 1998), 309–12.

26. See Martin Heidegger, *Les conférences de Cassel (1925): Précédées de la Correspondance Dilthey-Heidegger (1911)*, trans. Jean-Claude Gens (Paris: Vrin, 2003), 197–201.

27. Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Alcan, 1932), 338.

28. On this point, see the analyses of Jean-Paul Leroux, “Les cadavres, la technique et Heidegger,” *L’Enseignement philosophique* 54, no. 4 (March-April 2006): 21–33.

29. Martin Heidegger, “Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten,” *Der Spiegel* 30, no. 23 (May 31, 1976), 214.

30. Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: La introducción del nazismo en la filosofía*, 2nd ed., trans. Óscar M. Abadía (Madrid: Akal, 2018).

31. “Der Philosoph Heidegger in die NSDAP eingetreten,” *Der Alemanne, Kampfblatt der Nationalsozialisten Oberbadens* 3. Jahrgang, Folge 121 (May 3, 1933), 2.

32. A group of linguists and historians led by François Rastier (CNRS) and Peter Blumenthal (Köln) have taken these suggestions seriously enough to develop a vast Franco-German project of comparative studies of two computerized corpora: Hitler’s speeches and Heidegger’s writings. While this project unfortunately did not receive funding, the task remains for historians of Nazism will to identify the authors of the memoranda made available to the *Führer* for his speeches.

33. Emmanuel Faye, “Being, History, and Technology, and Extermination in the Work of Heidegger,” *The British Journal of Philosophy* 50, no. 1 (January 2012), 111–30.

34. Klostermann threatened to sue Grasset if my book were published *with* the translations (of Heidegger’s political writings). Nicole Parfait, “Entretien du 23 juin

2000,” in Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France, II: Entretien* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 265. Franco Volpi, “Goodbye, Heidegger! Mi Introducción Censurada a los *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” *Fenomenología y Hermenéutica*, Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Fenomenología y Hermenéutica, ed. S. Eyzaguirre (Santiago de Chile, 2008), 43–63.

35. On this score, it is important to add nuance to your statement according to which in France “the Jews of France were not saved from the vicious fury of the *Endlösung*.” It is true that, under the Vichy government, the French state took part in the deportation of Jews and that, under pressure from Pierre Laval, several thousand children were delivered into the hands of the Nazi occupier that did not require them, and who died in the German camps. That terrible responsibility of the Vichy authorities was unforgettably brought to light by Serge Klarsfeld. Nevertheless, the 75,000 French Jews who were exterminated constituted one-third of French Jewry. The remaining two-thirds were saved, often thanks to the succor and courage of the French population. That reality stands in contrast with the still more terrible fate of the Dutch Jews, for example.

36. Hassan Givsan, *Une histoire consternante; pourquoi des philosophes se laissent corrompre par le “cas Heidegger”?* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2011), translated from the German, preface by Emmanuel Faye.

37. It is important in this connection not to give in to a certain academic naivete, but rather to be conscious of the radical political translations to which Heidegger’s thought is susceptible. I recommend, after Franco Volpi, who succeeded so well in raising his level of awareness (see his lecture delivered in Santiago de Chile titled “Good-bye Heidegger”), the second book published by Victor Fariás in Italy, *L’eredita di Heidegger: nel neonazismo, nel fascismo, e nel fondamentalismo islamico*, trans. E. Castagna (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007) (Medusa, 2008) and prefaced by the French historian Édouard Husson. In it, Fariás retraces the history of Heidegger’s overwhelming reception among the neo-Nazis and neofascists, and among the fundamentalist Islamists. The United States is not immune to this problem, as may be seen for example in the way my book was received by an Internet publication of the extreme right: Michael O’Mara, “Heidegger ‘The Nazi,’” *North American New Right* (July 31, 2010), <https://www.counter-currents.com/2010/07/heidegger-the-nazi/>.

38. That virulence has often been noted. Henri Meschonnic, for example, in *Heidegger ou le national-essentialisme* (Paris: Éditions Laurence Teper, 2007), 155–56, made a list of the personal attacks to be found in a book by this little group, written in such an outrageous tone that Gallimard, after having had it printed, decided not to publish it. (Fayard then took it over, but in a somewhat toned-down version, and without the attempted defense of Jean Beaufret’s revisionist positions on the existence of the gas chambers.)

39. See Jean-Pierre Marchand, “Entretien d’Emmanuel Faye avec Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Pascal Ory, Jean-Edouard André et Bruno Tackels,” *Le phiblogZoph* (blog), *Le Monde*, January 18, 2006, http://skildy.blog.lemonde.fr/2006/01/18/2006_01_engt/.

40. Taylor Carman, “In and With: Flawed Efforts to Discredit Martin Heidegger’s Philosophy,” *TLS* (September 10, 2010), 26–27.

41. I will not expatiate on Heidegger's use of the words *Umwelt* and *Art*. To anyone who might continue to believe that the surrounding world according to Heidegger is an innocent concept, I would recommend the reading of Rothacker's *Geschichtsphilosophie*, so favorably received by Heidegger, in which the author associates Heidegger with the Nazi raciologist on the subject of the *Umwelt*; and I would particularly recommend the reading of the texts by Heidegger that I have presented to the public on the Semitic nomads and the German "space." For the connotations of the word *Art* in the context brought up by Carman, who does not hesitate in this connection to speak of the "perversity" of my interpretation, I refer the reader to the authoritative work of Norbert Kapferer, which I rely on and consider convincing: "Diese Art von Philosophiedozenten ist unser Ruin. Zwei Gutachten Martin Heideggers aus den Jahren 1929/1930," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, International Edition (August 8–9, 2001), 51–52.

42. I say his *supposed* dualism, because too many interpretations of Descartes misunderstand the fact that he conceives of man as "quelque chose d'un" (*unum quid*: something that is unitary) and considers that *union* to be a foundational notion.

43. "Wenn aber das schicksalhafte Dasein als In-der-Welt-sein wesenhaft im Mitsein mit Anderen existiert, ist sein Geschehen ein Mitgeschehen und bestimmt als *Geschick*. Damit bezeichnen wir das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes" (SZ, 384).

44. See Johannes Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) and Hassan Givsan, *Heidegger: Das Denken der Inhumanität* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998). The less extensively documented interpretation of §74 by Hermann Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 260–66, is also worthy of mention. Our discussion of the interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* was published in *Dialogue, Canadian Review of Philosophy* 47 (2008), 167–79.

45. The lecture has been published in French, Italian, English, and Persian. For the English, see E. Faye, trans. Alexis Watson and Richard J. Golsan, "Nazi Foundations in Heidegger's Work," *South Central Review* 23 (Spring 2006), 55–66.

46. F. van Peperstraten, "Der Nazismus-Vorwurf," 294.

47. With the exception of an expression lacking in the English translation: "the will to power," which Carman is right to restore.

Chapter 3

Wherewith to Draw Us to the Left and Right: On Reading Heidegger in the New Millennium

Matthew Sharpe

It is very easy, upon approved foundations, to build whatever we please; for, according to the law and ordering of this beginning, the other parts of the structure are easily carried on without any failure. By this way we find our reason well-grounded, and discourse at a venture; for our masters prepossess and gain beforehand as much room in our belief as is necessary towards concluding afterwards what they please, as geometricians do by their granted demands, the consent and approbation we allow them giving them wherewith to draw us to the right and left, and to whirl us about at their pleasure. Whatever springs from these presuppositions is our master and our God; he will take the level of his foundations so ample and so easy that by them he may mount us up to the clouds, if he so pleases.

Michel de Montaigne, "Apology of Raymond Sebond"¹

In one of the many remarkable features of his response to Emmanuel Faye's *Martin Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, Gregory Fried feels compelled to clarify his own "I am" (4).² He tells readers how he came to Heidegger, and how he has come to Faye. It is one more sign, if sign were needed, of the deeply political status of the debate concerning Heidegger's politics. To speak or write anything on this issue, as anyone who has done so knows, is to be positioned polemically in ways that differ greatly from intervening in most other academic debates. It is more like one is in the public arena. Criticism announces enmity, perhaps envy or *ressentiment*. If one evinces passion, one is "inquisitorial," "hysterical," or "zealous," as if passions were not inevitable when addressing the question of a continually influential philosophy's implication in a regime whose brutal crimes will remain a by-word for inhumanity so long as human memory survives. From

the other side, defenders of Heidegger are accused not simply of blind obedience to their philosophical master, but of harboring or abetting the extreme reactionary convictions of the “great thinker.” As readers will know, Fried’s response to Faye does what for most Heideggerians is the unthinkable: he concedes that “the *totality* of what you [Faye] assemble . . . is impossible to ignore: it conveys the portrait of a man entirely dedicated to the cause of Nazism, and not just in a fit of temporary madness or enthusiasm, but as an enduring mission” (2). The magnanimity of this gesture, and Fried’s willingness to prioritize “following the phenomena” over sectarian allegiance, can be gauged by considering its distance from the extraordinary accusations concerning Faye that the appearance of the books has provoked in Thomas Sheehan.³

The reader will permit me, then, to begin in a comparably apologetic mode as Fried does, on the basis of an “I am.” I have been approached as someone who will speak “against” Heidegger, in the “with or against Heidegger” alternative that is so often presented as inevitable in this area. With qualifications I will presently make clear, this opening positioning can stand. If to be “against” Heidegger is to agree with Faye, Bambach, Losurdo, Kellerer, Fritsche, Rastier, Pégny, and others that the lectures and seminars from 1933 to 1935 that have become publicly available since 1998 bespeak a deeply *philosophical* commitment to Nazism, inescapably close to the heart of Heidegger’s *Denken*, then I am “against” Heidegger. If to be “against” Heidegger is to contend that the *Black Notebooks* seem to strikingly confirm very many of Emmanuel Faye’s claims concerning the political dimensions of Heidegger’s philosophy, and raise deep questions about what, if any parts of that philosophy can be separated from this politics, then I am again “against,” not “for.”

It was not always so. Like nearly all readers of Heidegger educated before the turn of this century, at least outside of Germany, I had been taught Heidegger as an undergraduate in complete abstraction from his politics. My instructor, a woman of the deepest integrity and cosmopolitan liberality, frankly told students that she was not interested in examining political claims concerning Heidegger’s 1933–1934 *Dummheit* (as it was conceived as being, pre-Farías, and taking the thinker at his postwar word).⁴ We were taught Division 1 of *Sein und Zeit*, using predominantly French, British, and American secondaries as our guides, and then the essays of the *Basic Writings* in the advanced class. Thereby, although no one thought about this, we quietly skipped over nearly everything Heidegger said or wrote between 1932 and 1946. As today in nearly all Australasian universities (my own in 2015 became the exception), Victor Farías’s *Heidegger and Nazism*—despite all the international scandal it had caused by the late 1980s—was not even available as a library resource.

I remember telling a friend in the honors program in 1998 or 1999 who had announced his Wittgensteinian allegiances that, for my part, I was a “Heideggerian.” The following year, however, I undertook to examine the issues myself and acquired and read Hugo Ott’s *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*. Everything changed. The PhD project I had projected on “Ethics after Heidegger” I realized was profoundly naive and ill-conceived. By wayward paths, I found my way back in the following decade to classical and early modern thought.

It seemed as clear to me in 1998 as it remains to me today that the rhetoric and conceptual architecture of Heidegger’s political statements from the charged period of his activism between 1933 and 1935 bespeak the thoroughgoing imbrication of the man and the thinker, the politics and the thought. They announce the deep proximities between Heidegger’s philosophically revolutionary calls for a second “inception” of Western—or at least German—thought and contemporary National Socialist visions of the revitalized Germany’s salvific vocation to save Western modernity from its liberalism, socialism, and pervasive *Verjudung*.

Unlike the French post-structuralist responses to the publication of Heidegger’s Nazi-era political texts in the 1980s, I was also always deeply skeptical about claims that Heidegger’s later thought of Being—after a *Kehre* located somewhere between 1928 and 1945—could be insulated from implication in his political extremism. In the rector’s address, Heidegger’s association of a reborn German university wielding “spiritual leadership” in the new dispensation with his would-be recovery of pre-Socratic “Greek science” is manifest (GA 16: 107–17). It is this supposed “*Wissenschaft*” that issues the call from the first *Anfang* to which respond the thinker’s martial calls to resolute willing, *Kampfsgemeinschaft*, and standing firm in the storm of *Sein*.⁵ Heidegger’s idealized “Greeks” (if such a Platonic adjective could be correct) form the archaeological spring of the famous *Seinsgeschichte* whose other terms are the designated meanings of Being in the “Greek,” “Christian,” and “modern” epochs, leading eschatologically to what would become after 1937 the baleful “age of the world-picture,” with its consummate “nihilism” and *Seinsvergessenheit*.

The later work on technology, with its totalizing anti-modernism and epochal *Kulturpessimismus*, also seemed (and seems) to me clearly cognate with the forms of cultural pessimism that formed one wellspring of National Socialism’s appeal. Such radical cultural and political solutions as Hitler and his henchmen offered only make sense against the background of the most uncompromising diagnoses of the decrepitude of the present world, in the shadows cast by the First World War and Versailles. Yet, while such *Kulturpessimismus* surfaces in Division I of *Sein und Zeit* in the sections on *das Man*, and the Heidegger of 1927 already echoes, in ontological language,

well-worn, anti-liberal tropes concerning the depthless shallowness of urban, modern man and the “idle chatter” and rootless “curiosity” of the newspaper-reading “public;”⁶ and whereas in retrospect, it becomes possible to see, in Heidegger’s celebrated criticisms of Descartes and Kant in *Sein und Zeit* I, distant philosophical anticipations of the later, more radical denunciations of modern, technological “world reason” and *Technik*.⁷ It is only in the later works that Heidegger’s more direct and explicit criticisms emerge of “the modern age,” with its “distress in the absence of distress,” and the like.⁸ Clearly, the rhetoric present in *Sein und Zeit* II and “What is Metaphysics?” (1929) celebrating resolute decision and confronting death or “the nothing” plays a direct role in shaping Heidegger’s deliberative addresses in the years of the hoped-for *Kairos* of Germany and the West. But the decision as to *what* should be resolved for, and *who* the “metaphysical people”⁹ should heroize and follow, seemed clearly from the start to have been shaped by Heidegger’s unshakable hostility to the modern world and his assessment of the German *Sonderweg*. This is a hostility that after *Sein und Zeit* comes to be explicitly framed in the epic metanarrative of the “History of *Sein*” and its (self-) forgetting (see Heidegger as Historian of Philosophy below). It is a critical hostility that we see in the *Schwarze Hefte* tied intimately to the thinker’s philosophical rationalizations of his abiding anti-Semitism.¹⁰

Perhaps it was my exposure in history and social theory to other radical critics of modernity of the far Right which explains these responses to reading Ott—remembering that, at the time *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life* appeared, a good deal of the material published since, notably by Emmanuel Faye (2005/2009), had yet to appear. I realize from having periodically returned to this subject since then that not all students and scholars trained in philosophy respond similarly, even when they do brave Heidegger’s most militant lectures, seminars, and addresses. One still hears people holding to the idea, for instance, that the rectorship speech should be read as a declaration of the independence of the university from the vulgarities of the regime, rather than the bid for “spiritual leadership” the new rector-Führer at Freiburg opens by invoking as his subject.

Nevertheless, as Richard Bernstein has argued in an invaluable paper on the later material on technology, the question of Heidegger’s politics is not simply a philosophical question, although it most certainly is that too.¹¹ Critically understanding Heidegger’s politics calls for interdisciplinary approaches—like Faye’s, among others, who has taken up this challenge through his efforts to publish suppressed works by Heidegger and to clarify their meaning in the context of German cultural, political, and intellectual history. (Heidegger’s thought arguably militates against just such interdisciplinary approaches, as I will reflect in Parts III and IV below). To make informed judgments, scholars need to know the historical facts of what

Heidegger said and did, a need of course stymied by the continuing management of Heidegger's oeuvre by his will and estate and by the deceptions and half-truths of Heidegger's postwar "Facts and Thoughts."¹² To assess to what extent Heidegger's acts and philosophical thought were meaningfully "Nazi," students need to have an informed basis in historical and social-scientific literature examining the nature and features of that benighted regime. To know to what extent Heidegger's thought as a whole, or in its essential features, is meaningfully understood as a "Nazi philosophy"—either the introduction of Nazism into the philosophical tradition, as Faye charges, or the unrequited attempt at the introduction of a philosophy into Nazism, so as to secure the "inner truth and greatness of the movement"—we need to have read far more than Heidegger himself, and "Heidegger on Heidegger." We need also to have critical familiarity with the characteristic claims of other "conservative revolutionaries" like Jünger, Spengler, Sombart, Wundt, Krieck, Baeumler, Rosenberg, and Carl Schmitt, who in different ways contributed to undermining the democratic Weimar regime and legitimizing the Nazi *Machtergreifung*. Students need to be aware of the different veins of intellectual culture in Germany from which Nazism drew sustenance, as it sought to define itself and inspire the "fanaticism" of the German *Volk* before and after 1933—ideological lineages looking back to Fichte's famous "Address to the German Nation" of 1807, Hölderlin's idiosyncratic Hellenomania, philological researches alleging a deep linguistic (and soon enough racial) connection between the "Aryan" Greeks and Germans, passing via the *völkisch* thinkers of the nineteenth century into the "youth movement," "national bolshevism," and related strands of the "conservative revolution" against Weimar and the hated "ideas of 1789."¹³ To the extent that we do not make our students aware of these things, we remain like someone debating whether a color is red or brown who has no experience of either color. As Robert Bernasconi has commented,

There is a considerable "communication gap" between specialist studies on Nazi Germany and wider academic public when it comes to exploring the competing understandings of German identity within National Socialism. This communication gap is especially in evidence in the debate about Heidegger's Nazism. . . . If we are to understand what Heidegger was saying and why he was saying it in the way he was, then at the very least we need to have an understanding of the debates within the Nazi party so as to figure out his place within them.¹⁴

What follows then is not an argument "against" reading Heidegger. It is one more argument (standing on the shoulders of Faye and others) against reading him uncritically and unhistorically, absent confrontation with his Nazi-era writings, reflection upon his political and cultural contexts—the

materials found in the *Black Notebooks*, and on Heidegger's abiding relationship with the increasingly re-emergent traditions of European anti-liberal, anti-modernist, far Right thinking.¹⁵ In these ways, this chapter is closer to an argument "for" reading Heidegger—but all of Heidegger, and a Heidegger re-placed in the context of the times he continually tried to influence, for a brief time through direct action but much more lastingly (and successfully) through the missives of his thought which continue to provoke fiery debates, four decades after his death.

Heidegger's influence has been profound, mediated by two generations of students (Marcuse, Arendt, Jonas, Löwith, Gadamer, etc.) and admirers (Derrida, Lyotard, Nancy, Stiegler, etc.), albeit in many cases admirers and students who remained ignorant of the lectures and seminars of the 1930s, published only since the late 1990s—let alone the *Black Notebooks* and Heidegger's correspondence. No account of twentieth-century philosophy can be anything like complete without teaching Heidegger's earlier thought, which was long read (however erroneously, as Heidegger complains in the *Schwarze Hefte*) as "existentialist."¹⁶ No such account can equally neglect his later thought, which was read as opening paths toward "post-metaphysical" forms of thinking, and (again, arguably profoundly erroneously) as promising progressive forms of politics, as Marxism's legitimacy failed after 1950. Nevertheless, if we are to read Heidegger honoring the great thinker's own self-interpretation, we need to respect his unyielding loyalty to the "inner truth and greatness" of the "movement."¹⁷ This fidelity was reaffirmed in the last interview he gave¹⁸ and since 1998 by the publication of his Nazi-era works—despite his own failure to impress this Heideggerian truth and greatness upon Hitler and educate the "new nobility" he dreamed of during the *Kairos*¹⁹ and despite everything the world came to know after November 1938 and early 1945 about the actions of the *Bewegung*. Heidegger and his estate have availed themselves of the strategic value of a staged, selectively edited publications of his work since the war: a phenomenon whose "scandalous" character, relative to modern scholarly values, Theodore Kisiel has underlined.²⁰ Such a publication regime arguably kept Heidegger being read at all after 1945, in contrast to what the immediate postwar appearance of the 1933–1935 lectures and seminars would have made of his name.²¹ But that regime has encouraged existentialist, liberal, theological, or ecological understandings of his work which the *Black Notebooks* call into question. By including the political speeches and militant 1933–1935 lectures in his *Gesamtausgabe* since 1998 (and of course now by publishing his notebooks), Heidegger has issued a challenge to the philosophical community to account for this material too as an unretracted key turn of his pathways. By including the *Black Notebooks* as the capstone of the *Gesamtausgabe*, he has challenged scholars to reread the oeuvre in the grim backlight they cast—and the retrospective havoc they do to long-standing apologetic claims that his

Nazism was somehow ungrounded in his thought, or that the philosopher was never a Nazi or an anti-Semite, although he remained an NSDAP member until the zero hour.²²

One final qualification heads the three analyses which follow. I have from time to time already here talked of what “we” should do. The pronoun respects a genteel academic convention. But no one with any experience of the philosophical community can have any illusions that all of its members will agree on any given subject, let alone one as divisive as Heidegger’s politics and its place in his thought. Given Heidegger’s profound influence on several generations of scholars, his philosophy will continue to be taught and studied in some parts of academe as it was studied before 1998 or 2014, at least for a time. On the other side, many philosophers—and not simply Anglophone analytics—have long ago resolved not to read Heidegger at all, seeing in him an obscurantist, an irrationalist, a “malign master,” a monster.²³ Nothing any one chapter can achieve will change these perspectives.

The live stake in critically rethinking Heidegger in the light of everything we know in 2018 is then less about changing what established Heideggerian friends and foes will continue to argue, given the hermeneutic devotion to his oeuvre many of the former have built entire careers around. The debate is about how Heidegger should be conceived and taught to the next generation of students and scholars whose minds and careers are yet to be made up, given what we—as against previous postwar generations—know of the complete works. It is primarily with that “futural” aim and audience in view that the following critical considerations are tendered:

- the first, concerning claims that Heidegger, after resigning the rectorship then after the war, can plausibly be thought of as an “anti-Nazi” thinker (Part II);
- the second, concerning the claims Heidegger’s mature thinking makes about the history of Western philosophy and what the uncritical acceptance of this metanarrative serves to omit, distort, or prejudice students against (Part III);
- and the third, too briefly, on Heidegger’s persona as a philosopher, given the continuing anxieties academic philosophers face about our place in the “contest of the faculties,” and the democratization and technicization of education (Part IV).

AGAINST HEIDEGGER’S “ANTI-NAZISM”

“Another line [of proof] is to apply to the other speaker what he has said against yourself. It is an excellent turn to give to a debate,” Aristotle advises

in the *Rhetoric* (II.23.6).²⁴ Just so, the advertising description of the collection of Heideggerian essays gathered under the direction of Francois Fédier in 2007, *Heidegger à plus forte raison* (*Heidegger, Even More So*) culminates in what has become a classic *topos* amongst many of Heidegger's admirers. Despite the supposedly unconscionable calumnies of an Emmanuel Faye (which, we are told, would deserve "no other response than silence if the work in question, through a carefully orchestrated campaign, had not been praised by the mainstream media as serious and objective"), readers are advised that Heidegger's thinking, far from being essentially proximate to that of Nazism: "whatever his detractors claim to this day, is probably one of the few that can allow us to confront a nihilism whose upsurge [*déferlement*] is far from having ended with the collapse of Nazism in 1945."²⁵

Nearly every word of this artful passage would reward analysis, not least for the quiet implication that the "nihilism" whose upsurge readers might have associated with Nazism alone was in fact shared, just as the philosopher teaches, by the regimes that opposed it unto death.²⁶ Important here is only how this text illustrates the key, continuing defense in the "hermeneutics of innocence" many Heideggerians maintain,²⁷ despite the revelations of his "Being-historical" anti-Semitism in the *Black Notebooks* in the 100th anniversary of the Great War, "when so much began that has hardly now left off beginning."²⁸ This defense involves the idea, already floated in 1980s post-structuralist responses to Fariás, that the thought of the earlier Heidegger (he of *Sein und Zeit*) can be seen as implicated in his extremist politics. His later "thought of Being"—by overcoming the alleged residual "humanism" and "metaphysics" of the pre-*Kehre* work—placed him at a real, potent distance from National Socialism. After the war, indeed, this later Heidegger conceives a profound, maybe the *only* profound critique of Nazism. We need only accede to the idea that Nazism can best be described as a "humanism."²⁹ Its evils can best be ascribed to its accession to modern, post-Cartesian forms of technical rationality—the kinds of administrative rationality required to both mechanize agriculture and manufacture corpses at Majdenek and the other *Vernichtungslager*, as the philosopher daringly pronounced to a Bre-men audience as early as 1949.³⁰

Let us then critically assess, one by one, the historical and philosophical bases upon which these apologetic arguments rest. Contra post-structuralist representations, Heidegger was already, in his 1933 political speeches, proclaiming a "struggle against humanism,"³¹ long before the post-*Kehre* 1948 "Letter on Humanism." Baeumler and other Nazi intellectuals at the same time were also propounding forms of "anti-humanism" as key to understanding the significance of the Third Reich.³² "Humanism" remained for these Nazi intellectuals what it remains for non-Heideggerian historians of ideas to this day: an intellectual movement or family of movements looking back

principally to the Roman adoption of Greek philosophy and culture, passing via the Renaissance educational programs (with their focus on ancient rhetorical, practical and poetic writings)³³ to the French Enlightenment's renovation of Roman ideals of *humanitas* and *civilitas*; ideals imported into German education by men like von Humboldt, whose conception of the university was one target of Heidegger's *Rectoratsrede*.³⁴

To the extent that the universalism of Roman Law and the democratic component of the Roman republican tradition that culminated in Cicero were celebrated by the French revolutionaries, the Nazi's counterposing of the "ideas of 1914" against the "ideas of 1789" mark it off as a profoundly anti-humanistic and anti-Enlightenment political movement—as well as the most concerted effort yet to overcome the legacy of "Jewish Christianity."³⁵ In 1939, as the tanks and Stukas brought the new dispensation to Poland, the Nazi ideological machine opened a second front against the liberal nations' criticisms of German bellicosity by "orchestrating an ideological campaign against 'humanism.'" This campaign, after Paris fell, would issue in new "black lists" of Jewish and Anglo-American texts.³⁶ Consider here only Heidegger's NSDAP comrade Baeumler's 1935 "Der Kampf um den Humanismus" to whose characteristic claims concerning the "Greeks" we will return to in the following section. They show the extent to which the postwar Heideggerian claim that "Nazism was a humanism" courts a bizarre, if not a cynical misrepresentation of cultural history, one that in fact reprises a Nazi theme that would have been quite familiar to its audience just after the war:

National Socialism has an immediate and direct relation to Greek civilization based on the idea of race. This relation is not mediated by classicism or historicism. . . . The anti-humanist movement is bringing this immediate relation to Greek civilization into the present. We have a tradition of relating to antiquity—but it is not the humanist one. It is the tradition of Winckelmann, Hölderlin, and Nietzsche.³⁷

Heidegger's famous 1953 interpolation to his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* class that he saw the "inner truth and greatness" of Nazism as lying in "the confrontation of modern man with technology" should also not be uncritically accepted, relative to the evidence of the lectures and seminars now available.³⁸ Not only is there a long-standing question as to whether this interpolation was present in the original 1935 course (it appears likely it was not). While the "mathematical," as what is preeminently teachable, has a key place in his Summer 1933 lecture course's reconstruction of "metaphysics," technology is not raised as subject of critique.³⁹ The "Essence of Truth" course of Winter 1933–1934 arraigns "technology" in a single sentence (aligned with Galileo's "*definite advance understanding* of what a being

should be” (GA 36/37: 162/127; emphasis added), which we will return to below) for blocking our relation to “nature” (GA 36/37: 160–64/125–28).⁴⁰ But again, this is not central to these lectures, as Heidegger’s famous retrospective comment would lead us to expect. The *Logic* class of Summer 1934, despite its extended ruminations on the German *Volk*, raises technology only twice, never in a developed manner. Similar observations can be made of the advanced seminars of the winters of 1933–1934 and 1934–1935: the importance Heidegger assigns to technology is only assigned retrospectively (GA 38: 87–88, 143–44/77, 119).

The lectures and seminars from this decisive time that Emmanuel Faye was the first to publicly consider, meanwhile, contain a good deal more content detailing Heidegger’s conception of Nazism’s “proper happening” at this time (GA 38: 72–74/63–65). These claims as such form more likely candidates explaining what the philosopher saw prospectively in Hitler’s *Gleichschaltung*, before any need to apologize for his political engagement. They include directly political, philosophically articulated claims about the alleged ontological grounds of *Führerprinzip* (GA 36/37: 89–95, 224–29), the Leaders’ *Gefolgschaft*, and the unconditional love and submission the *Volk* owe to Hitler,⁴¹ the state as “the *Sein* of the *Volk*”⁴² conceived less biologically than on the basis of resolute, extra-moral self-assertion,⁴³ and the suprarational relation the German *Volk* (in contrast to “Slavs” and “Semitic nomads”) have to their *Heimat*.⁴⁴ The Winter 1933–1934 lecture course on “The Essence of Truth” included the already infamous passages that Faye, Rastier, and Fried, among others, have expressed dismay about:⁴⁵ concerning Truth as *Kampf*, based on what a Heideggerian letter to Schmitt describes as a long-prepared reading of Heraclitus 53 that ontologically prescribes the *Volk*’s seeking out, even deliberately *creating* and then aiming to completely annihilate the inner enemy of the *Volk* (in a matter of complete *Vernichtung*, a word that serves as a terrible omen of the *Vernichtungslager*, the extermination camps).⁴⁶

The larger Heideggerian idea at issue here, meanwhile, that Nazism was simply “pro-technological” merits as critical an assessment as the claim that the regime’s attitude to technology alone could allow us to adequately comprehend or oppose Nazism. Other regimes that fought mortally against Nazism also utilized advanced technologies. They never submitted to its species of virulent extremism and anti-Semitic genocide, whatever elements of racism they certainly harbored. The only way to credit Heidegger’s claim at all is accordingly to relativize all mortal, political, and ideological distinctions between Bolshevism, Nazism, and liberal democracy, as we know Heidegger did sometime between 1936 and 1939. In doing so, our thought moves into inevitable proximity to Heidegger’s kinds of Olympian or rather Titanic claims⁴⁷ that the war “decided nothing.”⁴⁸ These are statements whose wisdom or residual humanism should be measured against the facts that the

Russian victory on the Eastern Front ended the Shoah and the Allied victory on two fronts put an end to what Heidegger at one point seems to acknowledge as Hitler's "planetary criminality."⁴⁹

The regime of *Blut und Boden* always contained elements in its makeup that aligned modern industrialization, technological development, urbanization, and the *Asphaltmenschen* with the hated "civilizational" ideas of 1789, and beneath it the *Verjudung* of the modern world.⁵⁰ Such neo-pagan luddism was clearly inconsistent with the capacity to govern and rearm a complex modern nation of 80 million souls. Darre's "green wing" within Nazism was increasingly overridden after 1934. Yet its "heroic pauperism" played a vital ideological role in attracting intellectuals and others to the *Bewegung* before 1933,⁵¹ and formed one lasting, competing stream within Nazi ideology.⁵² As Alfred Rosenberg, often contrasted to Heidegger as a genuine Nazi intellectual, lamented in his *The Myth of the 20th Century*,

Today we see the steady stream from the countryside to the city, deadly for the *Volk*. The cities swell ever larger, unnerving the *Volk* and destroying the threads which bind humanity to nature; they attract adventurers and profiteers of all colours, thereby fostering racial chaos.⁵³

Heidegger, then, was far from alone among Nazis in heroizing the indigenous peasant, their boots black with the soil, and in hymning a primordial connection of the *Volk* (excepting the "massiveness" of the urbanized masses⁵⁴) with the earth or soil of the *Vaterland*. Thus Herbert Marcuse, in a contemporary attempt to comprehend Nazi ideologies which contains perhaps the first criticism of Heidegger's Nazism, comments:

Decisive here is that the irrational givens ("nature," "blood and soil," "folkhood," "existential facts," "totality" and so forth) are placed prior to the autonomy of reason [in the totalitarian struggle against liberalism]. . . . [This] leads to a reinterpretation of the irrational pregivens as *normative* ones. . . . In the contemporary theory of society, playing up natural-organic facts against "rootless" reason means justifying by irrational powers a society that can no longer be rationally justified, and submerging in the hidden darkness of "blood" or the "soul" contradictions recognised by the light of conceptual knowledge. . . . What it offers as an alternative to materialism is a heroic pauperism: an ethical transfiguration of poverty, sacrifice, and service.⁵⁵

We turn then to the argument, still reprised today, that says that Heidegger, as early as his resignation from the rectorship of Freiburg (April 1934), became a profound critic of the regime. Again, the publication of the 1933–1935 lectures since 1998 casts serious doubt on the idea that Heidegger was a virtual *résistant* within Nazi Germany. The remarkable *Logic* lectures of

Summer 1934, delivered after resigning the rectorship, still rapidly devolve the question of logic, by way of language and the human being, into political considerations concerning “the *Volk*” and who this decisional “we” could be. The same lectures very soon open onto Heidegger’s shaming (accompanied by students’ boot-stomping) of a student who, by joining the SA, shirks his “knowledge service” and another who uses his attendance at university to shirk his duties with the SA.⁵⁶ The new rector Eduard Kern, meanwhile, is criticized by the philosopher for parading around in an SA uniform with his mind “closed . . . to the proper happening” for which the previous incumbent had fought and failed.⁵⁷ These, like many of Heidegger’s criticisms of the ideas of other NSDAP intellectuals’ alternative conceptions of the movement, are the gripes of a misunderstood activist in competition with others for influence within the regime. They are not calls to arms of a dissident against it.⁵⁸

Before uncritically repeating the standard assessments of Heidegger’s criticism of really existing National Socialism in the difficult years between 1935 and 1945 more widely, we must consider how uncommon or common Heidegger’s trajectory as a National Socialist intellectual was. If he was really the dissident he is presented to us as being, this trajectory should break with, not mirror, that of most other Nazi thinkers who tried to exert influence under Hitler and Mussolini. George Mosse considers cases like Ernst Jünger, Ezra Pound, Gottfried Benn, and Arnolt Bronnen in his “Fascism and the Intellectuals.” What this study shows is that Heidegger’s initial excitement and naive vision of the NSDAP as promising a total spiritual *palingenesis*, his contribution to legitimizing its ascent by undermining Weimar parliamentarism, then his disillusionment with what by 1936 he was decrying as its “bourgeois” features, all trace out the mold of the fascist mandarins.⁵⁹ They do not break it:

In all of this, it is important to keep the chronological factor in mind. . . . The intellectuals were attracted to a fascism which seemed open-ended and whose ideology, with its organic framework, gave it a “superb openness to artistic creativity.” . . . [A]n Expressionist writer like Arnolt Bronnen . . . greatly admired a faction of the SA . . . for wanting a revolution, though this longing was little more than a desire to release a pent-up dynamic. Bronnen lost his innocence soon after Hitler attained power. His reaction to this disillusionment was typical of that of many other intellectuals who had joined the Nazis for similar reasons: half-hearted gestures, pathetic in their futility against “revolution betrayed.” . . . There was no real protest against the movement in power in favour of the “true movement” as it had existed earlier. . . . [T]he cultural ideals for which these intellectuals stood were compromised by reality. . . . Fascists came to believe theirs was a spiritual revolution, which through a new type of man would renew the nation and the world: in reality, this revolution became enmeshed in the very middle-class values it was supposed to fight.⁶⁰

During the period of the Nietzsche lectures, between 1936 and the early 1940s, Heidegger changed his estimation of Nietzsche in ways that attest that by around the outbreak of the Second World War, he came to see actually existing Nazism as increasingly falling prey to, not resisting the nihilism of the age of the *Weltbild*.⁶¹ But to weigh the significance of this fact, we should consider what this criticism of the movement left untouched—as well as the eschatological framing of this “critique,” which nevertheless depicted Nazism as inevitable, beyond moral criticism,⁶² in order for the future second *Anfang* to arrive. Despite this critique of Hitler and the movement, Heidegger never retracted his specific ontologico-political teachings of the *Kairos*—on the *Führerprinzip*, the need for roots, the spiritual uniqueness of the Germans, unconditional obedience of a *Gefolgschaft* to a leader untrammied by positive legality, the ontological imperative of *Kampf*.⁶³ He never ceded during the NSDAP years or afterward his deep contempt for modern urban life: an anti-liberal, anti-democratic elitism whose other pole was his claim concerning the rare ones (*jene wenigen Einzelnen*), privileged by *Sein*: the poet, philosopher, and statesman.⁶⁴ Heidegger never yielded ground before 1945 on the eschatological rhetoric of distress, extremity, danger, and the need to overcome “the most profound essence of ‘liberalism’” that led him into Hitler’s *Gefolgschaft* after 1930.⁶⁵ He did not cede on his identification, shared by Nazi ideologues, of “liberalism” with Marxism, despite their mortal enmity. As Tertulian has noted, the *Beiträge*-era texts exhibit a heightening “fury against Christianity,” associate with its Judaic, Old Testament roots, the Nietzschean slave revolt in morals, and (as such) Bolshevism.⁶⁶

The *Beiträge*’s “unequivocal renunciation of the embarrassing implications of 1933,” in one apologist’s assessment,⁶⁷ is also nevertheless replete with ruminations on “The Decision”—according to the post-structuralists, a “subjectivist” category supposedly left behind by the *Kehre*. Heidegger expresses a growing anxiety about “the destruction of the possibilities for decision by the irresistible course of the uprooting [*Entwurfung*] that threatens us.”⁶⁸ The inner truth and greatness of the movement, in the philosopher’s estimation, has been betrayed by ontic attempts to understand the *Volk*, the triumph of “modern” will to power, and the actually existing Nazis’ attempts to pursue the regime’s anti-Semitic redemption of the West from *Bodenlosigkeit* without the aid of his “essential thinking.”⁶⁹ Yet the overlooked philosopher can still produce unchecked, essentialist assertions about Germany’s “metaphysical” singularity and raise paeans to “the new German will.” Even after Stalingrad, Heidegger remained committed, far-sighted, and unrepentant enough to closely echo what he had opened by claiming to his Freiburg cohort in Summer 1933:

The planet is in flames: the essence of humanity is out of joint. World historical thinking can only come from the Germans—provided they can find and

preserve what is “German.” . . . No matter how the external destiny of the West is configured, the greatest and most authentic test facing the Germans still lies ahead . . . to see whether they, the Germans, are at one with the truth of *Seyn* and whether, beyond the willingness to die, they are strong enough to rescue what is originary, in all its unpretentiousness, against the petty-mindedness of the modern world.⁷⁰

We close this section by further contesting the counterintuitive claim made by Fédier and others that the postwar Heidegger is someone whom we should look to so as to combat the nihilistic forces which Nazism set loose upon the world, in contrast to pre- and postwar Marxist, social democratic, republican, and liberal critics of National Socialism. Again, the most elementary social-scientific consideration of the subject requires comparing Heidegger’s well-known postwar stances against the other leading Nazi intellectuals who survived the catastrophe. If Heidegger truly breaks with Nazism, his thought should break with that of other intellectual fellow travelers. The alternative is to suppose, *per absurdum*, that this cohort both (a) all became anti-Nazis after 1945, and (b) like Heidegger, could only provide compelling grounds for criticizing the regime they had each to different degrees abetted.

It would be historically and politically highly naive to suppose that pro-Nazi intellectuals could continue to speak and advocate after 1945 in the manner they had done during the Third Reich. Many of them, including Heidegger, were subject to denazification and differing degrees of direct censorship. Whether it is extreme Right journalists like Hans Zehrer or thinkers like Ernst Jünger and Carl Schmitt, what historical studies of these figures such as those by Lepenies, Olick, Morat, and Payk in fact reveal is Heidegger’s profound continuity, not repentant break with this group in the German postwar dispensation.⁷¹ Heidegger’s infamous comparison of Jewish Nazi-era with German postwar suffering in his 1948 letter to Marcuse, echoing ideas we now see confirmed by his *Black Notebooks*;⁷² his distancing of himself from Hitler and “those people”; his holding to a betrayed greatness in Nazism (rather than ceding a salvific sense of German uniqueness); and the cultivation of esoteric modes of communication to (in Heidegger’s words to Jünger) “not sacrifice that which remains to us merely to satisfy a persistent—but now craftier—thirst for revenge; . . . [but to] remain unassailable within the sphere of the authentic”—in all of these ways, Heidegger’s postwar denunciations of modernity, now including failed Nazism, illustrate that “recalcitrance of shame” that Olick analyses in these figures, amid “the agonies of German defeat.”⁷³

Above all, there is the radicalization of the *Kulturpessimismus* that had attracted these figures in the 1930s to Hitler as potential messianic savior. But now these melancholic narratives are reframed. After the zero hour, they

become a means of personal and national exculpation for the unprecedented crimes of the regime these thinkers had helped to win power before 1933 and falteringly supported until 1945:⁷⁴

As observed above, this idea—or motif [of the total critique of modernity]—had its origins in the turbulent years of 1918–19 and was frequently employed in the late 1920s and early 1930s to denounce the democratic foundations of the Weimar Republic. In the post-war years, this notion could easily be reactivated. However, it was invoked less to come to grips with the depressing reality of destruction, ruins, and million-fold death and more to obscure German responsibility for National Socialism. By extending their motif of crisis to engulf all of modern humanity, German conservative intellectuals concentrated on misfortunes and tribulations of society since the French Revolution that were only epitomized by but far from unique to National Socialism.⁷⁵

The motivation for such an ex-post facto rationalization by Right-wing intellectuals after Hitler's downfall, with its obliteration of all ethical responsibility for the regime's ascent and crimes—one that echoes defendant after defendant at Nuremberg—is readily explicable.⁷⁶ Heidegger's remarkable achievement, as well as his estate's now long after his death, has been to proselytize this metapolitical relativization of the political distinctions among Bolshevism, Nazism, and liberal democratic regimes after 1947⁷⁷—starting in the nations whose vast sacrifices had been necessary to cast down the behemoth.

HEIDEGGER AS HISTORIAN OF PHILOSOPHY: WHAT IS ANTI-HUMANISM?

We come then to the “History of *Sein*” that Heidegger's thought increasingly turns upon after 1936. We do not wish here to ascend all the rungs of its eschatological epic toward today's abyssal nihilism, in which those nameless Gods who alone might save us have fled, and essential thinking by Heideggerians alone can prepare their return. The *Seinsgeschichte* has by now formed the object of many critical and scholarly studies, upon several of which I shall be drawing. As in the preceding section, my aim is to add something new to existing contributions in this well-trodden field, deferring where warranted to the authority of others.

As Reiner Schürmann has reflected, the “thought” the postwar Heidegger maintains that the modern world does not undertake is increasingly a recollection of the “History of Being.”⁷⁸ In this ontological history, Heidegger does not engage with previous thinkers on their own terms with a view to disputing this or that construction or proposition: “All refutation in the realm

of essential thinking is foolish. Strife among thinkers is the ‘lover’s strife’ concerning the things themselves.”⁷⁹ Like Hegel and others, Heidegger aims at understanding those thinkers of the past better than they understood themselves. This involves uncovering the deepest presuppositions of their thinking: “words around which a philosopher’s thought appears to gather itself.”⁸⁰ Each of these key words, for Heidegger, stands as the thinker’s answer to the question “that has always been asked and is still being asked today: what is a being?”⁸¹—words like “*Physis, Logos, Hen, Idea, Energeia*, substantiality, subjectivity, objectivity, Will, Will to Power.”⁸² Despite all the differences between thinkers from Plato to Nietzsche, or even “Anaximander to Nietzsche” in some formulations,⁸³ Heidegger lays claim to disclosing the “unthought unity” of Western philosophy as “metaphysics,” and also as “ontotheology.” For each of these key ontological words names some “all-highest,” most present being, like the medieval *Theos*.⁸⁴ As such, each metaphysical philosophy between Heraclitus and Heidegger forgets Being (Sein) as the nonsubstantial, irreducibly temporal opening, or *Ereignis* that makes possible the meaningful intelligibility of the world to human-beings as *Daseine* or, in the later work, to particular “epochs.”⁸⁵

We note that Heidegger never calls into question that the key “decisions” shaping the history of the West, up to and including the events he was living through, transpire at the level of its philosophies. So many tectonic plates rumbling away beneath the ontic earth, it is the great philosophers’ successive ontotheological (mis)conceptions of Being that shake and shape the worlds of men. Philosophical thought, in this way, through which Being itself lays out the *archai* (principles, origins, and directive authorities⁸⁶) of different understanding of *Sein*, is the true switchman of history. It fathoms forth from its “great thinkers” successive “Greek,” “Christian,” then “modern” (“nihilistic”) epochs as so many expressive totalities: “As long as a principle holds sway, it affects the assemblies of the many as it affects intimate reveries, the deeds and feats of the mighty, as well as the voice of God and the voice of the people.”⁸⁷

Schürmann again seems right, as intimated in Part II, when he asserts contra Derrida and others that Heidegger’s thought is profoundly anti-humanistic from its beginnings.⁸⁸ The *humanitas* of *Dasein* from the beginning (if such a metaphysically loaded word can serve) resides in its openness to Being, into which we are thrown as “Being-the-basis of a nullity.”⁸⁹ After 1930, Heidegger’s emphasis increasingly falls on Being and its “mittences” or “sendings” of the different epochs in which people are fated to see, experience, and live their lives. What Schürmann misses, and here he is far from alone, is the historical politics of this anti-humanistic History of Being and its genesis.

The politics, as Heidegger might agree, is manifest in who and what is included or silently passed over in the *Seinsgeschichte*. In a Heideggerian

blog community in 2003, someone made bold to ask: What, if anything, does Heidegger say about Hellenistic philosophies? The answer, correctly, comes in GA 22, whose second part addresses “The most important Greek thinkers: Their questions and answers.” Here, Heidegger begins with Thales and ends with Aristotle. Like many of his Nazi-era contemporaries in Germany, Heidegger never addresses the Stoics, Epicureans, or skeptics at any length: thinkers who belong to what the *Black Notebooks* call, with depressing predictability, the “Hellenistic-Jewish ‘world.’”⁹⁰ More pointedly, he excludes any consideration of Roman thought. As is well known, the German thinker claims that the translation of Greek philosophical language into Latin was a decisive event in covering-over and forgetting the first *Anfang* of Western thought that Germanophone thought alone might recover.

As we will see momentarily, the historian or scholar of modern philosophy could address the same kind of question the blogger did concerning the Hellenistics about any British thinkers in Heidegger’s thought, excepting some considerations on Isaac Newton and the mathematization of nature.⁹¹ She could ask with similar justice about French thinkers’ absences from the history of Sein, outside of René Descartes, who from Heidegger’s early works forward is arraigned as the founding thinker of the modern epoch: a philosopher whose *cogito ergo sum* fatefully opened the West’s subjectivizing path toward the (mis)conceptions of Being as objectivity, value, will to power, and finally will to will or the principle of race.

It is probably a Greek proverb that anyone who casts a net so wide must miss catching many fish. Certainly, the attempt to align epochs with single, determinative philosophies, and then to select single philosophies from several of the most vibrant periods of Western intellectual history to stand for them as a whole, is highly contentious: like the old imperial Atlases which colored entire continents yellow, red, or pink. It could satisfy few intellectual historians, social historians, theorists of culture, historians *simpliciter*. Any student whom a teacher encouraged to take its striking claims about “the Greeks” *simpliciter* or “the Christian epoch” *simpliciter* to a journal in the history of ideas, under their own name, would soon find themselves rudely chastened.

Heidegger’s kind of ontological history risks at every moment licensing the most unsustainable generalizations. It supposes, at its inception, a homogeneous “Greek” experience and way of thinking: and this of a profuse, dynamic, agonistic culture whose philosophical flourishing between 500 and 300 BCE produced six schools who competed even at the level of ontology of interest to Heidegger—leaving aside the extraordinary cacophony of poets, rhetors, sophists, historians, *poleis*, and political regimes. Faced with this complexity, Heidegger’s thinking retreats backward historically from the 1920s into the 1930s in search of a presupposed, uncontaminated “originary” Greek *archê*.

He goes backward from Aristotle in the mid-1920s to those pre-Socratics who by May 1933 share the billing with Plato's *Republic*, and who by 1943, after all is lost at Stalingrad, alone command the tragic stage alongside the honorary Greek, Hölderlin.⁹² We recall the thinker's extraordinary claims in 1947's "Letter on Humanism" about the classical and Hellenistic philosophers:

Along with "logic" and "physics," "ethics" appeared for the first time in the school of Plato. These disciplines arose at a time when thinking was becoming philosophy, philosophy *episteme* (science), and science itself a matter for schools and academic pursuits. In the course of a philosophy so understood, science waxed and thinking waned.⁹³

Secondly, the Heideggerian profile of which thinkers are included and excluded may or may not be "originary," as he claims. But it is scarcely original in interwar Germany after Nietzsche, Verdun, and Versailles, as Charles Bambach in particular has shown. The 1903 appearance of the Diels's *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* with German translations, the work of Germanist figures like von Hellingrath reclaiming Hölderlin from his regrettable celebrations of the French revolution, and the twenty-three Musarion Verlag volumes of Nietzsche's works of 1920, all contributed during the Weimar period to a pre-Socratic Renaissance and the lure of a new way of understanding both the beginning of Western history and the contemporary task for Germany—against Weimar, against the ideals of the French Revolution, against humanism.⁹⁴ Heidegger crested this wave: an "anti-classical construction of the archaic" by figures like Diels, Fränkel, and Reinhardt in which "Heraclitus and Nietzsche were looked upon as the two most important pre-Socratics," and Heraclitus a "German-speaking author."⁹⁵ As Bambach observes,

Anyone familiar with the historical particulars of Heidegger's corpus can detect in his systematic rejection of Roman *humanitas* and Latin humanism the marks of the self-same metaphysics of exclusion as in his National Socialist addresses. All of the tenets of the originary myth of *alêtheia* with its peremptory rejection of all things Roman (i.e., Christianity, Renaissance humanism, Italo-French-Gallic culture) are firmly in place.⁹⁶

Turning to these Romans, Heidegger's essentialist account of the supposed kinship between German and Greek language is far from being as quaint and harmless as we students used to laugh, thinking it a lovable token of the serene unworldliness of the "shepherd of Being." Latin was the language of European Christian and humanistic culture until the eighteenth century, when the French *lingua franca* followed suit in the Enlightenment. Heidegger's hostility to Latin—albeit carried out in his own idiosyncratic manner—echoes

a chorus of philologists' and philosophers' voices opposed to Latin-language teaching in the Third Reich as well as to "abstract" Roman law, as instruments of un-German, Enlightenment "civilization."⁹⁷ Walter Eberhardt, author of *National-Socialist Science*, opened hostilities in this *Kulturkampf* in 1935, defending the value of teaching German boys Greek history and language alone—not the Romans. Latin shaped the humanism of the Italian and French Renaissance, Eberhardt expostulated. It was, by contrast, "not by chance"⁹⁸ that the Germans had rediscovered the Greeks in the eighteenth century, just as the *lumières* were celebrating the Roman humanists. The rediscovered Greeks emerged as "an ally" at a fatefully decisive moment of *Kampf* against "French classicism (that is to say, in the last analysis, Roman and Latin)."⁹⁹ In the long history of the German *Volk*, the Germans had again and again been opposed by the Latin-speaking peoples: first, by the marauding Imperial Romans, then by the moralizing, tithe-taking Roman Church. Casting our eyes forward to the future of the *Volk*:

If we pass to the present, we can state that it is the same ideology of civilization which, sustained and enlarged by the arguments of the French Revolution, has been the banner under which, nineteen hundred years later, the World War has been led against us, the barbarians across the Rhine.¹⁰⁰

So we come here finally to some necessarily brief, indicative reflections on Heidegger's hypostatization of Descartes as the single French author in the *Seinsgeschichte* and the sole founder of the modern epoch, with anticipations (in some articulations) from Galileo. First, while Descartes's significance was unquestionably great, he was preceded by Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bruno, and Bacon: to the last of whom he owed debts, but to whose empiricism (like Galileo's, who "builds without foundation") Descartes remained concertedly opposed. Indeed, as intellectual historians of the period like Thomas Kuhn, Robert Westfall, H. Floris Cohen, or Stephen Gaukroger have wrestled with at length, with differing results, it is unsustainably reductive to assign the scientific revolution—let alone the modern age—to Cartesianism by itself.¹⁰¹ Positioned uneasily somewhere between the atomistic, mechanical philosophy of a Gassendi and the mathematization of physics looking back via Galileo to Brahe, Kepler, Copernicus, and ancient astronomy, Descartes's rationalist attempt to found a new physics on clear and distinct ideas was directly opposed by Baconian experimentalists. The latter looked upon Cartesianism as an unregenerate, ill-founded exercise in first philosophy of exactly the kind that the new forms of natural philosophy should bracket and overturn. Descartes's method of doubt, meanwhile, looked back to Michel de Montaigne and the new Pyrrhonists, who exerted an influence on Baconian empiricism.¹⁰² This empiricism, yoked to mathematical physics after

Newton's grand synthesis in the *Principia Mathematica* soon called into question Descartes's singular importance as the sole founder of modern European philosophy, in ways which Heidegger's representation of this "epochal" shift, wearing seven-league ontological boots, treads roughshod over.

The reader will indeed not be surprised to recall that the *philosophes* of the French eighteenth century, whom the philosopher of the German twentieth century—here again in attunement with the Nazis' aim to "efface 1789 from German history"¹⁰³—also consigns to telling silence, owed as much to thinkers like Montaigne, Bacon, Locke, and Newton than they did to Descartes. Voltaire reports in 1734 with approval how, "when it was found that this gentleman (M. Fontanelle) had compared Descartes to Sir Isaac, the whole Royal Society in London rose up in arms. . . . Very few people in England read Descartes, whose works indeed are now useless."¹⁰⁴ Voltaire's *Micromégas* of 1752 pokes fun at Descartes for his conception of innate ideas—just as Diderot's *Letters on the Blind for the Purposes of Those Who See* of 1749 had done, at greater length, three years earlier.¹⁰⁵ D'Alembert's famous "Preliminary Discourse" to the 1751 *Encyclopedia* alike reports that "such is the fortune of that great man today [Descartes] that after having had innumerable disciples, he is reduced to a handful of apologists."¹⁰⁶ According to this text, at the absolute heart of the Enlightenment, Descartes's sole value lies in that skepticism which preceded the rationalist refounding on the basis of the *Cogito*, not the system that came after it, built on putative clear and distinct ideas: "Descartes dared at least to show intelligent minds how to throw off the yoke of scholasticism, of opinion, of authority. . . . And by that revolt . . . he rendered a service to philosophy perhaps more difficult to perform than all those contributed thereafter by his illustrious successors."¹⁰⁷

The point here concerns how we should understand early modern thought, and all that Heidegger omits or ignores, more than it concerns Descartes. Heideggerians can reply that none of these ontical facts scratch the surface of that ontological profundity the thinker of *Sein* plumbed. These cosmopolitan French thinkers, celebrated by the shallow urban civilization of their day, inherited and perpetuated Cartesianism despite themselves—however much a Diderot rejected mechanism, explicitly, and innate ideas, everywhere; however much a Voltaire denied any nonconjectural, infallible knowledge of the soul, essences, matter, and almost anything beyond a natural morality and universal religion;¹⁰⁸ however much, before these eighteenth-century figures, a Francis Bacon in the first decades of the seventeenth century would have decried in horror Descartes's attempt to refound first philosophy from out of the "distorted mirror" of the human mind, undelivered of its innate idols; and however so much, before Bacon, Michel de Montaigne in the sixteenth century had declared that his world-founding modern subjectivity was a mass of unstable and unreliable contradictions, appealing instead to "experience"

as the basis for whatever limited knowledge might be available to creatures so evidently fallible as human beings.

As pedagogues teaching the history of our culture and discipline, one wonders at what point Heidegger's leveling-out of the history of ideas into successive periods governed by single thinkers' "conceptions of Being"—tellingly omitting those Hellenistic, Roman, Renaissance, and Enlightenment legacies he and the National Socialists reviled—ceases to illuminate and begins to blind our charges. At such an ontological altitude, our capacity to make distinctions, let alone see human faces, expires.¹⁰⁹ This narrativization confers a great, too great simplicity on the "history of metaphysics." At best, it allows our students—many of whom have not had the time to read even a tenth of it—to quickly attain a sense of mastery of "the Western tradition." At worst, they purchase the self-certainty involved in declaiming about "Western ontotheology" at the price of remaining preemptively closed to many of our heritage's pinnacles, complexities, debates, and riches.

As other critical readers of Heidegger have noted, there is thus a very great irony in the post-structuralist reception of Heidegger as a thinker of difference or "plurification."¹¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas's conception of his thought as a "temporalized *Ursprungsphilosophie*" is much closer to the mark.¹¹¹ The Heideggerian "Difference" is the single, all-governing ontological-ontic difference. This side of the divide, ontic differences are foreclosed or devalued as beneath the dignity of thought, even when those differences span entire philosophical schools, ideologies, and nations at war. Also foreclosed, even more pointedly in terms of our capacity to deeply understand and fairly teach modern thought, is the possibility of philosophical thinking responding transformatively to ontic experiences—by, for instance, self-consciously establishing methodological protocols to combat human beings' proven propensity to falsely generalize on too few or too striking cases—in a way that could lead to revisions of our deeper presuppositions. This is why Heidegger, in his accounts of the early moderns' overthrow of medieval metaphysics and peripatetic physics, can repeatedly dismiss any claims to the importance of the new experimental practices—and the revolutionary thought of the period concerning their need and cultivation. "What is the difference between modern natural science and that of antiquity? One may say that modern science introduced the experiment. But that is an error," Heidegger thus claims to his Freiburg cohort in Summer 1933.¹¹² And why is it an error? Because, prior to looking, Galileo had already *seen*, as it were: or framed what would become for Heidegger after 1938 the all-encompassing modern *Weltbild*:

Galileo, with the means of ancient physics, established a new fundamental position toward actuality; that, before all experiments and all mathematics, before all questions and determinations, terminations, he first laid down what should

belong to the essence of a nature, in that he approached it as the spatiotemporal totality of the motion of mass-points.¹¹³

Heidegger may deny the charge of “irrationalism” in “Letter on Humanism,” in the midst of a rhetorically powerful series of hypertrophies and their refutations.¹¹⁴ But it remains that, as later in his post-structuralist successors, there can for Heidegger’s thought never be any rational, evidentiary bases for the revision of a philosophy’s foundational presuppositions. Each philosophically circumscribed epoch even the apparently scientific one (whose physics Heidegger can as such continue to compare unfavorably to Heraclitus’) are equivalently, “an-archically” destined by Being.¹¹⁵ Each is sent by Being in a new E-vent (*Ereignis*) in a way which asks our assent or “releasement,” as against our critical understanding, a thought which Schürmann for instance can celebrate:

The principle of an epoch is a factual a priori, finite and of a non-human facticity. It exhibits the paradox of an “ontological fact.” What bequeaths the historical epochs and their principles, the “event,” is itself nothing, neither a human nor a divine subject, nor an available or analysable object. Presencing reserves itself.¹¹⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS: OF SCIENCE AND SAPIENTIA

Let me conclude with some thoughts concerning Heidegger and the persona and calling of the philosopher in the age of the sciences. The advent of the modern natural, then social sciences has usurped many of philosophy’s traditional roles and object domains, precipitating a series of “ends of philosophy” of which Heidegger’s is only one. Analytic philosophy, speaking broadly, largely accepts the epistemic authority of the sciences. Different strands restrict themselves to addressing the problems these sciences leave unresolved or examining the presuppositions of their practice. Continental philosophy, speaking equally broadly, has remained more critical of the sciences: in the work of critical theorists, asking about their social, political, economic, and cultural presuppositions and effects; in the phenomenological heritage inaugurated by Husserl, asking about their intentional, then existential presuppositions; and in the hermeneutic heritage of Gadamer, striving to demarcate interpretive versus explanatory modes of understanding.

Heidegger has been a central figure in these later, continental lineages of thought. We have seen in Part III how his understanding of the sciences, from their inception, reframes, and relativizes their epistemic claims. In the *Seinsgeschichte*, Heidegger positions the sciences as antecedents to *Technik* and *Gestell*. He promotes thereby in his followers the gravest critical doubts

about science's epistemic authority and its wider effects on Dasein, if not an active prejudice against them. The sciences crest a "thoughtlessness" that Heidegger can by 1947 trace back as far as Plato,¹¹⁷ which his thinking alone can combat. It is in this context that Heidegger's abiding opposition to the biological antisemitism of the National Socialist ethnocrats is to be understood. As for a figure like Wilhelm Wundt, it is the ironically "calculative" attempt to give scientific biological grounds to their antisemitism, not antisemitism per se that the thinker opposes in other Nazis.¹¹⁸ Consider the extent of the contrast between the *Rectoratsrede* Max Horkheimer gave at Frankfurt in 1930, which announces the attempt to bring together and orient the social sciences with philosophy's successor in critical theory;¹¹⁹ and Heidegger's *Rectoratsrede* at Freiburg in 1933 which issues a call to shatter existing disciplinary boundaries and understandings of intellectual freedom in a return to originary pre-Socratic *Wissenschaft*. This contrast well marks out the lineaments of Heidegger's project of ontologically undermining modern scientific culture and reestablishing philosophy's lost intellectual *Führung* within the university by claiming hieratic access to the recessive mysteries of *Sein*.

We have been critically examining some of the contestable terms and consequences of Heidegger's reframing of philosophy, as the eschatological "thought" of the groundless unfolding of the epochs of *Seyn*. Heidegger's inability ever to criticize Nazism morally—indeed, his denial in the war years of the efficacy of such criticism, given the global fatality of *Macht*¹²⁰—his ontological relativization of all political distinctions between Marxism and liberalism ("English Bolshevism"¹²¹), then after 1937 Nazism as well; his failure to express any sympathy with the victims of Nazism and glib declarations like that the Second World War,¹²² with its 40 million dead, "decided nothing;"¹²³ his unflinching faith, despite his own political failure and the atrocities the Germans committed under Nazism, in his own mission as the German thinker of *Seyn* and of the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism—all these things mark out a new intellectual persona in the history of Western ideas: that of a secularized prophesy insulated from the intramundane validity claims that the thinker duly impugns as "thoughtless." It is a persona that has not failed to produce many emulators since.

Sophia, a Heideggerian might remind us, has always appeared eccentric to the common run of human beings who can conceive and aspire only to *epistêmê* and *technê*. But *Sophia* or—let us use the Latin, after all—*Sapientia* also always contained for classical philosophical thought a specifically axiological dimension. This tied wisdom to the virtues, including the virtue of justice, as Cicero tellingly argues:

And so, if that virtue [justice] which centres in the safeguarding of human interests . . . were not to accompany the pursuit of knowledge, that knowledge would

seem isolated. . . . In the same way, courage, if unrestrained by the uniting bonds of society, would be but a sort of brutality and savagery.¹²⁴

Furthermore, in the Stoic and Ciceronian lineages significantly neglected by Heidegger, classical philosophy culminated in a rational cosmopolitanism whose humane credentials the barbarities of Nazism potently underscore and which, in this sense as in others, stands at the farthest pole from Heidegger's prophetic call to a singular, salvific German destiny. It is fitting therefore to give Cicero the last word:

[behold] the man . . . who maintains a benevolent intercourse with his friends, and under that endearing name includes the whole race of mankind, as being united together by one common nature; who preserves, in short, an unfeigned piety and reverence towards the gods, and exerts the utmost force of his rational powers to distinguish good from evil, just as we strain our eyes, in order to view a beautiful object with greater attention. When this man shall have surveyed the heavens, the earth, and the seas, studied the nature of all things . . . he shall look on himself as not confined within the walls of one city, or as the member of any particular community, but as a citizen of the world, considered as a single Commonwealth.¹²⁵

NOTES

1. *Works of Michel de Montaigne*, vol. 2, trans. W. Hazlitt, ed. O. W. Wight (New York: Sheldon and Co., 1862), 257.

2. I am indebted to Professor Fried's comments on the drafts of this piece, alongside William H. F. Altman, author of *Martin Heidegger and the First World War: Being and Time as Funeral Oration* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).

3. See Thomas Sheehan, "Emmanuel Faye: or The Introduction of Fraud into Philosophy?" *Philosophy Today* 59, no. 3 (Summer 2015), 367–400. Sheehan opens the article by conceding "Martin Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* (*Gesamtausgabe* 94–97, with more to come) confirm . . . that this 'greatest philosopher of the twentieth century' was an unabashed anti-Semite. He was also a strong supporter of Hitler and the Nazis from 1930 through at least 1934, and a convinced fascist long after he took distance from the party. If anything, the *Black Notebooks* reveal how Heidegger tried to launder his anti-Semitism through his idiosyncratic 'history of being,' his devolutionary narrative about Western civilization that ends by claiming that 'machination'—the terrible state of the world today—is amply instantiated in world Jewry." Having thereby conceded the bulk of what Faye had claimed, facing great polemical opposition, Sheehan all but accuses Faye of the titular "fraud" on the basis of a series of claims, mainly concerning *Being and Time*, thereby happily ignoring the vast weight of material that Faye was the first to access and bring to public attention, in particular concerning the decisive years of 1933–1936. For critical responses

to Sheehan's charges, see Gaëtan Pégny, "The Right of Reply to Professor Sheehan," *Philosophy Today* 60:2 (2016), 447–79; Johannes Fritsche, "The Affaire Sheehan / Birmingham: Fritsche's *Rülpser* on Heidegger's *Being and Time*," <https://yadi.sk/i/uP-HIioywc42s>; and my own "Of idols and tribes, forests and trees: Some considerations on Sheehan's extraordinary labelling of Emmanuel Faye a 'Fraud,'" https://www.academia.edu/18241579/Of_idols_and_tribes_forests_and_trees_Some_Considerations_on_Sheehans_extraordinary_labelling_of_Emmanuel_Faye_a_Fraud.

4. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Back to History: An Interview," in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. R. Wolin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 267.

5. Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University: Address, Delivered on the Solemn Assumption of the Rectorate of the University of Freiburg," trans. Kirsten Harries. *Review of Metaphysics* 38, no. 3 (1985), 478–80. See Matthew Sharpe, "Rhetorical Action in the *Rektorsrede*: Calling Heidegger's *Gefolgschaft*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 51, no. 2 (2018): 176–201.

6. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), sections 26–27, 34–34. On the ontological translation of many of the motifs of the "conservative revolution" that worked to undermine the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

7. *Being and Time*, sec. 19–21, sec. 43.

8. Nicolas Tertulian, "The History of Being and Political Revolution: Reflections on a Posthumous Work of Heidegger," in *The Heidegger Case: Philosophy and Politics*, ed. T. Rockmore and J. Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 216; cf. 210, 217. "World reason" appears in the rectorship address of my 1933 (Heidegger, "Self-Assertion," 475), and in Heidegger's viciously political "report" concerning the Jewish neo-Kantian Richard Höningswald one month later, reproduced in full at Faye, *Heidegger*, 37.

9. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Polt & G. Fried (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 41.

10. Peter Trawny, *Freedom to Fail: Heidegger's Anarchy*, trans. Ian Alexander Moore and Christopher Turner (London: Polity, 2015).

11. Richard Bernstein, "Heidegger's Silence? Ethos and Technology," *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 83–84.

12. See Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's 'Gesamtausgabe': An International Scandal of Scholarship," *Philosophy Today* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 3–15.

13. See as a beginning Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism and the Greeks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); George McCarthy, *Romancing Antiquity: German Critique of the Enlightenment from Weber to Habermas* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997); E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935); Dominic Losurdo, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War* (New York: Humanity Books 2001); Johann Chapoutot, *Le nazisme et antiquité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009); George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German*

Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich (New York: Howard Fertig, 1998); Roger Woods, *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Zeev Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, trans. David Maisel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972); *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969); Herbert Marcuse, “A Study on Authority,” *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, trans. Joris de Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

14. Robert Bernasconi, “Who Belongs? Heidegger’s Philosophy of the *Volk*, 1933–34,” in Martin Heidegger, *Nature, History, State: 1933–1934*, trans. and ed. R. Polt & G. Fried (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

15. See Luc Ferry & Alain Renaut, *Heidegger and Modernity*, trans. Franklin Philip (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 31–54.

16. For Heidegger’s own criticism of the anthropological reading of *Being and Time* after 1932, see Martin Heidegger, *Ponderings II–VI: Black Notebooks 1931–1938*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 357 (GA 94: 491–92). See also Gaëtan Pégny, “Beyond the Human: Heidegger’s Self-Interpretation of Being and Time in the *Black Notebooks*,” trans. M. Sharpe, *Critical Horizons* 19, no. 4 (2018), 292–311.

17. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 213.

18. Martin Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us” in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent Press, 1981), 45–68.

19. Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, 45.

20. See Kisiel, “Heidegger’s ‘Gesamtausgabe’: An International Scandal of Scholarship.”

21. According to the Inter-Allied Basic Handbook, the occupation guidebook, Heidegger was “a 100% Nazi”; Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter,’” 98.

22. See Emmanuel Faye, “Antisémitisme et extermination: Heidegger, L’Oeuvre intégrale et les Cahiers Noirs,” *Cités* 61, no. 1 (2015), 107–22.

23. Harry Redner, *Malign Masters: Gentile, Heidegger, Lukács, Wittgenstein. Philosophy and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997). The other possibility, attested to by the work of Alexandre Dugin in Russia, is that Heidegger will come to be embraced by readers on the Far Right exactly for his philosophical metapolitics, not despite it.

24. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Fairhope, AL: Mockingbird Classics, 2015), 116.

25. Translated by the author from “Description,” François Fédier, Heidegger, à plus forte raison, fayard, <http://www.fayard.fr/heidegger-plus-forte-raison-9782213632230>.

26. We note also the conspiratorial implications in “orchestrated campaign” and “mainstream media” which later commentators have echoed following the publication in and after 2014 of the anti-Semitic passages from the *Black Notebooks*. It is not the content that is conveyed in reports on Heidegger’s anti-Semitism but the medium that calls for thinking.

27. Losurdo, *Ideology of War*, 208.
28. Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, Alfred A. Knopf, 1924).
29. See Ferry and Renaut, *Heidegger and Modernity*, 31–54.
30. See Tom Rockmore, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 241–42, and François Rastier, “Heidegger aujourd’hui ou le Mouvement réaffirmé,” *Labyrinthe* 33, no. 2 (2009): 83–85.
31. GA 36/37: 147, cited at Emmanuel Faye, *Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, trans. M. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 102.
32. See Bambach, *Heidegger’s Roots*, 168–69, 202–203.
33. A signification Heidegger himself recognized in his “Letter on Humanism,” *Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1987). This meaning is superseded in the essay by Heidegger’s much broader, idiosyncratic resignification of “humanism” as any view in which “the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* is determined with regard to an already established interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of the world, that is, of beings as a whole” (201–202).
34. See Bambach, *Heidegger’s Roots*, 27–31.
35. See David B. Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).
36. Anson Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter on Humanism’ as Text and Event,” *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 107–08. As Rabinbach details, Krieck’s famous attacks on Heidegger in 1940 turned on his Hellenism, deemed troubling to the Nordacist ideologues within the movement, because it is (in their eyes) too close to classical humanism: “reading Krieck’s attack politically, Heidegger could be considered a protohumanist” Brachmann, speaking against a collection to be edited by Heidegger’s Italian student Ernesto Grassi (in which Heidegger was to submit his reading of Plato, equating humanism with classical metaphysics as the forebear of modern nihilism) spoke against humanism in the name of “the blood-determined spiritual inheritance of the Indogermanic peoples.” Rabinbach, 109–11.
37. Baeumler, at Bambach, *Heidegger’s Roots*, 208. See Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter on Humanism,’” 107 ff. on humanism as contested signifier in 1940–41 among Nazi ideologues concerned about humanist residua in the Italian fascists: “the humanists were beautiful speechifiers for a *Bildung* lacking in roots in the *Volk*” and so on.
38. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 213; Rockmore, *Heidegger and Nazism*, 239–40.
39. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy*, in *Being and Truth*, trans. Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), chapter 2, sections 8–12.
40. Only one other passage, in unread notes for this course (Appendix One, section 7), addresses this later Heideggerian preoccupation (GA 36/37: 270–71).
41. See Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, 48–49 and GA 36/37: 89–95. On the archaism *Gefolgschaft* as key Nazi signifier, see Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, trans. Martin Brady (New York: Continuum, 2010), 220–28.

42. Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, 41. See Matthew Sharpe, “The State as the Being of the *Volk*: state, Führer and ‘the political’ in Heidegger’s seminars during the Kairos,” in *Law and Philosophical Theory: Critical Intersections*, ed. Thanos Zartaloudis (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2019), 199–217.

43. Martin Heidegger, *On Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: The 1945–35 Seminar and Interpretive Essays*, trans. A. J. Mitchell, ed. P. Trawny, M. Schuback, M. Marder (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 152, 158, 178, 185; Heidegger, *Logic*, 81; Richard Polt, “Self-Assertion as Founding,” in Heidegger, *On Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, 67–82. Matthew Sharpe, “The State as the Being of the *Volk*,” in *Law and Philosophical Theory: Critical Intersections*, ed. T. Zartaloudis (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 199–217.

44. Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, 41–42, 55–56; see Faye, *Heidegger*, 207.

45. See François Rastier, *Naufrage d’un prophète* (Paris: Actus Philosophu, 2015); Faye, *Heidegger*, 167–70; Fried, “A Letter” (12–14).

46. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth*, section 3.

47. The Olympians, who succeeded and defeated the Titans, were gods of the Greek *poleis*, exemplifying human virtues and crafts.

48. Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 66–67.

49. See Ingo Farin, “The *Black Notebooks* in their Historical and Political Context,” in *Reading Heidegger’s Black Notebooks 1931–1941*, ed. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 304 on this passage in the *Black Notebooks* where, it must be noted, Hitler is not named as such a criminal, but these unnamed criminals are able to be numbered on one hand.

50. On *asphalt* as key Nazi signifier of rootless urbanity, see Klemperer, *Language of Third Reich*, 225–26.

51. On heroic pauperism and Nazi ideology, see Herbert Marcuse, “The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian State” in *Negations*, trans. J. Shapiro (London: Penguin, 1968).

52. Peter Staudenmaier, “Fascist Ecology: The ‘Green Wing’ of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents,” in *Ecofascism Revisited: Lessons from the German Experience*, ed. Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (Porsgrunn: New Compass Press, 2011), 13–42.

53. Rosenberg, cited at Staudenmaier, 28.

54. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, 111; 182.

55. Cf. Marcuse, “The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian State,” 16.

56. Heidegger, *Logic*, 44–45.

57. Heidegger, 64.

58. Cf. David Farrell Krell, “Review Articles: Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks*, 1931–1941,” *Research in Phenomenology* 45, no. 1 (2015), 129

59. “National Socialism is a barbaric principle that is its most essential and potential greatness. The danger is . . . that it will be attenuated to a predication of the true, the beautiful and the good—(as if during an evening of scholarly edification).” Heidegger, GA 95, 194.

60. George Mosse, "Fascism and the Intellectuals," *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), citations from 111–16.

61. See, for example, Michael Zimmermann, "Die Entwicklung von Heideggers Nietzsche-Interpretation," Volume II, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch* (Freiburg/München, Verlag Karl Albrecht, 2005), 97–116.

62. See Faye, *Heidegger*, 287 on Heidegger's conception of the "principle of race" as beyond good and evil, a fated necessity, with Heidegger's citations: and 287–94 more generally.

63. Linguist Victor Klemperer, in his classic study of Nazi language, claims that *Die Gefolgschaft* was indeed "the one word" from which "followed" all the rest of the Nazis' heroic sentimentalism and appeals to blind obedience: "It turned them [Nazi workers] into vassals, into weapon-bearing liegemen forced to keep faith with aristocratic, knightly masters. Was this just dressing up just a harmless game? Certainly not: it twisted a peaceful relationship into a belligerent one: it stifled criticism; it led directly to the cast of mind expressed in that sentence emblazoned on every banner: 'Führer, command and we will obey (*folgen*).'" Klemperer, *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, 244. Scholars have pointed to Heidegger's ambiguous calls for an "essential opposition" to the leaders in the student body in the rectorship address: seeing in this "essential opposition" a subversive moment, testimony to Heidegger's supposed wish for a politically independent University. In order to do so, they need to account for Heidegger immediately continuing that the students have "sought out" their leaders with "all faculties of will and thought, all strengths of the heart and all skills of the body, [ready to] be unfolded *through* battle [*Kampf*], heightened *in Kampf*, and preserved *as Kampf*," with a threefold repetition of the key National Socialist signifier. Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University: Address, Delivered on the Solemn Assumption of the Rectorate of the University of Freiburg," ed. Hermann Heidegger, trans. & ed. Kirsten Harries, *Review of Metaphysics* 38:3 (1985): 479; and Sharpe, "Rhetorical Action in the *Rektoratsrede*."

64. Tertulian, "The History of Being and Political Revolution," 221.

65. Tertulian, "The History of Being and Political Revolution," 216–17.

66. Tertulian, "The History of Being and Political Revolution," 218–19; see Losurdo, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War*, 126–30.

67. Tertulian, "The History of Being and Political Revolution," 220.

68. Tertulian, "History of Being," 220–21; Krell, "Review," 131–32.

69. Krell, "Review," Rabinbach, "Heidegger's 'Letter,'" 106–07.

70. Cited at Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 320. On the courses of this period, see Agnes Heller, "Parmenides and the Battle of Stalingrad," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19, no. 2–20, no. 1(1997): 247–62.

71. Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Daniel Morat, "No Inner Remigration: Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger, and the Early Federal Republic of Germany," *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012): 661–79; Jeffrey K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005),

297–320; Marcus M. Payk, “A Post-Liberal Order? Hans Zehrer and Conservative Consensus Building in 1950s West Germany,” *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012), 681–98; Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter.’”

72. See Faye, *Heidegger*, 302–03; cf. Rastier, “Heidegger Aujourd’hui,” 83–85; and on the passages in the *Black Notebooks* following the war on German and Jewish suffering, see Johannes Fritsche, “Heidegger on Machination, the Jewish Race, and the Holocaust,” *Critical Horizons* 19:4 (October 2018), 312333.

73. Heidegger to Jünger, at Morat, “No Inner Remigration,” 673.

74. Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter,’” 116–17.

75. Payk, “A Post-Liberal Order?” 691.

76. Rabinbach, “Heidegger’s ‘Letter,’” 103.

77. See Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007) on the “metapolitical” or cultural turn in neofascism after 1945; and on Heidegger’s relationship to the European New Right, see Matthew Feldman, “Between Geist and Zeitgeist: Martin Heidegger as Ideologue of ‘Metapolitical Fascism,’” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6:2 (2005): 175–98.

78. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

79. Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 239.

80. Robert Bernasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1985), 11.

81. Aristotle, at Thomas Sheehan, “Heidegger’s Topics: Excess, Recess, Access,” *Tijdschrift Voor Filosofie* (December 1979), 616.

82. Martin Heidegger, “The Ontotheological Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference*, trans. K. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 59.

83. Martin Heidegger, “The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics,” in *Philosophy in the 20th Century*, vol. 2, ed. W. Barrett & H. Aitken (New York: Random House, 1962), 210.

84. Heidegger, “Ontotheological Constitution,” 54, 63; “Way Back into the Ground,” 215–16.

85. As readers of this collection will know, Being makes possible our apprehension of beings, present in space and time. It withdraws or conceals itself behind what it thus makes possible. “Western metaphysics” thus forgets Being, in a forgetting which is itself essential to the “essence of Truth” as *alêtheia*, unconcealment, or after 1933, the *Kampf* between appearances and the concealed grounds of those appearances. Post-metaphysical thought reconstructs the stages in this forgetting, as the West spirals toward the consummate nihilism and Being-forgetfulness of the technological age. Here all beings, including humans, are enframed as standing reserve, present, and available for technological manipulation. “Everything functions” but nobody “thinks”—except Heidegger, an elite of “unique” poets, and Heidegger’s followers.

86. See Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 98–99; 97–105.

87. Schürmann, 40.

88. Schürmann, 44–62.

89. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, section 58, 330–33.

90. Krell, "Review," 132–33: In a discussion of the "truth of being," Heidegger writes: "This question alone [i.e., that of *die Wahrheit des Seyns*] overcomes the modern anthropological definition of the human being and with it all prior Christian, Hellenistic-Jewish and Socratic-Platonic anthropology" (GA 95: 322). Elsewhere he refers to the "Hellenistic-Jewish 'world'" (GA 95: 339), again without offering any sort of explanation. One has to wonder what these massive generalizations concerning the "Hellenistic-Jewish" anthropology or "world" might mean; compare Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis*, 115–16 on Wundt's Hellenistics, alien to the "Germanic" earlier Greeks, including Heraclitus 53. On Nazi depictions of the Hellenistic philosophies as "Jewish," in full accord with Heidegger's notebooks, see Chapoutot, *Nazisme et l'Antiquité*, 306–12.

91. For example, see Martin Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics" in *Basic Writings*, 271–305.

92. See Johannes Fritsche, "Heidegger in the *Kairos* of the Occident," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 21, no. 2 (1999), 3–19, and his "With Plato into the *Kairos* before the *Kehre*: On Heidegger's Different Interpretations of Plato," in *Heidegger and Plato: Toward Dialogue*, ed. Catelin Partenie and Tom Rockmore (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 140–77; Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 99–107, 159–67, 189–241.

93. Heidegger, "Letter," 232.

94. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 196–246.

95. Glenn Most, at Bambach, 224.

96. Bambach, 202.

97. See Johann Chapoutot, *La Révolution culturelle Nazie* (Paris: NRF Éditions Gallimard, 2017), 53–73: "Le dénatura-tion du droit nordique: droit germanique et réception du droit 'romain.' This opposition of German (concrete-originary-collective) and Roman or 'Jewish-Roman' (abstract-derivative-individualistic) was a common trope in Nazi jurisprudence, echoed in Carl Schmitt and others. See Lawrence Preuss, "Germanic Law versus Roman Law in National Socialist Legal Theory," *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law* 16, no. 4 (1934): 269–80.

98. Eberhardt at Chapoutot, *La Révolution culturelle Nazie*, 184.

99. Eberhardt at Chapoutot, *La Révolution culturelle Nazie*, 184.

100. Eberhardt at Chapoutot, *La Révolution culturelle Nazie*, 185.

101. H. Floris Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: An Historiographic Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); *How Modern Science Came into the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity 1210–1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Thomas Kuhn, "The Classical and Experimental Traditions," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7:1 (Summer, 1976): 1–31; Robert Westfall, *The Construction of Modern Science: Mechanisms and Mechanics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

102. Richard Popkin, *History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

103. See Chapoutot, *La Révolution culturelle Nazie*, 73–88; and Johann Chapoutot, *La Loi du Sang: Penser et Agir en Nazi* (Paris: NRF Éditions Gallimard, 2014), 95–100 ("Révolution française, révolution Juive").

104. François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, “Letter XIV—On Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton,” *Letters on the English*, The Harvard Classics, 1909–14, <http://www.bartleby.com/34/2/14.html>.

105. Voltaire, *Micromegas: Philosophical History*, The Project Gutenberg EBook of Romans, vol. 3, ch. 7, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/30123/30123-h/30123-h.htm>: “The Cartesian took the floor and said: ‘The soul is a pure spirit that has received in the belly of its mother all metaphysical ideas, and which, leaving that place, is obliged to go to school, and to learn all over again what it already knew, and will not know again.’”; Denis Diderot, “A Letter on the Blind, for the Uses of Those Who See,” in *Blindness and Enlightenment: An Essay*, trans. and ed. Kate E. Tunstall (London: Continuum, 2011).

106. Jean Le Rond D’Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, The Encyclopedia of Diderot and D’Alembert Collaborative Translation Project, trans. Richard N. Schwab and Walter E. Rex (Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, 2009), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0001.083>. In *The Ignorant Philosopher* (1766), Voltaire declares the Cartesian philosophy “grossly mistaken in physics,” crediting the skeptical method of doubt but not the *cogito*. See Voltaire, *The Ignorant Philosopher*, Little Blue Book No. 200 (Girard, KS: E. Haldeman-Julius, 1922), 7.

107. *Loc. cit.*

108. See Matthew Sharpe, “On a neglected argument in French philosophy: Sceptical humanism in Montaigne, Voltaire and Camus,” *Critical Horizons* 16:1 (2015), 1–26.

109. See Hannah Arendt, “What Is Authority?” in *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin, 1993), 95–96.

110. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*, 6.

111. Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. T. McCarthy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 166–67.

112. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth*, Part 1, section 20: “Freedom and beings (Being).”

113. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth*.

114. Heidegger, “Letter,” 225–27.

115. This was Schürmann’s term (*Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 275–81), condensing ambiguously a political signification, before it became Trawny’s in 2014–15. See Rastier, “Heidegger Aujord’hui,” 100–106.

116. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 57.

117. Heidegger, “Letter,” 232.

118. Cf. Krell, “Review,” 132–33. Heidegger’s critique of biological antisemitism thus does not differentiate between this ideological pseudo-science, failed by 1935 (Claudia Koonz, “Law and Racial Order,” in *The Nazi Conscience* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press 2003], 165 ff) and any or all other modern natural and social sciences. For Wilhelm Wundt’s comparable views on biological antisemitism as itself reflecting “Jewish” calculative thinking, hostile to a true estimation of the *Volk*, see Sluga, *Heidegger’s Crisis*, 116–17.

119. Max Horkheimer, “The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research,” *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, translated by Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

120. See Heidegger’s dismissal of “the most honest fight for freedom and morality,” already “mastered” by the *Macht* of the modern age: at Faye, *Heidegger*, 287; cf. Heidegger, *Logic*, 81.

121. Heidegger, at Faye, *Heidegger*, 289.

122. Krell, “Review,” 138–39 on this “crass indifference” to human suffering; cf. John Caputo, “Heidegger’s Scandal: Thinking and the Essence of the Victim,” in *The Heidegger Case*, 265–81; Bernstein, “Heidegger’s Silence,” 87 ff.

123. Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 66–67.

124. Cicero, *On Duties*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 161, 1.44.157.

125. Cicero, *Treatise on the Laws*, trans. F. F. Barham (Altenmünster: Jazzybee Verlag, 2017), 24–25.

Chapter 4

Reflecting with the Heidegger Case

William H. F. Altman

Between the moral earnestness of Emmanuel Faye's assault on Martin Heidegger and Gregory Fried's equally earnest soul-searching in the wake of the sordid revelations on which that assault depends, readers are being treated to an enlivening display of dialectic in action; it would be sane, indeed, to see dialectic itself as the only true winner in the process, enshrined now in this collaborative book. As for my own position in the dialogue, I am considerably less intent than Fried on salvaging the ongoing philosophical relevance of Heidegger, and that despite the fact that I am deeply sympathetic to the amiable spirit that continues to guide him. But Faye's role in making Fried's salvage project so amiable should not be underestimated: without that vigorous and long overdue attack, there would have been no incentive for so balanced and thoughtful a response. It is therefore not difficult to triangulate here, and quite apart from finding much to admire in both scholars with respect to their ongoing dialogue, I also take a middling position with regard to the dialogue's substance. Although I will offer the reader an account of that position at the start, this essay's purpose is not to defend it, but rather to direct our gaze elsewhere.

For me, what ensures Heidegger's ongoing and permanent relevance to philosophy is precisely his decision to become a Nazi: the value of his work for later generations is not going to be diminished by his association with the *Hitlerbewegung*, but will rather be greatly increased thereby. In making this claim, I am anticipating neither the recrudescence of National Socialism nor the restoration of Heidegger's reputation. He will survive, but only in an altered form, and probably within another discipline. It is true that this most timely of thinkers has heretofore been accorded what is now being revealed to be a profoundly ahistorical and one-sided veneration by certain professors of philosophy; the future of Heidegger studies, by contrast, will belong to

historians. The tragedy of Germany's twentieth century will remain what is called in the Torah "a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples" (Deuteronomy 28:37), and the literary record left by a prolific writer and lecturer, whose proximity to that tragedy can no longer be denied, is inevitably of great and enduring value for understanding it. In short, I take the Holocaust and the two world wars to be of greater philosophical significance than Heidegger himself, and situate his enduring value in relation to them.

It is therefore not a question of what can be salvaged or what should be ruthlessly expunged but only what can be learned. Thoughtful readers of *Sein und Zeit* should have recognized from the start that both its contents and its author were and remain ripe for historicism,¹ and a reading that situates both squarely in their time was always already the sensible goal for the open-minded. The rise to power of National Socialism in Germany—national source of so much beauty and genius in both philosophy and the arts—will always remain the central problem of twentieth-century intellectual history, and the access that Heidegger gives us to this problem is unparalleled. We need to understand why thoughtful people became Nazis, and any suitable account of how they did so will necessarily be both timely and timelessly relevant. As I have argued elsewhere,² the deep spiritual chasm opened up by the Great War of 1914–1918 is the largely unexplored cause of the Heidegger phenomenon and also of the broader issues toward which that phenomenon points, especially Germany's fateful decision for Hitler.

By directing our gaze elsewhere, I mean more specifically: toward ourselves. It is true that the legacy of the Great War is still with us, and that a fuller understanding of the train-wreck of the twentieth-century would certainly be useful for guiding our steps in the twenty-first century.³ But I mean something different, and something specific to my own homeland, the United States. While it is true, then, that there is much to be learned about Germany's horrific decision for National Socialism from a brilliant and prolific intellectual like Heidegger, and thus what it really means to be a thinker *in dürftige Zeit*, it is altogether too easy to treat the matter too objectively, that is, as a phenomenon ripe for investigation by the disinterested historians of the future, still intent on solving the Nazi riddle.

Consider first, by way of preparatory comparison, the national basis of Faye's position: Is it not distinctively and importantly French? Without the adulation Heidegger received from French intellectuals after the Second World War, Faye's outraged assault would be as unthinkable as it would be irrelevant. From Ariovistus and Charlemagne to Verdun and Vichy, what happens in Germany cannot easily be separated from what happens in France, and it cannot be an accident that Cartesian doubt first arose while the doubter was fighting in Germany during the Thirty Years' War. Rousseau's reception in Germany, like Heidegger's reception in France, indicates that

the two streams cannot be easily separated, and a Cartesian revulsion at the lionization of Heidegger by scores of French intellectuals lurks just below the surface of Faye's careful research. If, as already suggested, Fried's temperate soul-searching depends for its existence on Faye's withering assault, the origins of that assault are to be found in the uncritical adulation for Heidegger displayed by Faye's own countrymen: it is the outraged spirit of France, not without a mixture of *revanchisme* or indignant patriotism, that now rises up, inevitably, against the abdication of responsibility displayed by the likes of Jacques Derrida, and the too-often cult-like following accorded his master.⁴

In Derrida, France produced an intellectual who, albeit in the Heideggerian vein, could justly be considered an original thinker in his own right; it would be difficult to identify a similar phenomenon in the United States. This means that there is less cause for outrage on this side of the ocean: we need not regard our national thought as having somehow betrayed itself by whoring after strange gods from across the Rhine. But this is a mixed blessing. Since our Heidegger reception has not spawned any world-class thinkers, we may well avoid the backlash that must follow the revelations of the *Black Notebooks*; the tempest will remain safely confined to a teapot. Over here, the casualties of those revelations will only be university professors with a scholarly, professional, and personal interest in continuing to expound an attractive version of Heidegger, and thus of validating his ongoing relevance and continued importance; against this crew, nothing so serious as *revanchisme* is in order, for neither Time nor Being is on their side. On the other hand, some indignant patriotism—now properly Anglicized—may well be called for, and it is as an American patriot that I propose to reconsider the lessons of the Heidegger case before handing it over to the historians of the future.

By “patriot,” of course, I do not mean to endorse any nationality based commitment to an uncritical belligerence on behalf of the *Heimat* or a scarcely Americanized “Homeland Security”; there is no sense in jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Instead, true patriots must always be critical of those national proclivities that undermine the greatness of the country they love. In the era of Trump, initiated by the post-millennial “you’re either with us or against us,” and culminating in a vociferous defense of “American exceptionalism,” what strikes me is just how insecure and terminally unexceptional our intellectuals have repeatedly proven themselves to be. As far as I can see, then, the Heidegger case is but one more example of a culture-wide phenomenon that permeates our academic institutions: a proclivity to allow European intellectuals to do our most serious thinking for us and an unwillingness to think for ourselves.

In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered “The American Scholar,” a clarion call for independence of mind that has, unfortunately, gone largely unheeded. The proof of this lamentable assessment is everywhere, and thus

has become a bit difficult for us to see. It is not simply the jargon-spouting following that is so readily accorded to the reigning French intellectual de jour, or the more pertinent and enduring impact that Weimar intellectuals are still routinely accorded here; it is the more primal problem that our system of higher education is profoundly and irrevocably Europeanized. With the nineteenth-century rise of the PhD, particularly in the field of philosophy itself, the distinctively American and polymath resourcefulness of a Franklin or a Jefferson would be difficult if not impossible to find at the universities of Pennsylvania or Virginia.

Consider James A. Garfield's story about the nineteenth-century president of Williams College: our twentieth president famously remarked that his idea of education was sitting alone in a log cabin with Mark Hopkins, his mentor when a student at Williams College, where Hopkins was also president.⁵ Anything but a specialist, and thus lacking a PhD, Hopkins (1802–1887) combined interests in theology, medicine, rhetoric, and moral philosophy, to name only the most obvious. Despite, or perhaps because of his lack of disciplinary specialization, Hopkins's renown and influence as an educator led to his being elected into the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in 1915. And so we must ask: Where are the likes of Hopkins today? Is such a man even thinkable, and is it clear that we are entitled to congratulate ourselves on the fact that he is not? At this point, one might be tempted to imagine that Heidegger has more in common with this jack-of-all trades polymath, deeply rooted in the rugged American spirit of self-reliance, than with the hegemony of technical and scientific progress that has caused the likes of Hopkins to vanish from the academic scene. Nothing would better illustrate our own myopia than this particular temptation: Heidegger in his heyday was famously distant and aloof, and one imagines that it was only the numerous avatars of Hannah Arendt who received private instruction in his version of a log cabin.⁶ Hopkins was broad, but made no pretense of being deep; his depth was rather in his breadth, and he was, of course, a believing Christian.⁷ He needed no distinction to be drawn between the thinker and the man, and like Emerson, would have laughed at those who attempted to draw one. Education was the intimate contact of teacher and student, sitting at opposite ends of the same log—and unlike Heidegger in his hut, he would have welcomed anyone to sit with him.

By contrast, the overly specialized expert of today, beholden to an often imperious *Doktorvater*, subjected to a series of frequently humiliating and demoralizing initiation rites, and seeking solace only by preserving a legacy through placing one's own properly trained students in other elite institutions, is antithetical to the broadminded faith, rooted in the Enlightenment, in the free and equal commerce of ideas that is the true basis of American exceptionalism. The story of Heidegger's American reception illustrates that

faith perfectly: as Martin Woessner has shown, the paradox at the heart of that story is Heidegger's easily documented but apparently even more easily overlooked or ignored antipathy to the United States.⁸ Was the lionization of Heidegger by so many thoughtful intellectuals the proof of our broadmindedness or of our self-loathing?⁹

At the very least, it testified to what I regard as the Europeanization of "the American scholar." Much as we had earlier welcomed the PhD as a form of intellectual credentialing that rendered educators like Hopkins obsolete, we now welcomed Germany's foremost thinker, with precious little awareness that we were undermining ourselves, and our most sacred values, by doing so. It is therefore somewhere between American exceptionalism and the Europeanization of our academic institutions, between our broadmindedness and self-loathing, that I intend to locate the lessons of *der Fall Heidegger*. And here is the narrative arc of that lesson: the revelation that Heidegger was a Nazi was scarcely required for us to recognize him as profoundly anti-American, and his fall from grace as a result of the *Black Notebooks* is as typically American as the unnaturally warm welcome we accorded him in the first place.

Thanks to what may be called "Anglo-American Analytic Philosophy," the embrace of Heidegger in North American universities could never have been anything more than partial in an institutional sense. But precisely because that embrace was always embattled and generally confined to a minority position, the adherents of "Continental Philosophy" on this side of the ocean were even more partial in another sense, and the resistance of most North American Heidegger scholars to Faye and his predecessors—the resistance that makes Fried an honorable and inspiring exception—is therefore anything but impartial: it is better understood as institutional. I personally think Fried is right: Heidegger scholarship will inevitably sink into irrelevancy (and deservedly so) in America if it cannot find a way to take up the relevant questions, not just exegesis of his own answers, in our own idiom.

But as a patriot I must ask: In what idiom is that? Can anyone doubt, for example, that the priority of "Anglo-" in Anglo-American Analytic Philosophy is substantive and not simply grammatical? Do we really know how to think for ourselves? In the last few years, I have been working, more or less exclusively, on Plato's "late dialogues," and with particular attention to their nineteenth- and twentieth-century reception. One of the most amazing things about this reception is the towering but scarcely obvious influence of G. E. L. Owen (1922–1982), a student of Gilbert Ryle's at Oxford, on North American Plato scholarship.¹⁰ Allergic to the transcendent Ideas and registering his contempt for them in a series of well-regarded papers, Owen has managed, through his many well-placed students, especially after his appointment at Harvard in 1966, to shape decisively what passes for "mainstream" in the

world of Plato scholarship. As a result, “Plato’s Progress” can now be measured by the first Platonist’s distance from and indeed repudiation of his own Platonism. Nor is that mainstream well prepared to welcome as salutary the influx of tributaries from entirely different sources: are we not in the process of ensuring its permanent influence by valorizing the production of articles published in *Phronesis* and *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* by assigning apparently objective point-values based on what is presently called “impact”? Beneath the surface, one can still, perhaps, discern a distinctively American commitment to “one out of many” unitarianism, but the pull of Owen-based and Ryle-inspired revisionism is an institutionalized juggernaut.¹¹

Similar in its European origins, but closer to Heidegger in its specific inspiration, is the rival school of Plato interpretation created by Leo Strauss; the American academy is now home to many self-styled “Straussians,” and in them the Owenite prejudices of Anglo-American Plato scholarship may be said to have found a rival. But is this any kind of improvement from Emerson’s perspective? As hostile to the Platonic Ideas as Owen, Strauss appears to be “taking Plato seriously” while consistently finding between his lines what nobody could have found there without a prior allegiance to Nietzsche. Quite apart from the content of Strauss’s thought, and even if there were not sufficient reason to doubt the sincerity of his commitment to liberal democracy or “the cause of constitutionalism,”¹² it is the willingness of so many American scholars to follow a leader in lockstep that would strike our forefathers as alien and unsettling. What can explain this phenomenon? Although the Straussians are, like the adherents of “Continental Philosophy” in general, a minority in most of their respective academic communities, they share with them an ethos of depth and profundity that continues to attract promising students, and it is this Heidegger-inspired attraction that I find interesting. Consider Strauss’s words:

Gradually the breadth of the revolution of thought which Heidegger was preparing dawned upon me and my generation. We saw with our own eyes that there had been no such phenomenon in the world since Hegel. He succeeded in a very short time in dethroning the established schools in Germany.¹³

The use of the word “dethroning” is revealing: in order for Heidegger to be crowned, there must already have been the impression of a reigning monarch. Strauss goes on to identify the celebrated disputation at Davos as the moment of transition, calling Ernst Cassirer both “a pupil of Hermann Cohen, the founder of the neo-Kantian school” and “this remarkable representative of established academic philosophy.”¹⁴ The latter description tallies with the notion of dethroning the reigning orthodoxy, but since Cohen and Cassirer were Jewish, the former will perhaps eventually become more relevant for

understanding Heidegger's achievement.¹⁵ Be that as it may, his achievement was commonly described in terms of monarchy, as in Arendt's famous comment about "the rumor of a hidden king."¹⁶

The rise and fall of America's Heidegger reminds me of another king: Elvis Presley. We loved him, at first. He came out of nowhere, and soared to the top of the charts. He was different enough, and sufficiently challenging to our values—especially with respect to our unofficial Apartheid—that loving him always had an edge, always had something subversive and questionable about it. My hunch is that there must be some inner connection between the adulation we accorded the beautiful young Elvis, the relentless exploitation of his talent, the resulting decline into obesity or drug abuse, and finally his tragic fall; it happens too often here to be accidental. Since there are no longer any kings in the United States, we find a way to raise them up, but just as surely always manage to find a way to knock them down again once they're up there.

My research has suggested another parallel, however. In the brilliant little scholarship boy from Catholic Messkirch, I see the dynamism, talent, and ambition of Michael Jackson, a proper outsider in White America, who nevertheless became "the King of Pop." He exuded charisma, he rose, and he fell. His attempt to unmake the features of his own sweet face, to erase the stereotyped traces of ecstatic Negritude behind which even the Pelvis limped by comparison, corresponds to what I regard as the secret cause of Heidegger's embrace of National Socialism: the self-hatred engendered by his successful evasion of dying like a hero in the Great War and his pathetic attempt to conceal that guilt by helping his fellow Nazis remake that ghastly shambles as merely "the First World War."¹⁷ The humiliation of Germany at Versailles, like the internalized racism that would lead a precious little girl to take a bath in milk in order to whiten her already beautiful skin, these hidden causes, which reflect so badly on us, we must ignore. They threaten to teach us something we would prefer not to learn.

We therefore prefer to keep the focus on the fallen, not on those who lifted them up and then felled them, and that means: not on ourselves. We are not going to ask: What does the writer of the *Black Notebooks*, a man who actually joined the Nazi party in 1933, teach us *about us*? Why was he able to make so many thoughtful Americans welcome him not only into our modernized log cabins but also and more importantly into our hearts and minds? Certainly those who can isolate the thinker from the man are not going to enquire how they themselves could have been so badly fooled, or what it is *in them* that made them so susceptible to his dangerous charms. For the others, they will take self-serving delight in seeing someone they never much liked in the first place revealed to public view as a pathetic and ugly little man, devalued by the publication, prearranged by Heidegger himself, of his private musings.

The *Schadenfreude* or open contempt of his foes, no less than the enduring but frustrated hero-worship or defensive pugnacity of his friends, will keep our eyes directed safely away from ourselves. As in a mirror, we would do better to reflect.

So let's take a moment to remember our fallen kings, Elvis and Michael, along with a hundred other fallen stars whose paths have streaked across the highest heaven of the ambivalent American psyche. Precisely because the only ones who care about Heidegger are intellectuals, a class apparently immune to the boom-and-bust follies of popular culture, let's take care not to make the same mistake that our benighted brethren seem to do on a daily basis. In the rise and fall of Martin Heidegger, let's take the path of neither denial nor satisfaction, but do the harder business of introspection, and address the national weaknesses that made his rise no less paradigmatically American than his inevitable fall. After all, the easiest way to think *for* ourselves is to think seriously and unflinchingly *about* ourselves—we are well worth it, by the way, for “we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world”¹⁸—and we will better honor Emerson's call when it is no longer Alexis de Tocqueville who teaches us who we really are, or Heidegger who can explain to us what is called thinking.

NOTES

1. Leo Strauss, “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism” in Thomas L. Pangle (ed.), *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 27–46 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 30: “Everyone who had read his first great book and did not overlook the wood for the trees could see the kinship in temper and direction between Heidegger's thought and the Nazis. What was the practical, that is to say, serious meaning of the contempt for reasonableness and the praise of resoluteness except to encourage that extremist movement?”

2. See my *Martin Heidegger and the First World War: Being and Time as Funeral Oration* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012).

3. See my “Singin' in the Shade: An Introduction to Post-Post-War Thought,” in *100 years of European Philosophy Since the Great War: Crisis and Reconfigurations*, ed. Mathew Sharpe, Rory Jeffs, and Jack Reynolds (New York: Springer, 2017), 27–41.

4. See Hassan Givsan, *Eine bestürzende Geschichte: Warum Philosophen sich durch den “Fall Heidegger” korrumpieren lassen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), and now Hassan Givsan, *Une histoire consternante: pourquoi des philosophes se laissent corrompre par le “cas Heidegger,”* trans. Denis Trieweiler, preface by Emmanuel Faye (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 2011).

5. See Frederick Rudolph, *Mark Hopkins and the Log: Williams College, 1836–1872* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956).

6. See “*Mein liebes Seelchen!*” *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfride, 1915–1970*, ed. Gertrud Heidegger (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2005); Martin Heidegger, *Letters to His Wife, 1915–1970*, trans. R. D. V. Glasgow (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010).

7. See especially Mark Hopkins, *The Law of Love, and Love as a Law; or, Moral Science, Theoretical and Practical* (New York: C. Scribner, 1869).

8. See Martin Woessner, *Heidegger in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

9. Cf. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 2: “It would not be the first time that a nation, defeated on the battlefield and, as it were, annihilated as a political being, has deprived its conquerors of the most sublime fruit of victory by imposing on them the yoke of its own thought.”

10. See my *The Guardians on Trial: The Reading Order of Plato’s Dialogues from Euthyphro to Phaedo* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016), 18 n. 7, 64–67, and 444 n. 391.

11. For Heidegger’s impact on post-World War II Plato studies in Germany, see “The Heideggerian Origins of a post-Platonist Plato,” in *Brill’s Companion to Classical Receptions: International Modernism and the Avant-Garde*, ed. Adam J. Goldwyn and James Nikopoulos (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 220–41.

12. Consider, for example, Leo Strauss, *Liberalism, Ancient and Modern* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 24, noting the shift of meaning in “that” from the first two times, when it is clearly used as a conjunction, to the revealingly concealed demonstrative it may be, if read with the proper emphasis, at its third appearance: “Karl Marx, the father of communism, and Friedrich Nietzsche, the stepfather of fascism, were liberally educated on a level to which we cannot even hope to aspire. But perhaps one can say that their grandiose failures make it easier for us who have experienced those failures to understand again the old saying that wisdom cannot be separated from moderation and hence to understand that wisdom requires unhesitating loyalty to a decent constitution and even to the cause of constitutionalism.” On this passage, and on Strauss as friend and ally of democracy, see my *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011), 355–58.

13. Strauss, “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism,” 28. Consider also these remarks, two paragraphs later, on 29: “The same effect that Heidegger produced in the late twenties and early thirties in Germany, he produced very soon in continental Europe as a whole. There is no longer in existence a philosophic position, apart from neo-Thomism and Marxism crude or refined. All rational liberal philosophic positions have lost their significance and power. One may deplore this, but I for one cannot bring myself to clinging to philosophic positions which have been shown to be inadequate. I am afraid that we shall have to make very great effort in order to find a solid basis for rational liberalism. Only a great thinker could help us in our intellectual plight. But here is the great trouble: the only great thinker in our time is Heidegger.”

14. Strauss, “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism,” 28.

15. Altman, *Martin Heidegger and the First World War*, 74–76.

16. Hannah Arendt, “Martin Heidegger at Eighty,” trans. Albert Hofstadter, *The New York Review of Books* (October 21, 1971).

17. See Altman, *Martin Heidegger and the First World War*, 28–33 and 287–90.

18. John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630) in John R. Vile, *Founding Documents of America: Documents Decoded* (ABC-CLIO, 2015), 19–22: “For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world.”

Chapter 5

Un-wesen: Tarrying with the Negative in Heidegger's Black Notebooks

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The exchange between Gregory Fried and Emmanuel Faye, along with the broader controversy about Martin Heidegger's place in philosophy, naturally revolves around the extent to which he supported National Socialism. Today no one doubts that he was an enthusiastic participant for some time in the early 1930s. But what did he see in Nazism? How deep did his support go? And how long did it last?

The more we believe that Heidegger was a long-term, earnest advocate of Hitler's worst aims, the less it becomes possible to take him seriously as a philosophical interlocutor. To oppose someone on ethical and political grounds, without seriously considering the potential truth of his arguments, is indeed unphilosophical. But can we afford to be philosophical about every point of view? Can we afford to expose our conscience to corruption? It may be prudent to condemn and reject dedicated Nazis, and even to avoid reading them—in order not to waste our precious time and not to run the risk of having our sound moral and political instincts subverted.

Emmanuel Faye has, of course, devoted years to reading Heidegger, and has concluded that “Heidegger's work is too deeply grounded in the racist and exterminatory project of National Socialism and Hitlerism to make up a philosophy properly so called” (54). If Faye's view is correct, then his project of discrediting Heidegger is quite understandable: whether we call Heidegger's discourse “philosophy” or not, as a deeply Nazi point of view it must be exposed and combated, so that it will be less likely to corrupt naive readers in the future. Is Faye right, then?

Some things are clear: for instance, Heidegger was a lifelong anti-liberal.¹ But was he a diehard Nazi, or not? Does he develop an opposition to Nazism, or does he not? Does he, as I have argued in the past, express a “secret

resistance” in his posthumously published texts?² I no longer make that claim, as I will explain below. However, in my reading, by the late 1930s Heidegger is not a straightforward supporter of Nazism either. His position is more complicated than any simple yes or no; in order to understand him and to develop an accurate critique of his political views, we must grasp his two-sided relation to National Socialism as an *Un-wesen*: a perverse essence.

I will make my case primarily on the basis of the volumes of *Black Notebooks* that offer us Heidegger’s journals of the 1930s and 1940s. These texts provide insights that can fruitfully be applied to a wide range of his lectures and publications.

Let me emphasize, before proceeding, that the complexities of Heidegger’s positions should not be abused to construct excuses for his behavior or thought. His attitudes toward both the essence and the perverse essence involve an appalling indifference to concrete victims, whose suffering he disregards as merely inessential.

AFFIRMING NEGATIVITY

We can begin with some fundamental facts on which every decent judge will agree. The Nazi regime was a reign of terror that operated with massive brutality. Hitler’s willful rampage through Europe demonstrated his criminal madness. The atrocities of the Nazis embodied a nationalism gone wild. In sum, nothing can justify this ideology that despised the mind itself.

Do these truths immediately damn Martin Heidegger? Not at all. In fact, I take these characterizations of Hitler and the Nazis from postwar entries in Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks*. They are his own judgments on Nazism.³

So does Heidegger condemn Nazism?

That would be a rash conclusion, first of all because we must attend to the context of these phrases. They were largely written during the Allied occupation and partition of Germany, which involved purges and reorganizations of various sorts, including Heidegger’s own denazification hearings and forced retirement. His attitude in this period is never contrite, but rather indignant and bitter. He pushes back against the talk of German guilt, rejecting calls for morality and justice as nothing more than the spirit of revenge, disguised in the remnants of a bankrupt Christianity (GA 97: 64, 99, 117, 129, 134–35, 146–47). All his comments on the Nazis are embedded in his denunciations of postwar developments, which he portrays as equally bad as or worse than Nazism. For instance, in one hyperbolic passage, he claims that contemporary “thoughtlessness . . . exceeds by many thousands of degrees the irresponsible misdeeds with which Hitler raged around Europe” (GA 97: 250).

In short, Heidegger is unapologetic, and many entries in his journals exemplify the denial, evasion, and defensiveness that is typical of people who are doing their best to avoid the unpleasant sensation of a guilty conscience. There is no apologizing for the unapologetic, and none of my interpretation should be understood as an apologia.

Still, it is a fact that Heidegger describes Nazism as brutal and criminal. Yet could these descriptions just be a sop thrown to public opinion? Are they an attempt at posthumous public relations? This possibility is not to be rejected out of hand. In many of his voluminous notebook entries from the late 1940s, Heidegger is clearly trying to defend himself—either in his own mind or to posterity. He looks back over his acts and thoughts, doing his best to minimize the extent of his support for Nazism: he “had to deceive himself for a few months about the superficial and contemporary” (GA 97: 174). Many of these self-interpretations made their way into other accounts and became the “official” Heideggerian exculpation. We now know, thanks in part to Faye, that the story that Heidegger, sincerely or insincerely, told to himself and to others was at best one-sided, since his faith in Nazism was hardly a matter of “a few months.” At least through the mid-1930s, he forcefully attempted to influence the direction of Nazism, clinging to a belief in its “inner truth and greatness,” and he never sympathized with the enemies of the regime.

However, it would be inadequate to take the postwar *Black Notebooks* as a whitewashing operation, because as much as Heidegger criticizes Nazi ideology there, he also makes his rejection of liberalism, Christianity, and morality quite clear. His disgust with the postwar order of Europe is, as I have said, obvious. Heidegger’s contempt for the public—which would include us today—is boundless, and he surely knew that many remarks in these notebooks would be considered unacceptable by the victors of the Second World War. So if the purpose of his postwar entries were to make himself palatable to the postwar world, they would be a complete failure. I think it is more reasonable to take them as genuine expressions of his self-perception and his perception of the world at that time, even though those perceptions involve some selective remembering and some distortions.

There is another, and more fundamental, reason to take Heidegger’s postwar characterizations of Nazism seriously: in earlier entries, those written during the war and before, Heidegger attempts to give concepts such as “criminality” and “brutality” ontological content. He does not just adopt these terms after the war and give lip service to anti-Nazi discourse; years before, he gave them specifically Heideggerian interpretations and applied them to Nazism at length.

Of course, we cannot dismiss the possibility that the notebooks that appear to have been composed in the 1930s were subjected to rewriting and editing after the war.⁴ Editor Peter Trawny observes that the manuscripts are clean,

with few corrections, as if they were revised versions of earlier texts, but no first drafts are known to exist (GA 94: 534). My own guess is that the clean pages are, in fact, a first draft; it would be consistent with the character of the notebooks as a “thought journal” for Heidegger to write out his thoughts continuously, without aiming at perfection.⁵ I may, however, be proved wrong by some future discovery.

A typescript presenting a selection from the *Black Notebooks* is extant; this selection omits all comments on Jews, among other things.⁶ Whether it was Martin Heidegger, Fritz Heidegger, or another who created this selection, it is in keeping with Martin’s tendency after the war to edit his earlier writings to make them more acceptable. At the same time, its very existence indicates that the more complete *Black Notebooks* as we have them in the *Gesamtausgabe* are probably *not* edited texts, but were composed as they stand.

Let us return to the postwar comments on Nazism and focus on another word that has some philosophical depth. Heidegger speaks of “the irresponsible misdeeds” of Hitler. “Misdeeds” is my attempt to translate *Unwesen*, which in its everyday use means something like “malicious mischief,” “disorder,” or “disturbance.” But *Unwesen* is an ontological word, based on *Wesen* (which can mean “essence” or “entity” depending on the context). The German prefix *un-* is not simply a negation, like the English “un-,” but connotes a certain malignancy, deformity, or perversity. The *Un-wesen* is not the inessential; it is the malignant essence, the degenerate genus, the deformed form. Heidegger, who chose his words carefully when being was at stake, is referring to the malignant essence of Adolf Hitler.

So does he reject this essence? We cannot say simply that he does or does not—and at this point we have to take our leave once and for all from black-and-white, pro-or-con readings. The matter hinges on Heidegger’s ambiguous attitude toward the negative and perverse—or to put it in a word, *Un-wesen*. In the epigraph for the seventh volume of his *Überlegungen*, composed around 1938, he writes, “Whoever encounters the *Un-wesen* by merely negating it is not yet ready for the *Wesen* either” (GA 95: 1).

In a crucial passage from 1939, Heidegger applies this thought to Nazism:

Thinking purely “metaphysically” (that is, in terms of the history of being [seynsgeschichtlich]), in the years 1930–1934 I took National Socialism for the possibility of a transition into another inception, and gave it that interpretation. With this, I misunderstood and underestimated this “movement” in its authentic forces and inner necessities as well as in the kind of greatness and granting of greatness that is proper to it. Instead, what begins here is the completion of modernity as regards the humanization of the human in self-certain rationality—in a much deeper, that is, more encompassing and gripping way than in fascism. . . . The completion required the decidedness of the historiological-technical in the sense of the complete “mobilization” of all capacities of a

humanity that has based itself upon itself. . . . On the basis of the full insight into the earlier deception about the essence and historical essential force of National Socialism, there results the necessity of its affirmation, and indeed on *thoughtful* grounds. This also means that this “movement” remains independent of its contemporary shape in each case, and of the duration of these particular visible forms. But how does it come about that such an essential affirmation is appreciated less, or not at all, in contrast to mere agreement, which is mostly superficial, clueless, or just blind? (GA 95: 408–09)

This passage makes it clear that although National Socialism represents a modernity that Heidegger longs to transcend, his philosophical critique of modernity does not translate into resistance—to the contrary. We are forced to ask in what sense, on what level, Heidegger said yes to Nazism, even after recognizing it as *Un-wesen*. Why did he affirm its monstrous “greatness”? (“Greatness is the grounding of something inceptive—or, since it also has its *Unwesen*, the extreme hardening of something that has run its course” [GA 96: 171].) Just how thoroughly did he “tarry with the negative,” to use the Hegelian phrase?

The general question of negativity in Heidegger could be the object of a voluminous study. As Fried has shown, confrontation as *Auseinandersetzung* or *polemos* can, at its best in Heidegger’s work, be a form of deep respect for the opponent. When Heidegger takes Hegel as his opponent, it is precisely the question of negativity that is a main focus of the confrontation (GA 68: 3–61). *Das Nichts* is, of course, a recurring theme in Heidegger’s thought, and he constantly insists that being cannot be understood without a profound encounter with nothingness.⁷ Similarly, truth for Heidegger is constantly shadowed by *lēthē* or un-truth.

The *Black Notebooks* themselves include various thoughts on negation. “Thoughtful no-saying” is not mere “rejection and turning away,” but “the struggle for the most essential yes to the full essence of beyng” (GA 95: 21). Heidegger’s descriptions of contemporary phenomena appear pessimistic because “the *Unwesen* is taken in a negative sense . . . for we are too small, and too poor in resistance, to experience the refusal in what is apparently negative, and to grasp refusal itself as beyng” (GA 95: 37). Far from simply rejecting the present, Heidegger’s “ontohistorical thinking recognizes the ground of the necessity of the current age and its uncanny consistency” (GA 95: 221). “If the *Un-wesen* in beyng fulfills the essence in case after case” (GA 97: 46), a confrontation with the perverse essence is a path to truth. In sum,

It is petty to think that what is brought to confrontation in an essential opposition, and in this confrontation is first set into the essence, is thereby merely rejected and becomes the object of mere negation—an object that then haunts

us like an evil specter, which is never understood because it is never thought through, and cannot be. (GA 97: 180)

MACHINATION, BRUTALITY, AND CRIMINALITY

With these general points in mind, let us turn to Heidegger's prewar and wartime analyses of three specific features of the modern *Un-wesen*, which he calls machination, brutality, and criminality.

We should be clear from the start that these are not ethical or political concepts, even though it is difficult not to hear them as so-called value judgments. Heidegger attempts to dig deeper than ethics and explore the question of being that supposedly underlies all values. He rejects the moral point of view as superficial, if not hypocritical. Instead, his concepts are "ontohistorical": they are descriptions of how the being of entities is understood in the current phase of the history of being, which he understands as a late stage of the "first inception" inaugurated by the Greeks. Machination, brutality, and criminality characterize how we interpret both ourselves and other beings in the light of our general understanding of being. They are ways in which entities are revealed in our age, and they are part of our destiny. Such phenomena cannot simply be rejected or condemned, but must be acknowledged as essential to the way beings present themselves to us.

It is also important to understand that these ontohistorical concepts are not intended to point out distinguishing characteristics of Nazism *per se*. According to Heidegger, they characterize late modernity in general and apply to fascism, communism, and liberalism. Left, right, and center are all instances of a machinational relationship to the world.

The word "machination" (*Machenschaft*) normally refers to scheming, but Heidegger does not mean it in this "superficial and derivative" sense, and denies that it is a human creation (GA 96: 111). He takes it in an ontohistorical sense, drawing on its root *machen* or "making." It is a productive and manipulative understanding of beings as such, so that they appear as objects to be calculated, controlled, and transformed. Machination is "the makeability of what is, which makes everything and makes up [i.e., constitutes] everything" (GA 66: 16). Under the sway of machination, to be means to be a computable construction.

Machination fulfills the destiny of Western metaphysics, which ends in a mode of relating to what is such that "beings, as what is actual and effective, 'have' precedence over 'being,' and being presents itself as the final vapor of mere thinking" (GA 95: 382). The irony is that "the highest dominance of being as machination spreads the complete oblivion of being" (GA 95: 385). In other words, our obsession with that which is calculable and malleable

blocks out any question about what else it may mean to be, or how we come to understand being in the first place; yet it was precisely a certain understanding of being that led us to interpret beings as calculable and malleable resources to begin with.

Heidegger tends to see machination as the inevitable outcome of the “first inception” of philosophy among the Greeks, who received the gift of being as presence but were not able to preserve the mystery of the giving, falling instead into the project of ascertaining correct claims about present *beings*. (For a compact genealogy of machination, see GA 65: 126–27.) Thus, “*What is now happening* is the *end* of the history of the great inception of Occidental man, in which inception man was called to be the guardian of being, only in order to transform this calling right away into the pretension to re-present beings in their machinational *Unwesen*” (GA 95: 96).

The *Black Notebooks* portray machination as a fate that envelops the West, turning individuals into agents and spokesmen for the machinational understanding of what is. War and politics are merely the implementation of this metaphysics; there can be no winners and losers, but “all become slaves of the history of being” (GA 96: 141). The “unconditional empowerment of machinality [*Machsamkeit*]” is not the work of individual personalities who “make” it; to the contrary, “unconditional power creates its own possessors of power . . . servitude to the essence of power makes it possible to put everything into service in an unrestricted, unlimited way and to transform everything into the character of power” (GA 96: 186–87).

In passage after passage, Heidegger portrays machination as a global essence (or perverse essence), an understanding of being that dominates all contemporary systems and events, leaving us little or no hope for extrication. “The power of machination . . . has reached its final stage; differences between peoples, states, and cultures are merely a façade. Machination cannot be limited or controlled by any measures. . . . Everything is entangled in the machinationally overfilled emptiness of the abandonment of being” (GA 96: 53). “The current world war is the extreme overturning of all beings into the unconditionality of machination” (GA 96: 173).⁸

Let us turn to the second ontohistorical concept: brutality. Sometimes Heidegger seems to use this word in its everyday sense, as when he distinguishes heroism from “purely corporeal masculinity in its brutality” (GA 94: 183) or speaks of “the sheer brutality of a street brawl” (GA 95: 438). There is also a somewhat more ontological concept of the brutal as the brute facts (cf. GA 95: 396): under the domination of machination, what *is* is “the actual and effective that has been brought about and can be worked over, the so-called ‘facts’ and the ‘real’” (GA 96: 105).

But Heidegger’s primary concept of brutality alludes to the “brute” as the subhuman animal. He portrays *brutalitas* as the necessary counterpart of

rationalitas (GA 95: 402; GA 96: 18)—its *Un-wesen*. He rejects the simple valorization of the rational over the brutal, and attempts to see them as two sides of the same coin.⁹ To view ourselves as *rational* animals is, at the same time, to assert our animality. Conversely, “the surrender of man to the animal does not exclude caring for the ‘spirit’ [*Geist*] and goods of the ‘soul’ [*seelisch*], but includes them, because ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ are just animalistic interpretations of the human essence” (GA 96: 14). The modern form of the “rational animal” is split in two: we develop logical calculation to its extreme while indulging our bestial impulses. Thus, “the *capacity for brutality* is the sign of the actuality of everything actual at the end of metaphysics. In this consists the ‘mastering’ of technology” (GA 96: 253–54).

What must in the future be called *brutalitas* (not accidentally a Roman term), the unconditionality of the machination of being . . . is the *mirror image* of the human essence, the *animalitas* of the *animal rationale*—and thus also and precisely of *rationalitas*. . . . The fact that man had to be defined as *animal rationale* and that the *brutalitas* of beings should one day drive to its completion—these have one and the same basis in the *metaphysics* of being. (GA 95: 394–95)

Brutality is essential to machination, as Heidegger sees it: “To the completion of machination in being, there corresponds, and must correspond, the unconditional *brutalitas* of humankind” (GA 95: 402). He adds that the “motorization of humanity,” most clearly implemented in the Soviet system, fulfills the brutalization of modern man (GA 96: 256).

The themes of brutality and machination are closely connected to that of violence. We are entering the completion of modernity as “the unconditional empowerment of power to boundless violence” (GA 96: 12). “The stupid obstinacy of mere violence becomes the tool of inner destruction” (GA 96: 176). “The *gigantic disruption* of all human constructs that is spreading over the planet . . . can only be the spasms of a machination that no longer has power over itself, and thus . . . must impress . . . empty violence into the essence of the actual” (GA 96: 104). Violence is “the constantly annihilating essence of machination” (GA 66: 16).

Calculating brutality and controlled violence are summed up in the figure of the predator. “It is no accident . . . that in the completion of Occidental metaphysics . . . animality comes forth in its completion as the predatory animality of the roving beast; the predator, lusting after victory and power . . . becomes the ‘ideal’ of humanity” (GA 95: 422–23). The predator becomes “the primal form of the ‘*hero*’—for in him, all instincts remain unfalsified by ‘knowledge’—and at the same time restricted by his racially bound drive in each case. But the predator equipped with the means of highest technology—completes the actualization of the

brutalitas of being” (GA 95: 397). Man has become the predatory subject (GA 96: 21).¹⁰

The third and least developed ontohistorical concept I would like to consider is “criminality.” Heidegger seems to be thinking of criminality in a more or less ordinary sense when he writes that robbery and banditry take various forms in the age of the complete domination of all the means of veiling and deceiving. The Treaty of Versailles, he says, was a preliminary form of such robbery (GA 96: 40).

But “criminality” assumes ontohistorical depth in the key passage on this topic:

The authentic experience that has been allotted to today’s generation, but which it was not able to take over, see through, and lay back into its essential inception, is the unrestricted outbreak of the unconditioned criminality of the modern human essence, in accordance with its role in the empowerment of power into machination. Criminality [*Verbrechen*]: that is no mere breaking up [*Zerbrechen*], but the devastation of everything into what is broken. What is broken is broken off from the inception and dispersed into the realm of the fragmentary. Here, there remains only one possibility of being—in the mode of order. Ordering is only the reverse of criminality, understood in terms of the history of being (not in a juridical-moral way). (GA 96: 266)

The brokenness that concerns Heidegger is not the shattering of things and bodies in “the catastrophes of war” (GA 96: 45), but an insidious senselessness, a devastation of meaning. In the broken world, ordering is merely “the reverse of criminality.” What has been smashed into pieces can be artificially pieced together. In a world without meaningful connections, the only solution seems to be a forced consolidation, a willed and planned order. When there is no organic coherence to life, it remains possible, and even urgent, to coordinate the remnants. We thus seem to be faced with the choice between “complete destruction and disorder” and “the enforcement of a complete coercion” (GA 95: 70). Modern man becomes the “organizer of nihilism” (GA 94: 452). “The completion of modernity” is that “in the age of unconditional machination, the giganticism of criminality comes into the public sphere under the rubric of the ‘true’” (GA 46: 115).

When Heidegger refers to “planetary criminals” (GA 69: 77–78), he means contributors to a devastated world that appears to demand a forced unity. Again, he is not attributing creative agency to such criminals, but sees them as creatures of a deeper ontohistorical trend.

THE CATASTROPHE OF BEYNG

We have reviewed three ontohistorical phenomena: machination, brutality, and criminality. What is Heidegger’s attitude toward them? Those who work

for the future must “stand within the gigantic machination of a complete mobilization and at the same time, carry within themselves the passion for the great stillness” (GA 96: 174–75). What does it mean to “stand within” machination? It cannot be either indifferent objectivity or unadulterated rejection.

Instead, I detect a sort of horrified fascination. Heidegger cannot stop looking at the spectacle, which involves a certain suspense: “What convulsion is essential enough to allow meditation to arise? Or will *brutalitas* have the last word? Has it perhaps already spoken the last word, so that everything is now just an empty plunge into the long ending?” (GA 95: 397).

Certainly, the language Heidegger uses often suggests that he abhors or disdains the phenomena of the times, but his attitude is not simply negative. For instance, he speaks with irritation of “*existentiell littérateurs*” whose writing “yields only a deformation of the spirit of the age, a deformation that weakens its ‘*brutalitas*’ and thus hems in the great decisions” (GA 96: 18). In order for the age to reach a clear climax and crisis, its metaphysical brutality should not be disguised or retarded; it has to be faced and, in a sense, affirmed.

Heidegger thinks that humanity faces “an originary decision between the grounding of a new truth of being and the erection of the machination of beings to its final predominance” (GA 95: 278). In other terms, this is the decision between “*the power of machination and the rule of the appropriating event*” (GA 96: 59). But the decision is not as simple as saying yes to one and no to the other, since “we will never *directly* free ‘beings’ from machination” (GA 94: 425). Machination should not simply be represented as bad, either: “Machination fosters the *Unwesen* of being. But this very *Unwesen*, because it is essential to the essence, is never to be devalued” (GA 65: 126).

“No-saying” as “the most essential yes” (GA 95: 20–21) is not a wholehearted embrace, a sheer plunge into the *Un-wesen*. That would mean submitting to an all-embracing system and simply assuming one’s role within it. Even if one attained great skill within that role, it would come at the cost of enslavement. As Heidegger says in his 1941 lecture course *Basic Concepts*, “Technology is mastered only where it is affirmed from the outset and without reservation. That means the practical mastery of technology . . . already presupposes a metaphysical subordination to technology.”¹¹ (On the small scale, consider a video game “master”: in order to become the top-scoring player, one has to accept the premises of the game and inhabit its world, developing reflexes that reflect its mechanisms, incorporating the game’s parameters into one’s own body and mind. One has to submit to the game in order to win. In a first-person shooter game, one becomes the technological predator who fulfills the brutality of machination.) Heidegger says that today the will to power determines the basic character of action. Two types, “the worker” and “the soldier,” are the faces of the actual. Together, they are the

kind of humanity that is called to carry out today's "shattering of the world" and direct our relation to beings (GA 51: 36).¹² But the experience of being a worker and soldier does not necessarily bring insight into being (GA 51: 38). Absorption in the metaphysical game is not an understanding of the deeper ontohistorical currents.

Then in what sense does Heidegger affirm machination, if not by submitting to it? The answer becomes clearer in light of his concept of downfall (*Untergang*). An inception, if it is great, ends in a great downfall. "The great collapses [*geht unter*], the small remains forever" (GA 95: 427). "Only those who can never know the inception are afraid of the downfall" (GA 97: 17). Downfall is a sign of being (GA 94: 429). "*Beyng* itself is 'tragic'—that is, it has its inception in downfall as an abyssal ground" (GA 95: 417). "Beyng itself brings itself into the 'catastrophic' course of its history" (GA 95: 50). What we need is "a *καταστροφή* into the abyss of beyng" (GA 95: 417). Downfall is "the highest victory of beyng," "the highest testimony and history of the uniqueness of beyng" (GA 95: 403). If being is essentially "catastrophic" or "tragic," then we should not fear the collapse of modernity but accelerate it. Downfall might become a transition to the other inception (GA 94: 277).

If the greatness of the first inception fails to eventuate in a great downfall, we may face "the degeneration of the current condition of unconditional machination into the endless" (GA 96: 138–39). "The great doom that everywhere threatens modern humanity and its history is this: that a *downfall* remains forbidden to it, for only the inceptive can collapse. The rest comes to an end . . . in the endlessness offered by the possibilities of a special kind of 'infinities'" (GA 96: 251). What Heidegger fears is the indefinite continuation of a tradition whose essential possibilities have been played out. "The greatest danger is not barbarism and decline [*Verfall*], for these conditions can drive us into an extreme and thus bring forth an emergency. The greatest danger is averageness and the indifferent management of everything" (GA 94: 330).

This means that critiques of dictatorship are misguided, according to Heidegger. Totalitarian systems, as "effective forms of machination," cannot be judged in moral terms or condemned from a democratic point of view; dictators are "the executors of the completion of modernity" who bring modernity "to its highest essence; their greatness consists in the fact that they are able to be 'dictatorial'—that they get wind of the concealed necessity of the machination of being and do not let themselves be driven off track by any seduction" (GA 95: 404).

The talk of 'dictatorship' is idle talk from the point of view of a 'freedom' that has forgotten, or rather never has known, to what its freedom frees: it frees for the self-securing of man as subject. . . . The supposed 'dictatorships' are not a *dictans*, but already in themselves the *dictatum* of that essence of being from

which modern man cannot escape, because in order to be himself, he must affirm it in all its essential consequences. (GA 95: 431)

In other words, the struggle between liberal individualism and totalitarianism is a conflict between two forms of aggressive, closed-minded modern subjectivity—and totalitarianism has an advantage in that it recognizes the naked, absolute claim of total machination, thus accelerating the salutary catastrophe.¹³

According to Heidegger, then, no compromises will be adequate to overcoming modernity. The modern will to power must be played out to its extremity before the new inception can take place. This perspective continues after the war, when Heidegger writes that “a few” (presumably including himself) realized in 1932—“in a genuine and completely non-destructive sense”—“that the technical world of today’s humanity cannot be overcome with half measures—but only by passing through its complete essence” (GA 97: 250). The claim about the “non-destructive sense” is revisionism, but the rest of the thought is very much in line with Heidegger’s position in the 1930s. “Before the downfall,” as he writes in another postwar note, “man must rise up to become the overman” (GA 97: 367).

This line of thought reflects the passage that Fried cites (22) from Heidegger’s reflections on Jünger in the 1930s: the “highest possession of power” may be capable of passing beyond power itself to prepare a “new truth of being” (GA 90: 222). At that time, the supreme instantiation of the metaphysical will to power was the Nazi regime. After the war, planetary technology, which embraces every country, plays that role. Heidegger’s attitude continues to be one of grim fascination, as he waits for modernity to culminate in a convulsion.¹⁴

NAZISM AND WORLD JEWRY AS UN-WESEN

Let us return to the notebooks written during Hitler’s regime to take a closer look at Heidegger’s attitude toward the Nazi movement and its ideology, as well as “world Jewry.” National Socialism is discussed on hundreds of pages of the notebooks, nearly always in a critical mode. Heidegger likes to point out what he takes to be parallels between Nazism and its supposed opponents, seeing them all as instances of ontohistorical *Un-wesen*. “National Socialism is not Bolshevism, and Bolshevism is not fascism; but both [extreme right and extreme left?] are the machinational triumphs of machination—gigantic completion-forms of modernity—a calculated misuse of peoples” (GA 96: 127, ca. 1939). Nazi ideology appropriates the principles of Germany’s enemies: power politics, cultural politics, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, imperialism. None of these ideas are properly German, but rather English, French, Russian, Italian, or generally modern (GA 96: 197).

There can be no reasonable doubt that by the late thirties, Heidegger sees National Socialism—or at least what it actually is as an ideology and practice, not whatever “inner truth” it might once have adumbrated—as a case of machination. For instance, Nazi racial doctrine is “a *consequence* of the power of machination, which must force beings in all their domains down into planned calculation” (GA 96: 56). “The” *Volk* is an idol that is just a form of the machinational (GA 94: 420). “All hymns to landscape and soil, all exaltation of ‘blood,’ are just a foreground and pretext; they are necessary in order to keep what really, solely *is*—namely, the unconditional dominance of the machination [*Mach-schaft*] of destruction . . . to keep this free for its own complete perfection of its essence, and that means disguising it from the many” (GA 95: 381–82). Nazism, as the “machinational organization of the people,” can never master technology. “What is essentially a slave can never become master” (GA 94: 472).

But—and here is Heidegger’s strange affirmation—“this birth of the new politics from the essence of technology, insofar as we mean these connections not chronologically but ontohistorically (arising from the machinational *Unwesen* of being)—this birth is *necessary* and thus cannot be the object of a short-sighted ‘opposition’ that appeals to former ‘world views’ and standpoints based on faith” (GA 94: 472). Nazism is the necessary fulfillment of machination, and thus a possible transition to a non-machinational, post-metaphysical epoch.

Where do the Jews stand in Heidegger’s scheme? In the first five volumes of *Black Notebooks* (GA 94–98), I find twenty-eight passages that range from remarks on particular Jews to generalizations about Jewish religion or “world Jewry.” Most of these are poorly developed, brief comments. I do not mean to minimize their importance; they are often telling and troubling. But it is clear that Heidegger did not think it was worth his time to research Jewish life or tradition in any depth, or to explain and justify his ontohistorical judgments on the Jews. We are left to resolve various ambiguous hermeneutic situations created by remarks that are, philosophically speaking, rudimentary and unsatisfactory.

What is clear is that Heidegger sees “world Jewry” as a carrier of machination and criminality, in his senses. The Jews, as rootless cosmopolitans, are destructive and devastating, carrying out “the uprooting of all beings from being” (GA 96: 243). In the manuscript of *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (1938–1940), Heidegger writes: “The question remains . . . what the basis is for the peculiar predetermination of Jewry for planetary criminality.”¹⁵ He does not attribute brutality to the Jews, but rather, a spectral, sly, conspiratorial manipulation. This is all consistent with standard anti-Semitic tropes, although in a postwar passage Heidegger denies that his views have anything to do with “foolish and abominable” anti-Semitism; he may mean that his

views are not based on biological racism, or have nothing in common with the Christian history of hounding and executing unbelievers (GA 97: 159).

Heidegger rarely picked up his journal during the most intense phase of the Second World War; there are only a few pages dating from 1942 to 1945, when the Shoah was in full swing. But these pages include three comments in a row on Jews. The one that has received the most attention so far reads:

When what is “Jewish” in the metaphysical sense combats what is Jewish, the high point of self-annihilation in history has been attained—supposing that the “Jewish” has everywhere completely seized mastery, so that even the fight against “the Jewish,” and it above all, becomes subject to it. (GA 97: 20)

The passage can be read as claiming that European Jews have brought their own annihilation upon themselves, that they themselves are responsible for the Holocaust. Some other interpretations are possible, though. Heidegger may be saying that the Nazis are unwittingly destroying their own ideological source. He may be saying that it is the underlying ontohistorical machination, which lies at the root of both Jewish and Nazi machination, that is turning against itself. Or perhaps all three of these readings are compatible and are somehow implied in Heidegger’s thought. What is safe to say is that there is no hint of sympathy here for the victims; instead, he seems to be coldly, distantly, and ironically observing the events of the time.

To put the passage in context and relate it to the question of affirmation and negation, it is helpful to compare it to remarks on other forms of self-destruction. This proves to be a recurring theme in Heidegger’s view of the world. Just two pages before the comment on the campaign against the Jews, he writes, “The highest stage of technology is reached when, as consumption, it has nothing more to consume—than itself” (GA 97: 18). Elsewhere he writes that the Soviet onslaught against the West is really a form of the West’s self-destruction, since communism is Western (GA 96: 276; GA 97: 37, 53). Or, he writes after the war, since the Americans are destroying Europe and they are essentially Europeans, Europe is destroying itself (GA 97: 230).

On the one hand, Heidegger hardly seems to be celebrating these events. His expressions “high point” and “highest stage” should not be taken naively as some sort of praise. On the other hand, the dynamic of self-destruction may be precisely how he imagines that machination, taken to an extreme, may lead to its own downfall, making way for a new inception. This malignancy turned against itself, this self-canceling *Un-wesen*, would then have to be “affirmed.” (Again, the parallels to Hegel are unmistakable, as well as certain parallels to Nietzsche, as we will see below.)

Can an appreciation for the double-sided character of Heidegger’s position on *Un-wesen* help us interpret texts other than the *Black Notebooks*? Let us

take some passages in his 1940 Nietzsche lectures as a test case. In this text, among others, Heidegger analyzes “subjectivity” in what can easily appear to be a critical mode, but Faye has argued that Heidegger is in fact celebrating or endorsing the Nazi form of subjectivity. Faye’s proposal is worth careful consideration; he invites those who would read Heidegger as a critic of Nazism to execute a Gestalt switch, in which what may have seemed to be negative remarks now appear with a positive valence.

Faye writes:

In May-June 1940, at the moment of the invasion of Holland, Belgium and France by the motorized armies of the Third Reich, Heidegger taught a course titled *Nietzsche, European Nihilism* [GA 48], at the end of which he presented the motorization of the Wehrmacht as “a metaphysical act”! In this course, he was not yet the critic of world technology that he would present himself as being after the defeat of Nazism in 1945. On the contrary, he praised the “new humanity” (*neues Menschentum*), that of the German people under the Third Reich, which had succeeded in “letting itself be totally dominated by technology” in order to dominate it in turn, and thus to dominate the other peoples, who were excluded from that “new humanity.” (57–58)

We certainly need to pay close attention to passages from texts such as the Nietzsche lectures that Heidegger expurgated after the war. Faye’s archival research, as well as that of other scholars sharing this philological approach, has uncovered significant cases of such material; this type of research ought to continue as scholars work toward a critical understanding of the history of Heidegger’s manuscripts and publications. In this case, we need not even turn to the archives, but can consult volume 48 of the *Gesamtausgabe*.¹⁶

Naturally, the texts cited by Faye must be interpreted closely in context. Let us begin with the comment on the Wehrmacht. Heidegger’s statement runs:

From the point of view of bourgeois culture and “intellectuality” [*Geistigkeit*] one could, for instance, view the complete—that is, fundamental, from the ground up—“motorization” of the Wehrmacht as a manifestation of merely limitless “technicism” and “materialism.” In truth, it is a metaphysical act, which surely exceeds in its depth something like the elimination of “philosophy.” That would just be a measure within the academic and educational industry. (GA 48: 333)

Does this statement *exalt* the German military? Heidegger does attribute depth and importance to the complete technical mobilization of the country’s forces. The reasons for this attribution are not stated, but the claim is not necessarily praise. Consider that he compares the motorization of the Wehrmacht

to the possible abolition of philosophy as a topic of instruction, which presumably he would not welcome.

The mechanized military is an instance of metaphysics' oblivion of its constitutive distinction between being and beings. This distinction "counts as the basis and ground of human history, which in its innermost essential forces remains metaphysically determined. As long as we do not clearly experience these and decisively reflect on them, we constantly fall prey to erroneous judgments and positions"—such as the "bourgeois" view of the Wehrmacht (GA 48: 333). To counteract the oblivion of the ontological difference, Heidegger proposes that we must reflect on Plato's establishment of that difference and on the way in which such a move was prepared by earlier Greek philosophy (GA 48: 334). Naturally, it would be difficult to find thinkers to carry out this reflection if instruction in philosophy were abolished.

But why would a motorized Wehrmacht count as a deep instance of the forgetting of the ontological difference? Let us return to an instructive passage on brutality from the *Black Notebooks*, dating from 1939:

What must in the future be called by the name *brutalitas* (not accidentally a Roman term) [is] the unconditionality of the machination of being. . . . [The many] need the romanticism of the "Reich," of the Volk, of "soil" and "camaraderie." . . . The *brutalitas* of being has as a consequence, and not as a ground, that man himself, as a being, makes himself expressly and thoroughly into a *factum brutum* and "grounds" his animality with the theory of race . . . [a theory that] drives toward the most radical nihilism; for everything is "in the end," that is, already at the start, an "expression" of the race. . . . The predator is the original form of the "hero." . . . But the predator equipped with the means of the highest technology completes the actualization of the *brutalitas* of being. (GA 95: 394–95)

The basic thought is clear: the technologically equipped predator (the motorized Wehrmacht) is a deep phenomenon because it expresses a metaphysical interpretation of the essence of human beings and their relationship to being. Man, blindly following his metaphysical determination as *animal rationale*, morphs into a calculating beast. This development is more Roman than German. Heidegger adds that Nazi rhetoric is superficial propaganda and Nazi racism is a nihilistic offshoot of the underlying metaphysical self-misinterpretation.

The comment on the "depth" of the motorized Wehrmacht now looks quite different from a simple celebration of military conquest. The phenomenon is a case of *Un-wesen*. But we have seen that to recognize the *Un-wesen* is not necessarily to reject it. It is still possible that Heidegger is "affirming" the "most radical nihilism" of militarized, racist conquest, precisely because of its "depth."

We must turn to the passage on a “new humanity” that Faye mentions:

In these days, we ourselves are the witnesses to a mysterious law of history, that one day a people is no longer fit for the metaphysics which arose from its own history, in the moment in which this metaphysics has transformed itself into the unconditional. Now what Nietzsche already metaphysically recognized becomes clear: that modern “machine economy”—the machinelike, thorough calculation of all action and planning in its unconditional form—requires a new humanity that goes beyond humanity up to now. In other words: it is not enough that one possesses tanks, airplanes, and information devices; nor is it enough to have at one’s disposal people who can operate such things; nor is it enough for man merely to control technology, as if it were something indifferent in itself as regards utility and harm, construction and destruction, usable arbitrarily by anyone for arbitrary ends.

What was required was a humanity that from the bottom up is suited to the unique fundamental essence of modern technology and its metaphysical truth, that is, a humanity that lets itself be completely dominated by technology, so that it itself may steer and use particular technical processes and possibilities.

Only the overman is suited to the unconditional “machine economy,” and vice versa: the overman needs such an economy in order to establish unconditional domination of the earth. But it was Descartes who pushed open the door to the essential domain of this metaphysically understood domination, with the proposition *cogito sum*. The proposition that inanimate nature is *res extensa* is only the essential consequence of the first proposition. *Sum res cogitans* is the ground, what lies at the ground, the *subjectum* for the determination of the material world as *res extensa*. (GA 48: 205)

Now, is Faye correct to say that Heidegger “praised the ‘new humanity’” (57)? Heidegger claims that this humanity is metaphysically “required,” but that is not necessarily praise. It should be noted that the overman does not dominate technology itself, as Faye claims, but only individual technical devices and procedures; technology as a broader metaphysical destiny can never be technically controlled.

There are further problems with Faye’s interpretation. Heidegger says nothing here about dominating other peoples. It is not clear that the overman is embodied only by the Germans, since other peoples too are submitting to technology—compare the passage in the *Black Notebooks* that claims that the Soviet “motorization of humanity” is the acme of brutalization (GA 96: 256). Finally, the role of Descartes here suggests that it is problematic to assert, with Faye, that Heidegger is both anti-Cartesian and pro-technology.

But, yet again, Heidegger’s thinking cannot be reduced to a list of what he is “for” and what he is “against.” Consider this comment from the late 1930s in the *Black Notebooks*:

The attack on Descartes, that is, the counter-questioning that is *appropriate* to his basic metaphysical position on the basis of a fundamental overcoming of

metaphysics, can be carried out only by *asking the question of being*. The first attack of this kind is attempted in *Being and Time* (1927). It has nothing in common with the previous and subsequent “critique” of “Cartesianism.” This attack, through its choice of opponent, first places this opponent into his unimpeachable greatness within the history of Occidental thinking. This attack knows that nothing can be achieved here with “refutations”—that instead, through the primordially of the attack, the one attacked first comes to stand properly in his historical unshakability, so it is ever less possible for him to be considered “defeated,” if a future of thoughtful questioning still remains open to the West. Thus, this attack (although since then, it has been exploited just as strongly by Jews as by National Socialists, without being grasped in its essential core) has nothing in common with the impertinent, half-cocked carping at Descartes from “*völkisch-political*” points of view . . . these world-view-based perspectives—the appeal to “life” and to “man” defined “otherwise”—are indebted to Descartes through and through. That is, they take over—to be sure, in complete obliviousness—the characterization of humanity as *subjectum* that was grounded by Descartes. They fortify Cartesianism in a manner whose coarseness guarantees that Cartesianism will become more and more obvious to the “people.” (GA 95: 168–69)

Heidegger is “for” Descartes in the sense that he views Descartes as a permanently great thinker, and he sees Nazi anti-Cartesianism as mere propaganda, a chauvinist ideology that is blind to its own entanglement in what it attacks. This is not to say that Heidegger is a Cartesian, of course. According to him, Descartes takes the subject as a secure ground; Nazis take the *Volk* as just such a ground, even though they interpret it in terms of “life” instead of reason. The result is the technological predator, the motorized Wehrmacht.

The question of subjectivity is crucial to the interpretation not just of this passage, but of Heidegger’s entire tortured relationship to Nazism. In fact, Faye’s “entire interpretation of Heidegger’s relationship with National Socialism depends on” the thesis that during the Nazi regime, Heidegger does not critique subjectivity in general, but only “degenerate,” individualistic subjectivity.¹⁷ Faye claims that Heidegger did not aim at overcoming the metaphysics of subjectivity in general until after the war, citing a discussion at GA 48: 211–13 (1940). I cannot agree with Faye that in that passage, Heidegger understands subjectivity “quite positively” and individual egoity “negatively,” that he “has a very positive view of the fulfillment (*Erfüllung*) of subjectivism . . . in the people and the nation,” or that “Heidegger’s intended meaning is unequivocal.”¹⁸ In fact, it is quite equivocal, as it deals with a case of *Un-wesen*. In this case as in others, Faye commits the mistake of taking superlative expressions such as *Erfüllung* as expressions of simple approval. Heidegger cannot be wholeheartedly embracing subjectivism as “the unconditional self-legislation of man” (GA 48: 213), in which “man becomes the ground of all truth” (GA 48: 211) and bases “everything that

is . . . upon himself” (GA 48: 212). He had already condemned this attitude at length, notably in the 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He repeatedly rejects the subjectivist conception of freedom as autonomy (e.g., GA 36/37: 161; GA 66: 48). Many other texts written during the Nazi regime confirm that Heidegger is critiquing the predominant ideology as a form of subjectivism. For example, when describing Dasein’s displacement into beyng, he writes that “there is no room at all here for the interpretation of the human being as ‘subject,’ either as the egoistic subject or as the communal subject” (GA 65: 488). However, as we have seen, Heidegger thinks that modern subjectivity must drive to its catastrophic end before a post-subjectivist dispensation becomes possible. This is the element of truth in Faye’s interpretation.

For Heidegger, subjectivism is an error—but it is a great error, and Descartes, the founding philosopher of modern subjectivity, is a great thinker who anticipates the destiny of our age. Is the motorized Wehrmacht great in a similar sense? Consider Domenico Losurdo’s interpretation of the 1940 lectures: “The ruthlessness and brutality with which the Third Reich was achieving its goals were philosophically described and transfigured by Heidegger [e.g., at GA 48: 73, 139] as complete and active nihilism, which contains nothing decadent, because it accelerates and completes the collapse of decaying values that are devoid of credibility.”¹⁹ Losurdo is too quick to assume that when Heidegger is explaining Nietzsche’s concept of active nihilism, he is himself wholeheartedly adopting a Nietzschean point of view. We would have to consider the intense critique of Nietzsche’s metaphysics (and of Jünger’s variety of Nietzscheanism) that Heidegger develops in other texts. We also have to consider the possibility that, lecturing under the Third Reich, Heidegger would prefer to keep his own point of view unclear, so that he could seem to be a pure Nietzschean Nazi while maintaining private reservations. Still, there is a good deal of truth in Losurdo’s reading: the catastrophe of beyng and the possibility of a new inception, which according to Heidegger may be facilitated by the extremity of machination, bear similarities to what Nietzsche calls the revaluation of all values.

ON ERRANCY AND ERRORS

It should be clear that I am not proposing that Heidegger was a convinced anti-Nazi. Rather, my point throughout this essay is that the categories of “pro” and “anti” are insufficient to capture Heidegger’s thoughts. To say, with Faye, that Heidegger is “indissociable” from “the exterminatory movement” of Nazism (56) is to disregard profound ambiguities.

This is not to exculpate Martin Heidegger. When it comes to tyranny and mass murder, ambiguity is no virtue. For all the complexity of his

thought, Heidegger's failings are quite clear. Although he acknowledged his "errancy," that acknowledgment is far from an apology.²⁰ He frankly states that his thinking lies "beyond good and evil" (GA 97: 179) and often insists that moral categories are far too superficial to grasp the meaning of machination (e.g., GA 69: 80). If we ourselves are unwilling to set morality aside, then a negative moral judgment on Heidegger's stance is inevitable. He is morally indefensible.

What, then, is to be gained by working through his ambiguities, if we are quite clear on the evil of Nazism? Is there anything of philosophical value today in Heidegger's political thought?

I believe so. It is clear that, even if Heidegger never set aside his sympathies for the Nazi movement, he held that its predominant ideology was superficial and failed to understand its own metaphysical presuppositions. His analyses of those presuppositions may have cogency independently of whether he was pro-Nazi, anti-Nazi, or (as I have argued) affirmed Nazism precisely because of its catastrophic nihilism. His metaphysical diagnosis of Nazism is certainly debatable, but that is a debate worth having, and perhaps a necessary one if today's neofascist movements are to be combated intellectually.

However, Heidegger exhibits an obvious *déformation professionnelle*: he insists that all political and historical events are to be judged exclusively in terms of their metaphysical presuppositions. For instance, he asserts in the 1940 Nietzsche lectures that "'totality' is not the invention of supposed 'demagogues and dictators,' but the essential trait of a metaphysical process whose regions were historically posited by precisely those peoples and nations who today are no longer fitted to its *unconditionality*" (GA 48: 168). We have seen other scornful dismissals of the concept of dictatorship in the *Black Notebooks* (GA 95: 404, 431). For Heidegger, liberal capitalism has no superiority to fascism or communism, but is only the half-hearted continuation of a metaphysics that liberalism itself initiated, but is incapable of bringing to its culmination. The truly historical peoples are those who have devoted themselves in full to the *Un-wesen* of modernity. Thus, by dismissing all political and ethical judgments in favor of metaphysical ones, Heidegger eliminates any grounds for opposing totalitarianism.

Here, in my view, is where a primary danger of Heidegger's way of thinking lies. We must not follow him in his utter abandonment of properly moral and political ideas, such as the concepts of "demagogues and dictators." Those concepts describe real and all too important phenomena—human beings whose behavior has painful and ruinous effects.

It is questionable whether anyone is, ultimately, driven by a metaphysical ideology. There are deeper, universally human passions and vices—resentment, ambition, malice, cruelty, conformism—that go farther to explain political phenomena. Some human beings feel a need to enlist their reason in the

service of such impulses and to ascribe their own behavior to some set of beliefs—religious, mythical, or metaphysical. These people will, sometimes with great passion and sincerity, rationalize their actions in terms of the “ism” that they espouse. To critique that “ism” philosophically may be a necessary project, and some of Heidegger’s analyses can help us in the task. But when that task is done, the real work of justice has hardly begun.

I will end with a question about philosophy itself. Heidegger elides crucial distinctions—between justice and injustice, tyranny and freedom—in his eagerness to find the “essential” unity that underlies apparent oppositions. For him, all phenomena become instances of an overpowering essence. The malignant essence cannot simply be rejected because it, too, is part of that essence to which we and the whole world belong. Should the *Black Notebooks* serve as a cautionary example of the damage that the passion for essences can inflict on good judgment? And, insofar as all philosophy seeks essences, does all philosophy run the risk of such misjudgments?

NOTES

1. Against Heidegger’s anti-liberalism, see my “Metaphysical Liberalism in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” *Political Theory* 25, no. 5 (October 1997), 655–79. For my broader account and critique of Heidegger’s politics, see Richard Polt, *Time and Trauma: Thinking Through Heidegger in the Thirties* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019).

2. Richard Polt, “Beyond Struggle and Power: Heidegger’s Secret Resistance,” *Interpretation* 35, no. 1 (Fall 2007), 11–40.

3. All the following quotations are found in Heidegger, GA 97 (as in the rest of this essay, the translations are mine, unless others are cited): “the National Socialist terror” (82); “the reign of terror of the bygone system” (84); “the reign of horror [*Schreckensregiment*] of ‘Nazism’” (156); “The blunt brutality of the ‘Third Reich’” (82); “the massive brutality of ahistorical ‘National Socialism’” (87); “the criminal madness of Hitler” (444); “the irresponsible misdeeds with which Hitler raged around Europe” (250); “the wild willing of *nationalism*” (99); “the wildness [*Verwilderung*] of *National Socialism*” (100); “‘National Socialism’ very quickly and inexorably became *one* of the aberrations into criminality [*Abirringen ins Verbrecherische*]” (200–201); “the atrocities [*Greuel*] evident on posters [of concentration camps]” (84–5); “the atrocious business [*Greuelhaften*] of the ‘gas chambers’” (99); “the atrocities of National Socialism” (98); “In ‘National Socialism,’ i.e. in the wretched aberration of its essence, ‘the mind’ [*der Geist*] was simply despised” (209). For Heidegger’s denials that Nazism can be justified, see 129, 135 (with reference to Nazi “criminality”), 136 (Nazi “historical cluelessness”), and 150 (“Hitler”).

4. Faye cautions that the texts “programmed . . . for posthumous publication” must be used only with “the greatest precaution and reservations”: “Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger’s Writings,” *Philosophy Today* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2011), 281.

5. See my essay “The *Black Notebooks* as Thought Journals,” in *Zur Hermeneutik der “Schwarzen Hefte,”* Heidegger-Jahrbuch 11, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2017).

6. Unpublished typescript, Loyola University of Chicago Archives, Martin Heidegger-Barbara Fiand Manuscript Collection, accession number 99–13, box 3, folders 2–3.

7. See Richard Polt, “The Question of Nothing,” in *A Companion to Heidegger’s “Introduction to Metaphysics,”* ed. Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

8. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger consistently pairs machination with *Erlebnis* or “lived experience” (GA 65: 129–34). As we increasingly measure and manipulate our external surroundings, we accumulate internal, subjective, shallow experiences. (An amusement park or a movie theater would provide clear examples.) The concept of machination is a predecessor to what Heidegger was to call the *Ge-stell* in the 1949 Bremen Lectures (GA 79). *Ge-stell* has been translated in several ways; I like Gianni Vattimo’s suggestion “im-position.” Im-position is the essence of technology, understood as a mode of revealing what is. In the light of im-position, beings are disclosed as what can be posited or ascertained through rational calculation, and then put in position so that they can serve the functions imposed on them by human will. Entities get broken up into “pieces” that can mesh into a global system of production and exploitation. They become “standing reserve” or resources, which can yield energy for our projects—and we ourselves become “human resources.”

9. Similarly, several passages put “culture” on a par with “barbarism” (GA 95: 280, 294, 322; GA 96: 201).

10. Heidegger credits Nietzsche with foreseeing this development (GA 96: 14).

11. *Basic Concepts*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 14 (GA 51: 17–18). Heidegger follows this comment with a clear allusion to the Third Reich as one of the regimes that are “knowingly planned to last millennia.” The source of this phenomenon is “metaphysical will,” not individual dictators. While Heidegger is impressed with the depth of this will, his distance from it can be seen in his comment that the Greeks, far from fortifying themselves against downfall (*Untergang*), saw greatness in it (*ibid.*, 15 = GA 51: 18).

12. A clear source for Heidegger’s thoughts here is Ernst Jünger’s *The Worker*, which portrays a world of “total mobilization” that empowers a new form of subjectivity. Heidegger’s critique (GA 90) paints Jünger as a one-sided Nietzschean. However, Heidegger takes Jünger to have painted a strikingly accurate picture of the metaphysical vision underlying the contemporary world.

13. Despite Heidegger’s struggle against Hegel’s conceptions of nothingness and negativity (GA 68: 3–61), Heidegger’s thoughts on dictatorship are strikingly similar to the reasoning of Hegel, who sees certain disruptive forces and individuals as embodiments of a historical dialectic that operates on a higher level than morality (thus Napoleon is “the world spirit on horseback”).

14. In the Bremen Lectures Heidegger pursues Hölderlin’s thought that where the danger is, salvation also grows; the key is to experience technology as a given destiny, a gift, and then to meditate on that which gives it. It is presumably in this sense that

Heidegger writes in a 1968 letter to Shlomo Zemach (an Israeli writer and translator of *The Origin of the Work of Art*) that “it is a great error to say that I am against technology.” But the same letter claims that in 1935 “my position toward National Socialism . . . was already unambiguously hostile” (GA 40: 233). We have seen that this is not the case. In fact, if Nazism was a form of machination, then Heidegger could not simply be “against” it. As a “gift,” it should, in some sense, be “affirmed.”

15. Quoted in Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 33. I have encountered the suggestion that Heidegger means that the Jews are destined to be *victims* of criminality. This interpretation does not strike me as plausible.

16. Fried collects comparably significant material from GA 43 that was cut from the postwar *Nietzsche* volumes in *Heidegger's Polemos*, 257–61. Sidonie Kellerer has discovered significant differences between the 1938 and postwar versions of Heidegger's “The Age of the World Picture”: “Reworking the Past: The Postwar Publication of a 1938 Lecture by Martin Heidegger,” *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 3 (November 2014), 575–602. In the 1938 version, Heidegger refers to individualism as the *Unwesen* of subjectivity, and asserts that the communitarian struggle against individuality also takes place within the realm of subjectivity. Faye describes this as a “*völkisch* radicalization” and a “National-Socialist confession of faith” (“Subjectivity and Race,” 271), but this is far from obvious. We have seen that Nazism, for Heidegger, is itself a form of machinational *Unwesen*. His affirmation of the movement is not a confession of faith *within* the movement, since he questions its metaphysical foundations, including subjectivity.

17. Faye, “Subjectivity and Race,” 269.

18. “Subjectivity and Race,” 271.

19. Domenico Losurdo, “Heidegger and Hitler's War,” in *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 146.

20. See Polt, “The *Black Notebooks* as Thought Journals,” for an analysis of the passage from which Heidegger extracted the well-known saying, “He who thinks greatly must err greatly” (GA 97: 174–79; GA 13: 81).

Chapter 6

The Imperative Mode of Heidegger's Thought, National Socialism, and Anti-Semitism

Dieter Thomä

When looking down on a city from far above, one does not see any details or hear any individual voices. These voices blend into one another and rise as a cloud of sounds. What if we hovered above a city where only one language—Heidegger's—were spoken, where his texts, discourses, and lectures were replayed all at once, as a mighty torrent of words? Would we make out a pattern, a signature tune?

Heidegger himself “give[s] a little hint on how to listen” to his philosophical language in the late lecture on “Time and Being”: “The point is not to listen to a series of propositions” (GA 14: 6/2). This advice is actually to the point. His mode of thinking deviates from systematic philosophy. But how do we account for this difference? Before sketching my own answer to this question, I need to briefly discuss Heidegger's own suggestions regarding the non-propositional tenor of his philosophy. They lead into two different directions.

In “Time and Being,” Heidegger advises the reader “to follow the movement of showing” (GA 14: 6/2). This “*Showing*,” which is said to be “*the essential being of language*,” has a linguistic complement: “naming”—the act of singling out something and hinting at something (GA 12: 16–17/L, 196; GA 12: 242/OWL, 123).¹ Naming represents an alternative to propositional language; it operates with single words: the pitcher, the bridge, or the shoes. (I will get back to showing and naming at the end of this paper.)

In his early years, Heidegger is not so much interested in naming but in questioning. At the very beginning of *Being and Time*, he states: “Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of *Being*” (SZ, 1).² Instead of jumping to Being as such, this initial positioning of his work should be taken seriously: it is about raising a question. Before naming

comes into play, questioning is introduced as the first contender to propositional language and as the *modus operandi* of this philosophy.

Which side should we take when listening to Heidegger's cloud of words? Should we go for naming or for questioning? I would recommend neither of those. Heidegger's two suggestions of how to listen and how to read his philosophy are equally misleading. I propose that the signature tune of his texts, both early and late, is neither questioning nor naming, but the *imperative*. It could be said that the exclamation mark is the mostly invisible, but readily audible amendment to many of his phrases. In the following I will try to cast new light on Heidegger by reading him as a philosopher of the imperative. This may also be helpful for situating the controversy between Gregory Fried and Emmanuel Faye.³ I will make comments on only four of the many important issues raised by them: the status of *Being and Time* as a (non-?)fascist work, the question of whether, how, and when Heidegger distances himself from National Socialism, his anti-Semitism, and his relation to Descartes.

Before turning to the philosophy of the imperative proper, three preliminary clarifications are in place.

- (a) I have to confess that my use of the imperative as a clue to Heidegger's philosophy is inspired by a slightly awkward association. When doing research on the intellectual orchestration of the unmaking of the Weimar Republic, I came across a particularly repulsive figure: Hanns Johst. He joined the Nazi movement in the mid-twenties, was a fierce anti-Semite, and became president of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* in 1934. In his early years, Johst was a savage mind and an expressionist poet. Here are some sound bites from his play *The Young Man* from 1916: "I am full of resolve"—"I don't want to juggle with concepts any longer! I want to trigger an action! . . . Now a swing!! . . . A jump!!!"—"I want to step up and become a signpost!"—"I want . . . to stamp an exclamation mark onto your face!"⁴ Not only does Johst use exclamation marks excessively in this text, he uses them as a weapon and becomes, as it were, a living exclamation mark himself. It should not go unnoticed that Johst's rhetoric makes use of a vocabulary partly used by Heidegger as well: "resolve," "jump," and so on. There are strong correspondences between Johst's praise of the exclamation mark and his dismissal of the juggling with ideas on the one hand and Heidegger's early texts on the other.
- (b) When claiming that the exclamation mark plays a pivotal role in Heidegger's texts, I need to further specify in which sense it is used precisely. The rules of grammar know two main classes of exclamations. They can serve for expressing surprise or awe, and they can take on the form of a command, directive, or order. It is the imperative mode that is omnipresent in Johst and plays a dominant role in Heidegger's texts.

(A more appealing, heterodox notion of the imperative will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.)

- (c) When turning to the imperative, we enter the social logic of interaction. Who issues a command? Who receives an order? Heidegger remains faithful to the imperative mode throughout his life, yet the allocation of roles and the cast chosen for issuing or following orders undergo major changes. In the following, I want to distinguish four different stages in the development of Heidegger's philosophy of the imperative. The fitting titles for these stages are: assignment (*Anweisung*), mission (*Auftrag*), destiny (*Geschick*), and calling (*Geheiß*).

ASSIGNMENT

We should keep in mind that there is a powerful philosophical role model for Heidegger's imperative: Husserl's "Back to the things themselves!" As shown elsewhere,⁵ Heidegger alters this imperative in a decisive manner when entering the phenomenological scene. Bluntly said, his slogan becomes "Back to the self itself!" In 1921–1922, Heidegger notes that "genuine accomplishments" in the "world" come "from oneself," *from* the "Self" (GA 61: 195). In 1923, he adds: "Philosophy is a mode of knowing which is in factual life itself and in which factual Dasein is ruthlessly dragged back to itself and relentlessly thrown back upon itself" (GA 63: 18). In 1924, he states: "Mea res agitur" (GA 64: 113). Heidegger issues an ultimatum that can be regarded as a *last call*. Turn back to yourself, otherwise you are lost! Many variants of this imperative pervade Heidegger's early writings. He quotes Angelus Silesius: "Man, be essential!" (Exclamation mark!) (GA 56/57: 5). He goes back to Pindar's "Become, what you are!" (Exclamation mark!) (SZ, 145). He also adorns his letters to Hannah Arendt and Elisabeth Blochmann with the line "Volo ut sis"—"I want you to be."⁶ This sentence (inspired by St. Augustine) complies with the imperative logic in two respects: (a) There is a strong demand directed at a person and (b) This person's "being" is not taken for granted but appears to be an achievement by which she responds to this demand. She is called into being and comes into being. Generations of Heidegger readers have dutifully learned the lesson that his philosophy was concerned with "Being." They got it all wrong. In fact, when it comes to *Being and Time* and the early lecture courses, Heidegger was concerned with "Be!"

The imperative is a cornerstone of Heidegger's philosophical—and personal—endeavor. In his letters to Karl Löwith from 1920 to 1921, he reacts to a "state of upheaval" (*Umsturz-Situation*) by stating "I do only what I must do."⁷ The "must" is the placeholder for the imperative in any given

proposition. It attains its purest form in the famous definition of the basic constitution of Dasein which “has to” be its Being: “Dasein . . . has been delivered over to the Being which . . . it has to be”—“Its essence lies . . . in the fact that . . . it has its Being to be”—“Dasein . . . exists as an entity which has to be as it is and as it can be” (SZ, 134, 12, 276). Dasein receives a directive, an assignment; it is called upon to follow it or to live up to itself. It listens to a “call” or “appeal” (SZ, 275). The imperative aims at “my ownmost *coming to be being*” (*Seinwerden*; GA 20: 441; translation modified) and is directed against the threat of losing oneself, against a life where “everyone is not himself” (GA 64: 113). “‘Resoluteness’ signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one’s lostness in the ‘they’” (SZ, 299).

Heidegger’s imperative has a clearly defined addressee. It is directed at myself, at me as a self. But it is issued by the very same self. The phrase “*volō ut sis*,” which implies a division between sender and addressee, actually conceals the fact that the imperative structure of the task of becoming oneself is circular: “*Dasein calls itself*” (SZ, 320). Any proper caring for others has a secondary or auxiliary function only. The “solicitude” which is said to “liberate” (SZ, 122) the other cannot be but an attempt to accompany the other’s self-liberation. Sender and addressee coincide: “The caller is Dasein. . . . The one to whom the appeal is made is this very same Dasein” (SZ, 277). I follow an assignment not coming from without, but from within. Instead of adhering to other people’s concerns, I listen to myself. When doing so, I do not receive any anthropological or personal information on who I actually am or should be. At this point, Heidegger’s preference for the imperative over the assertive mode of language comes to the fore in the most pertinent manner. When insisting on the fact that “the call gives no information” (SZ, 288), Heidegger seeks to overcome the level of assertions which would be the linguistic container for such information.

The circular structure of the “call” is of a particular kind though. This becomes clear when one compares it to the standard account of self-determination. The latter is based on a self being in charge, steering a person’s behavior and fighting the weakness of the will. Instead of presupposing a firmly installed self which makes a person behave in a certain way, Heidegger takes a step back and demands the self to come into being in the first place. The order is not exactly issued by a given self; it makes clear to Dasein that it could be a self or should be a self. Not complying with this demand would represent a failure in the sense that Dasein mistakes itself for something else, namely for a selfless entity or “something ready-to-hand . . .—that is, something that gets managed and reckoned up” (SZ, 289). By listening to the “call” which “comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me*” (SZ, 276), Dasein is brought “back from its lostness in the concerns of the ‘they’” (SZ, 289). As being a self is all what the Being of Dasein is about, the demand to be such a self can be condensed to the above-mentioned imperative “Be!”

Yet how am I to understand and embrace this peculiar imperative? Let us imagine that we conduct fieldwork in a busy street, approach passers-by, and call upon them to "be." One of them may respond: "I don't quite get it. I *am* already. Why don't you grab me, so you will know?" Another one could reply: "Leave me alone. I am on the way to my wedding, and one thing I know for sure: I am—I am totally into her. This is as good as it gets." In a rebuttal of the first response, Heidegger would probably insist on the difference between physical existence and personal existence. In his rebuttal of the groom's response, Heidegger would complain about a Dasein entangled in its "current, present What." Such a Dasein is nothing but "what it is concerned with." In such "everydayness, Dasein is not the Being that *I am*" (GA 62: 119–20).

The rebuttal of the second response seems pretty nonsensical indeed. If it contains a grain of truth, one has to read the last quotation from Heidegger in a particular manner: by emphasizing the word "not." The imperative "Be!" and the phrase "I am" are marked by a hidden negation: the demand to be *not* a, b, or c, to shake off predicates and qualities. What is left at the end? A purified "I" that consists in nothing but the formal capacity to relate to predicates, to appropriate or reject them. If Dasein accomplishes the task of reclaiming or attaining this very property, it is prevented from actions "consist[ing] simply in taking up possibilities which have been proposed and recommended" (SZ, 298), from "opportunities and circumstances" "which daily 'come to pass'" (SZ, 389–90). A person who is capable of following the command "Be!" is not in any way determined or defined, but asserts herself as somebody who *can* be this or that. Predicates appear as possibilities upon which I project myself. The "Be!" is properly decoded as an "I will be" or "I can."

Those who seek to follow Heidegger's demand "Be!" find themselves in a dodgy situation. This becomes clear when one confronts Heidegger's self-command with regular self-determination one more time. Self-determination consists in the task of gaining some critical distance to existing habits and of living the kind of life that I find appealing. This seems to be different in the case of the Heideggerian imperative "Be!" While following it, I have to maintain a distance to life and insist on the negation of specific predicates. This is why Heidegger says, "I am precisely the possibility itself." The potency of being myself depends on the fact that I do "not draw" the possibility "near as a present but . . . let it stand as a possibility" (GA 20: 439). Instead of generating a critical distance that entitles and empowers me to make the right choice and to get involved, Heidegger seems to retreat to a possibility defying realization. In a paradoxical manner, the imperative "Be!" leads to a turning away from the plenitude of life.

In his attempt to protect the self from being dragged into the real, Heidegger takes refuge to the one singular "possibility" that cannot be "actualized" and

thereby “*annihilate[d]*”—a possibility “not” in any way softened or “weakened” by its realization (SZ, 261). “Death, as possibility, gives Dasein nothing to be ‘actualized,’ nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself be” (SZ, 262). “If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been *fully* assigned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being” (SZ, 250). By anticipating death, the Being of Dasein is “transposed authentically directly to the ‘I am’” (GA 20: 44). Death plays a specific systematic role in *Being and Time*. Reading it side by side with the texts from the Nazi period is instructive in this respect. The early Heidegger claims that when Dasein anticipates death, “all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone” (SZ, 250). The success of this disentanglement obviously depends on the fact that death has not occurred yet. I do have an expiration date, but my death is *mine*—and I only benefit from this exclusive prospect as long as it is still pending. It would be misleading to say that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger celebrated death and praised the willingness of heroes to sacrifice themselves. (By the way, suicide does not make sense under these circumstances either.) My Being as unrestrained possibility coincides with my mortality: “*sum moribundus*, . . . insofar as I am, I am *moribundus*. The moribundus first gives the sum its sense” (GA 20: 437–38).

As discussed elsewhere, Heidegger’s theory of death suffers from severe problems and shortcomings.⁸ In the context of a philosophy of the imperative, the main problem of this theory is the fact that it seems to lead into an aporetic stance that prevents Dasein from retrieving determination and agency. In order to escape from this impasse, two options come to mind: decisionism and totalitarianism.

The decisionist path has been popularized by the witty remark circulating among Heidegger’s students from the 1920s: “I am resolved, only towards what I don’t know.”⁹ According to this reading, the authentic self is not really stuck in the anticipation of death. The vantage point of its ownmost possibility serves as a safe haven that entitles Dasein to act at will without running the risk of losing itself. It maintains its resolve when turning possibilities into actualities. Even though Dasein seems to corner itself by identifying its Being with Being-toward-Death, self-assertion still allows for authentic action.

This decisionist reading is certainly in line with Heidegger’s pretension that authentic Dasein has access to “the *very possibility of taking action*” (SZ, 294). Yet it is at odds with the demand that “a projection is to go beyond a merely fictitious arbitrary construction.” Heidegger wants to provide “instructions” (the German word *Anweisungen* makes the imperative character of such instructions more explicit) (SZ, 260). Dasein’s action should not be an *acte gratuit*; it should receive some guidance for picking the right battle. At this point, the decisionist solution reaches its limit. In the lecture *The Concept of Time* from 1924, Heidegger indicates a different path—a path

providing a proper criterion for authentic action and eventually leading to totalitarianism. He says:

To what extent is time, as authentic, the principle of individuation [*Individuationprinzip; principium individuationis*], i.e., that starting from which Dasein is in specificity? In being futural in running ahead, the Dasein that on average is becomes itself; in running ahead it becomes visible as this one singular uniqueness of its singular fate in the possibility of its singular Being-over.¹⁰ What is properly peculiar about this individuation is that it does not let things get as far as any individuation in the sense of the fantastical emergence of exceptional existences; it strikes down all becoming-exceptional. It individuates in such a way that it makes everyone equal. In being together with death everyone is brought into the “how” that each can be in equal measure; into a possibility with respect to which no one is distinguished; into the “how” in which all “what” dissolves into dust. (GA 64: 124/21E)

This lengthy quotation indicates a narrow path leading from death to agency, from anticipating the future to affirming the present. The experience of death as a possibility turns out to have a powerful, straightforward effect on present decision-making. This effect is indicated by Heidegger's claim that death “mak[es] everybody equal,” that, with respect to death, “no one is distinguished” and any “exceptional existence” dissolves into dust. Death denies the individual any particular qualities; it fosters a complete demolition of distinctions. The point is this: In order to remain true to the ownmost possibility of death, Dasein has to turn the annihilation of differences into a criterion for the kind of agency meeting the standards of authenticity. Thus individualization culminates in equalization. Dasein is required to act in a way that pulverizes differences. Any project qualifying for authentic existence has to share this one feature with death: the lack of any particular, distinctive content, the endorsement of total homogeneity. Heidegger wants Dasein to perform a loop-like movement leading from “fallenness” to “individualization” (*Vereinzelung*—less equivocally translated as singularization) and back again to the world in its fullness (SZ, 175–76). But this fullness is curtailed in order to prevent Dasein from falling prey to “idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity” (SZ, 175). The world is transformed to a mirror image of the leveling and homogenization experienced in Being-toward-death. Toward the end of *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes:

The more authentically Dasein resolves—and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility—the more unequivocally does it choose and find the possibility of its existence, and the less does it do so by accident. Only by the anticipation of death is every accidental and “provisional” possibility driven out. Only

Being-free *for* death, gives Dasein its goal outright and pushes existence into its finitude. Once one has grasped the finitude of one's existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one—those of comfortableness, shirking, and taking things lightly—and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its *fate* [*Schicksals*]. . . . Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. (SZ, 384)

To put it paradoxically: The content of authentic action is the absence of content, the total rejection of any content whatsoever that would entail diversity. The equalization brought about by death sets the bar for anything that could be done in life. Any task, message, or order is to serve sameness; everybody has to act in unison. In order to actually achieve total equalization, *authentic action needs to become totalitarian*.¹¹

In a charitable reading of the “freedom toward death,” some scholars have tried to develop a “phenomenology of freedom” based on Heidegger’s *Being and Time*.¹² This attempt is futile. Freedom is introduced in *Being and Time* only in a curious manner familiar to all native speakers of the German language who consult a doctor and are asked to undress. In German this request reads: *Machen Sie sich mal frei!* This exposure, this ridding (or liberating) oneself from one’s clothes serves the purpose of making oneself ready for a medical procedure. In Heidegger’s case, Dasein prepares for a particular treatment or procedure: it receives a message that comes over it as a salutary salvation. It could be said that the leveling triggered by death as an outpost of “first nature” in human life is used as a leverage for setting things straight in the “second nature” of social life forms and for fostering unequivocal unanimity.

To sum up: By linking the imperative “Be!” to the anticipation of death, Heidegger runs the risk of being stuck with an impoverished, dequalified account of the self strangely reminiscent of Descartes’s “worldless” subject.¹³ In order to find a way out of this unpleasant situation, he considers two options: the decisionist resolve and a mode of agency that proceeds from the equality of dedifferentiation incited by death to the totalitarian equalization of enforced conformity (*Gleichschaltung*). *Being and Time* remains inconclusive at this point. This inconclusiveness is reflected by the controversy among Heidegger scholars who seek to come to grips with the (surprising? predictable?) turn to “people” and “fate” toward the end of *Being and Time*.

At this point, I can turn to the debate between Emmanuel Faye and Gregory Fried for the first time. They contribute to that controversy by taking different sides. Fried says that Heidegger’s National Socialist turn can be deduced from *Being and Time* but does not follow from it “necessarily”

(54). He means to say that Heidegger still needs to take certain steps in order to transform the framework of *Being and Time* into a totalitarian scenario. It is not systematically *cogent* given the premises of his early philosophy that these exact steps are taken. Faye obviously belongs to the opposite camp and claims that Heidegger, from 1919 on, endeavors to instrumentalize philosophy for a National Socialist agenda.¹⁴ The most important reference point for this reading is the turn to the “people” in § 74 of *Being and Time*.

I feel that Fried's reflections on the necessity or likeliness of the development leading from *Being and Time* to National Socialism could benefit from considering Heidegger's obsession with the imperative (further analyzed below). In any case, my account of the early Heidegger is much closer to Fried's than to Faye's. My difference from Faye can be traced back to the proper interpretation of Dasein and temporality in *Being and Time* and related writings. According to Faye, the idea “that Dasein in *Being and Time* and in the book on Kant means . . . individual existence” is utterly misleading.¹⁵ This contention is at odds with Fried's claim that Heidegger wanted philosophy to begin “with the questions that confront us out of our own individual lived experience” (4)—and with my own claim that one of Heidegger's first—albeit implicit—imperatives is “Back to the self itself!”

Faye is aware of Heidegger's frequent usage of the “self” in the early writings, but he claims that this “self” has “nothing” to do with an “individual,” but stands for “being-in-common” and is fully absorbed in the “destiny” of a community.¹⁶ This claim is incompatible with various statements in Heidegger's early writings. In the review of Jaspers's *Psychology of World-views*, he states: “We are given a clue as to where we must find the sense of existence as the particular ‘how’ of the self (of the I). What turns out to be important here is accordingly the fact that I *have* myself, i.e., the basic experience in which I encounter myself as a self. . . . This experience is the experience of the ‘I’ as a self” (GA 9: 29/25). In *The Concept of Time* he adds: “Dasein is an entity that determines itself as ‘I am.’” (GA 64: 113/8E). Like a number of other philosophers, Heidegger likes to distinguish between “I” and “self,” but this self still says “I am” and not “we are.” The notions of “Being-in-the-world” and “Being-with” do not invalidate the fact that it is *me* who is in the world and with others. Rather the opposite: If “the self is what it is in its relations to the world of the self, the world it shares with others, and the enviring world” (GA 9: 34/30), it does not make any sense to regard it as a community or collective *tout court*. Otherwise the “self” would have no use for such “relations” at all. As shown earlier, the self passes through a peculiar process of singularization in order to eventually join a collective immune to dispersion and disarray.

Faye quotes a sequence of questions from *The Concept of Time* leading from “What is time?” via “Who is time?” to “Are we ourselves time?” While this sequence appears in the main text of his paper, the question concluding this sequence is relegated into a footnote: “Am I my time?” (GA 64: 125/22E). Unfitting things do not go away when printed in smaller font. The systematic difficulties that eventually prevent Heidegger from completing *Being and Time* have to do with this strong link between me and my time or between self and temporality—a temporality requiring Dasein to singularize itself in its freedom toward death. According to the original scheme for the whole book project, the next sections after those published under the title of *Sein und Zeit, Erste Hälfte* were supposed to accomplish the step from the temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) of Dasein to the “most original” (GA 24: 429) “*Temporality of Being*” (*Temporalität des Seins*; SZ, 19). This step cannot be conducted conclusively under the premises set by Heidegger in the mid-1920s. As “Dasein is nothing other than *being-time*” and “time is . . . what I myself am,”¹⁷ temporality is exclusively bound to the process of becoming a self. There is really nothing Heidegger can say about a temporality (*Temporalität*) transcending this process. This also limits Heidegger’s leeway for situating the self in a larger whole. The task of joining a collective appears to be a clumsy procedure in *Being and Time*. Only by ignoring Heidegger’s systematic problems can Faye ascribe Heidegger a collectivist approach from the outset. The collective or the “people” is a desideratum—and this is bad news indeed—but it is not a primordial, accomplished fact.

After the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger remains faithful to the imperative mode of philosophizing and makes clear that he goes down the road leading to collectivism. This move is announced by the “action” that “engages in the whole that . . . prevails through us” (GA 29/30: 510) and by the “actual willing of the pure ought” (GA 31: 296). In the *Black Notebooks* from the early 1930s, Heidegger comes up with a rather simplistic play of words that aptly illustrates this point. There he talks about a transition from the “individuality of the existing individual” to the “alone-ness [*Allein-heit*] of Dasein” and further on to the “all-oneness [*All-einheit*] of being” (GA 94: 21). Fooling around with language often helps cover up problems. Faye uses this play of words for what could be called a strategy of retrofitting: it is said to reveal the fact that Heidegger, when talking about the singleness of Dasein in *Being and Time*, already had nothing in mind but a collective.¹⁸ It makes much more sense to take this play of words as a belated attempt to bend and twist his earlier position. In any case, Heidegger’s path from *Being and Time* to National Socialism can be described as a transition from singularity (or soleness) to unity.

MISSION

It does not come as a surprise that Heidegger remains faithful to the imperative mode of philosophizing in the high time of orders and commands around 1933. He now crosses a border still fairly strictly observed in *Being and Time*. In 1927, the imperative was contained in an internal, reflective structure, an appeal directed at the self by the self. If Heidegger himself acted as a commander at all, he did so by demanding his readers or his audience to become selves listening to their own command. Eventually this command culminated in the resolve to act according to one's "fate." The philosophical scenario which could be labeled as the pipedream or nightmare of self-inflicted equalization becomes a political project in 1933. The thinker joins forces with the perpetrators.

This closing of ranks can be illustrated by Heidegger's relation to one of these perpetrators: Albert Leo Schlageter. Schlageter had been a student at the University of Freiburg before becoming a member of the *Freikorps* and committing terrorist attacks in the Rhineland, then occupied by the French. He was executed in 1923 and became one of the first martyrs of the Nazi movement during the Weimar Republic. By the way: The "Being with one another in the same world" (see above) applies to Heidegger and Schlageter in a particular manner. Both attended the same catholic high school in Constance and the *Bertholdsgymnasium* in Freiburg. They each in turn lived in the convent of the Freiburg archdiocese before turning away from theology.

On May 26, 1933, one day before his rectorial address, Heidegger gave a speech at the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Schlageter's death. This speech illustrates the aggressive mode of imperative philosophizing typical for his writings from this period. Heidegger says: "Schlageter walked these grounds as a student. But Freiburg could not hold him for long. He was compelled to go to the Baltic; he was compelled to go to Upper Silesia; he was compelled to go to the Ruhr. He was not permitted to escape his destiny so that he could die the most difficult and greatest of all deaths with a hard will and a clear heart. We honor the hero and raise our arms in silent greeting."¹⁹ In the German original, this compulsion is even more obtrusive, as Heidegger repeats and italicizes the phrase *Er mußte* ("he was compelled") three times. Schlageter excels not just by doing something but by having to do something. Accordingly Heidegger grasps the new German reality in sentences serving as direct orders or as applications of an "ought." It is also noticeable that, in the Schlageter piece, death plays a different role than in *Being and Time*. It could be said that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not want for Dasein to get its fingers burned when anticipating death. In 1933, the willingness to sacrifice one's life becomes the hallmark of heroic action.

It is instructive to compare Heidegger's Schlageter speech to a play that premiered on April 20, 1933, in Berlin, on the occasion of Hitler's birthday and in his presence: the play *Schlageter* by the already mentioned Hanns Johst. Not only does it contain the infamous sentence often ascribed to Goebbels "When I hear the word culture, I release the safety on my Browning" or—as one often reads—"I reach for my revolver." The play also contains the following passages (the punctuation is original): "The world . . . we humans aren't spirit . . . we are flesh and blood, and the laws of life are not spiritual . . . but bloody!"—"I have to obey! To serve!! Where is the command post [. . .]? The two meters of reality, the two meters of duty, the two meters of frontline that matter . . . ? [. . .] My conscience wants a law. And my sentiment needs a command!" At the end, Schlageter knows what he has to do: "There is going to be an explosion!!!" (*Es wird gesprengt!!!*)²⁰

"My sentiment needs a command"—this phrase aptly grasps the spirit of Heidegger's texts from 1933 through 1934. In the *Black Notebooks*, he talks about the happiness or "fortune" (*Beglückung*; GA 94: 111) that comes with the willingness of the German people to act in unison—a willingness only half-heartedly envisaged in *Being and Time*. This collective is marked by a total "fusion"²¹ smelting together all the formerly forlorn individuals. It follows one order as if it had a single body. Heidegger gets rid of the "secretive actual willing of the individual" (*verschlossenen wirklichen Wollens des Einzelnen*):²² "The individual, wherever it stands, does not count. The fate of our people in its state is everything."²³ "Community is through *each individual's* being bound in advance to something that binds and determines every individual" (GA 39: 72). The Germans, standing side by side and in file, are seized by one large movement. They constitute a particular kind of "We," as they don't see each other nor interact with each other, but only look ahead. They are members of "*one single* German 'estate'" (*Lebensstand*) prepared for "sacrifice and service in the area of the innermost necessities of German Being."²⁴ The self-assignment from *Being and Time* is replaced by "mandate and mission: The mission itself is in advance withdrawn from arbitrariness and obstinacy" (GA 38: 156/133). The new authenticity is bound to a mission whose message could not be more simplistic: it consists in the total rejection of any particular content—beside the requirement of total equalization. "The Führer has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into a single resolve."²⁵ Equalization and homogenization culminate in the self-assertion of the German people and develop an aggressive momentum directed against any interaction admitting plurality and diversity. (Hence Heidegger enthusiastically endorses Hitler's decision to leave the League of Nations.)

Grammatically speaking, Heidegger's hero is still a singular, but the individual Dasein has been replaced by "*one* fate," "*one* idea,"²⁶ a people

with one "body," a people as one "community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) or one "whole" (*Volksganzes*).²⁷ This collective singular finds its complement in the singular of the Führer who, for this very reason, can act as mouthpiece or "top dog" of the people. The Führer appeals to a necessity that is nothing but the permanent reconfirmation of total unity. In August 1934, Heidegger states: "The essence of the National Socialist revolution consists in the fact that Adolf Hitler has elevated and established the new spirit of community as a power shaping the new order of the people" (GA 16: 302). The counterimage to this unity is the "unconstrained play of curiosity,"²⁸ that is, all the whims, preferences and reservations creating fission and friction. The decision to be made is not between more or less appealing or justifiable actions but between agency and mere decay. Dissenters are not granted their individual agenda. They are denied agency and called "lame, comfortable, and effete," whereas "those who are strong and unbroken"²⁹ live up to the task of fighting for a new reality and display the "pure will to following and leadership, that is, to struggle and loyalty."³⁰

Who exactly is in charge of issuing an order or command? The Führer? Or maybe Heidegger himself? In line with Jaspers's famous suggestion that Heidegger wanted to lead the Führer, some scholars suggest that Heidegger sought to play his own role in the new order and to maintain some kind of intellectual independence.³¹ Yet the generous formula of "leading the Führer" is misleading. It does not fit to the particular imperative envisaged by Heidegger in 1933. When discussing attempts to "spiritualize and ennoble the . . . National Socialist revolution," he unflinchingly rebuts this idea: "The spirit is already here" (GA 36/37: 7). Heidegger does not want to be in command. He gives himself over to a historical process and to an actual spirit giving out orders. By stating that the "spirit is already here" Heidegger wants to make sure that the new beginning is no artifice. The self-referential assignment of Dasein is not replaced by an order issued by the philosopher at his desk, but by a mission rooting in history. The National Socialist movement achieves by listening to this order.

Is it necessary to know the content of the *Black Notebooks* in order to sketch Heidegger's National Socialism in such a manner? Certainly not. What do they add to the mix? The anti-Semitic aggravation. This makes things worse. But what exactly gets worse? We are familiar with quite a number of anti-Semitic remarks by Heidegger long before 1933. They are to be found mainly in letters and are virtually absent from his academic texts. Even in the strongly National Socialist texts of 1933–1934, anti-Semitic remarks are rare, vague, and cryptic. These texts are now complemented by the *Black Notebooks*, where Heidegger takes off his "mask" (GA 94: 305). Does he, while supposedly speaking freely, launch an attack against the Jews as the ultimate enemy? Yes. But it should not go unnoticed that all his infamous

anti-Semitic tirades do not stem from the early series of the *Black Notebooks*, but from the late 1930s and from the 1940s. I will turn to them in the next section when discussing the question of how this explicit anti-Semitism coalesces with Heidegger's relation to National Socialism in this period. But before doing so, I need to figure out to what extent anti-Semitism is already in play in Heidegger's writings in 1933–1934 or even earlier.

Heidegger certainly has strong anti-Semitic inclinations in and before 1933. But he does not seem to know yet how to give them a philosophical standing. In 1934, he notes: "If, for the purposes of placing out in relief one's own presumed significance, one uses as comparison only scoundrels and money-grubbers from a degenerate epoch, then it is truly no great merit to be better. What one demonstrates in this way is only . . . spiritual blindfoldedness" (GA 94: 153). This statement reveals a distinct form of distaste: disregard. The "villains," among them, certainly, the Jews, are not worth mentioning. They should not matter. Heidegger admonishes those who start a fierce battle against them that they run the risk of debasing themselves. An extended discussion of Heidegger's self-contradictory statements regarding the relation to the (Jewish?) "enemy" would lead to similar findings.³²

When making this claim about the subdued or subordinate role of anti-Semitism in Heidegger's publications from 1933 to 1934 and also from the 1920s, I have to prepare myself for facing an objection that is to be taken seriously. As it can be traced back to an argument made, among others, by Emmanuel Faye, this gives me the opportunity to come back to his controversy with Gregory Fried one more time. This argument basically says that the virtual absence of explicit anti-Semitism in his theoretical texts before the late 1930s does not really matter, as it is trumped by a powerful implicit anti-Semitism already starting in Heidegger's early years. According to this reading, we need to broaden the perspective and regard the 1920s as a kind of warm-up period for the Nazi "mission." So I need to take a step back and discuss the reach and role of anti-Semitism in *Being and Time* and related writings as well.

At first glance, my claim about the marginal role of explicit anti-Semitism in Heidegger's writings before the late 1930s sounds a little simple and schematic. Making this claim serves a purpose though: it raises the bar for Faye's far-reaching interpretation. He needs to come up with truly sophisticated hermeneutical analyses in order to make the case that Heidegger's theoretical texts are full of anti-Semitic insinuations from the outset. For his reading to be plausible, it has to provide answers to two questions: (1) Why is it that Heidegger addresses the Jewish question in an oblique manner only? (2) How do we trace down his allusions clearly targeting and singling out the Jews?

(1) The obvious answer to the first question is that Heidegger's indirectness is merely strategic. In spite of role models like Werner Sombart,

anti-Semitic remarks could look out of place in academic texts and backfire as they limit their impact to an in-group. Even when it comes to Heidegger's public statements in 1933–1934, the argument could be made that his support for National Socialism becomes more efficient—especially with regard to its international impact—when all-too conspicuous hate speech is missing. (This argument is not particularly strong though, as Heidegger volunteers to act as a vicious agitator at various occasions.) This strategic explanation is based on the presupposition that Heidegger would be otherwise very willing to deliver anti-Semitic statements but suppresses them for tactical reasons. This leads to the reverse conclusion that they should abound as soon as he can write without holding back. We specifically have to look for such statements in the theoretical writings, as his anti-Semitic statements in letters are of historical interest only. Under these premises, the *Black Notebooks* where Heidegger takes off his “mask” (see above) serve as a unique test case. The fact that explicit anti-Semitic remarks are missing from these notebooks until 1938 is highly significant. It shows that Heidegger's reticence with regard to anti-Semitic slander cannot be *altogether* strategic. This finding makes it even more pressing to give an answer to the question of whether and how the early Heidegger denigrates the Jews in an indirect manner.

- (2) Several concepts from Heidegger's writings before 1933 fall under suspicion as carrying oblique anti-Semitic allusions, among them “worldlessness” (*Weltlosigkeit*) and “groundlessness” (*Bodenlosigkeit*). Faye calls them two “key concept[s] of Heideggerian anti-Semitism.”³³ In an entry to the *Black Notebooks* probably stemming from 1938, both terms are attributed to the Jews (GA 95: 96–97). Does that mean that Heidegger already aims at the Jews when he uses them earlier? It is always nice to connect the dots in a straightforward manner, but this case requires some caveats. For lack of space, the following remarks are limited to comments on *Bodenlosigkeit*. The reader is asked to bear with the scrupulous investigation that follows, as the Devil is in the details.

First of all, we should keep in mind that the epithet *bodenlos* in the *Black Notebooks* themselves by no means refers to Jews specifically and exclusively. Heidegger also complains, for example, about the “groundless bustling” (*bodenlose Treiben*) of narrow-minded Nazi supporters (GA 94: 223). As he does not always allude to the Jews when using this term, it cannot function as a clear-cut designator or marker—just as little as the term “stingy” necessarily brings Swabians or Scots to mind (according to the stereotypes widely spread in Germany and Great Britain, respectively). But what about Heidegger's use of *bodenlos* in his early writings?

Thomas Sheehan suggests a reservation based on semantics. He criticizes Faye for mistaking *Bodenlosigkeit* as “the absence of the soil,” whereas, in fact, it means “groundlessness” in the sense of an “unfoundedness of a philosophical position.”³⁴ Even though Faye’s translation is tendentious indeed, Sheehan’s strict dismissal strikes me as going too far. Heidegger frequently uses this term in the sense identified by Sheehan, but he also juxtaposes *Bodenlosigkeit* and *Bodenständigkeit*.³⁵ (The latter term means “being down-to-earth” and keeps a considerable distance to the rhetoric of “blood and soil.”) Heidegger’s juxtaposition would not make any sense if *Bodenlosigkeit* meant unfoundedness *only*, because it would then require something like well-foundedness as its opposite. So far, this means that Faye’s position is shaken, but not shattered. In any case, we are still far away from any specific allusion to the Jews.

Faye claims that “the ideas that are at the very foundation of National Socialist doctrine are already present” in *Being and Time*.³⁶ When it comes to anti-Semitism specifically, he seeks to drive his point home by tracing Heidegger’s use of *Bodenlosigkeit* and *Bodenständigkeit* back to a supposedly poisoned source: Paul Yorck von Wartenburg’s letters to Wilhelm Dilthey. Heidegger, an eager reader of these letters, does not find the term *Bodenständigkeit* in them—as Faye erroneously states (66 and 69)³⁷—but he does find *Bodenlosigkeit*. Yorck, who was an anti-Semite, talks about the Jews lacking the “feeling for psychic and physical groundedness” in a letter quoted by Faye (but not by Heidegger!).³⁸ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger quotes two other passages from Yorck that are pertinent for *Bodenlosigkeit*:

These “scientists” stand over against the powers of the times like the over-refined French society of the revolutionary period. Here as there, formalism, the cult of the form; the defining of relationship is the last word in wisdom. Naturally, thought which runs in this direction has its own history, which, I suppose, is still unwritten. The groundlessness [*Bodenlosigkeit*] of such thinking and of any belief in it (and such thinking, epistemologically considered, is a metaphysical attitude) is a Historical product. (SZ, 452)³⁹

If philosophy is conceived as a manifestation of life, and not as the coughing up of a baseless [*bodenlosen*] kind of thinking (and such thinking appears baseless because one’s glance gets turned away from the basis of consciousness [*Bewußtseinsboden*]), then one’s task is as meagre in its results as it is complicated and arduous in the obtaining of them. Freedom from prejudice is what it presupposes, and such freedom is hard to gain. (SZ, 206)⁴⁰

The first passage does not—as Faye insinuates⁴¹—refer to the Jews, nor does it—as Sheehan suggests⁴²—criticize the aestheticized relativism of “certain historians.” When Yorck talks about those “scientists,” his reference point is a heated

debate about Darwinism at the Berlin Academy of Sciences. *Bodenlosigkeit* in this particular context means the attempt to scientifically analyze biological and historical genealogies and to escape from the “experience,” “attitude,” and “understanding” of life.⁴³ This argument is complemented by Yorck’s defense of philosophy as a “manifestation of life” in the second quotation given above. His critique of “scientific-technological progress” culminates in the finding that rationalism—the regime of a “groundless *ratio*”—is based on a one-sided account of human life inevitably prompting the outbreak of a suppressed “other,” that is, “animalism.”⁴⁴ (These considerations contain an astounding anticipation of Heidegger’s later critique of the dualist *animal rationale* and of Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s analysis of the dialectic of enlightenment.)

In Yorck, *Bodenlosigkeit* has a wide range of applications. There is no indication for the fact that there is a ranking between them in the sense that the guiding principle for all its uses is anti-Semitism. Faye’s sensationalist claim that Heidegger, when using this term, seeks to convey an anti-Semitic message is unfounded. Like Yorck, Heidegger himself uses the term *bodenlos* at various occasions. It plays a role in his critique of various philosophers, including Descartes and Hegel (SZ, 320fn19). Does that mean that they are spiritually Jewish? The most flagrant deviation from the anti-Semitic construction of *bodenlos* is to be found in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, where Heidegger even identifies a non-Jewish starting point for *Bodenlosigkeit* and claims that “the rootlessness of Western thought begins” with the translation and transformation of Greek philosophical concepts into Latin. Here the culprit is “Roman thought” (GA 5: 7/6).

Gregory Fried is right: In Faye, “everything ends up getting drawn into the vortex of crypto-Nazi maneuverings” (20). Sometimes it seems that Faye suffers from an identification with the aggressor and prefers resoluteness over accuracy. By his free-wheeling analyses, he unfortunately undermines the credibility of a task which is worth pursuing and which I would like to jointly pursue with him: figuring out how a thinker becomes a perpetrator.

Before turning to the next stage of Heidegger’s philosophy of the imperative, I need to raise a question that frames Faye’s attempt in a more general way. Even if *Bodenlosigkeit* and other suspicious terms used by Heidegger are unspecific when it comes to their targets, it could still be true that they promote a general attitude or mindset that entails a prejudice against Jews. This would not mean that Heidegger has to pursue a National Socialist agenda in the 1920s, but it would lead to the conclusion that he belongs to a large number of thinkers who more or less tacitly approve the marginalization and stigmatization of “Jewish” attitudes.

To put it bluntly: It would be surprising if Heidegger did not belong to this group. One of the depressing findings from David Nirenberg’s impressive

book *Antijudaism* is the very fact that such attitudes are virtually omnipresent in Western societies. What is especially interesting in Nirenberg's argument is the observation that modern thinkers, poets, and activists practice what I would call the sublimation, sublation, or displacement of anti-Semitism. Just to give an example: What do we make of the fact that greediness is an anti-Semitic cliché—and that many people criticize unbridled capitalism for fueling such greediness? Formally speaking, this phenomenon can be described as a *metaphorical* use of “Jewishness” in the strict sense of the word: an attribute at certain occasions ascribed to the “Jews” is transferred to a different setting. This transposition can take two different forms. Sometimes this critique retains anti-Semitic associations (like in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs* or in Zola's late novels—in spite of his support of Dreyfus), sometimes it doesn't (like, hopefully, in the slogan “Greed Kills” popularized by *Occupy Wall Street*).

Either the anti-Semitic tone remains audible and all those non-Jewish parties who are said to have the same attributes are subsumed as artificial Jews and come under attack. (Nirenberg gives a poignant example: only 6 out of 112 artists presented in Goebbels's exhibition *Entartete Kunst* were Jewish, but many visitors probably would have come up with a very different estimate.)⁴⁵

Or those attributes ascribed to the Jews become part of an independent conceptual repertory instrumental for analyzing modernity and its discontents in its own right. This still means that they bear a historical burden, but, under these circumstances, it is thinkable that an issue like *Bodenlosigkeit* can be addressed in an unsuspecting manner. (Quite a number of thinkers whose records as anti-Nazis or democrats is impeccable make use of *Boden*, *bodenlos*, and so on, when describing the unsettling aspects of modernity; Fried mentions the example of Simone Weil (39–40).)⁴⁶ According to this second option, those pseudo-Jewish attributes can still be used and also reevaluated. So instead of being bound to the negative connotations of *bodenlos*, this term can be salvaged and valorized in a new way. This exact move is suggested by Robert Ezra Park, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Vilém Flusser, and Zygmunt Bauman.⁴⁷

A problem remains: When a discourse is stripped off of direct designations, when people talk about greed without any reference to Jewry, for example, it is hard to tell whether they play this game with an anti-Semitic card up their sleeves or not. Their overall behavior and its context are to be scrutinized in order to settle this question. Research on the latest wave of anti-Semitism is very much concerned with this problem. A strategy popular among right-wing extremists is the use of familiar clichés that are carefully cleansed of any direct reference to Jewry. Examples discussed in current research are the replacement of international Jewry of finance (*Finanzjudentum*)

by international finance capitalism or the talk about “East Coast bankers” (implying that they are Jewish).⁴⁸ During his presidential campaign, Trump launched a TV advertisement in which a picture of Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein served as an illustration for the statement: “A global power structure . . . is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class.” It is as important to take these incidents seriously, as it is admissible and necessary to still be able to talk about finance capitalism and the like without being suspected of anti-Semitism.

All those examples from Wagner and Zola to Trump are to be analyzed by going back to the semantic and pragmatic levels of language, that is, by scrutinizing the distinction, combination, or conflation between semantic content and pragmatic designation. In his reading of Heidegger, Faye does not take the difference between those two levels seriously. He uses semantic associations and allusions as circumstantial evidence for Heidegger's attempt to exclusively and unequivocally single out the Jews as his target. Heidegger's early use of the term *bodenlos* does not show any rigid connection between general attributes and a specific reference group. Yet it is safe to say that his texts disseminate diffuse, free-floating stereotypes, and prejudices.

DESTINY

In this section, I turn to the next stage of Heidegger's philosophy of the imperative: his writings of the late 1930s and 1940s. Two issues move to center stage now: Heidegger's continuing adherence to or growing distance from National Socialism and the outbreak of explicit anti-Semitism. Even though the publication of the *Black Notebooks* has created a—plainly justified—uproar of indignation, its bearing for a critical account of Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi movement remained limited. The anti-Semitic remarks complement the picture based on his other writings, but they do so in a strange, unexpected manner. Heidegger's faithful support of the Nazi movement in 1933–1934 does not coincide with the overt introduction of anti-Semitism to his philosophy. I will briefly discuss this delayed anti-Semitism at the end of this section. Before doing so, we have to learn more about the development of his philosophical-political imperative after the end of the rectorate.

The step from *Being and Time* to the texts of 1933–1934 can be described as a transition from the reflective self-command issued and followed by Dasein to the insinuation of a higher historical mission. The imperative gets outsourced and transformed into a collective, total, totalitarian demand. Heidegger's writings from the late 1930s and the 1940s indicate yet another readjustment. He now feels forced to redefine the historical role attributed to

the Nazis. They turn from heroes fighting the doomed civilization of the West and properly executing the mission of Being to collaborators in the modern enterprise of metaphysics and technology. The Nazis are the latest acquisition for a special exhibition of figures put on trial for the forgetfulness of Being and for having their share in constructing the iron cage of technology. This exhibition stars, among others, Plato, Christian theologians, Descartes, Hegel, and Nietzsche.

Almost like the communists (see GA 96: 128–29, 150–54), the Nazis are involved in a power game solely guided by the ultimate goal of supremacy and omnipotence. Heidegger feels that the self-complacent forgetfulness of Being has become virtually omnipresent. If all cats are gray in the dark, so are political systems: “The respective forms of government [*Staatsformen*]*—*be they democratic, fascist, bolshevist, or a hybrid*—*are nothing but facades” (GA 90: 231). In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger states: “The equalization of the warlike opponents in terms of their modes of action is completed” (GA 96: 262). In *The History of Beyng* from 1939 to 1940, he writes: “The inexorable manner in which power presses to the fore shows itself finally in the fact that the justification for the claims presented in each instance in these struggles for world power lacks credibility in the case of their defenders no less than the opponents.” His examples are “the securing of ‘morality’” and the “protection of freedom” on the one hand and “the saving of ‘*völkisch* substance’” and “racial salvation” on the other (GA 69: 182–84, 154). “So long as the human being remains outside” of the realm in which it can be properly reached by Being, it “staggers back and forth between blocked exits at the end of a long dead-end street” (GA 69: 208).

If the Nazis are stuck in a dead-end street, this merely means that they are, as it were, the wrong Germans. Heidegger acts like an event manager forced to postpone the “next big thing” due to the lack of appropriate personnel. He does not withdraw from the Germans altogether. They still carry his hope. In 1943, he regards “world-historical” reconsideration and redirection (*Besinnung*) as a task exclusively ascribed to the “Germans” (GA 55: 123). “The time of the Germans has not yet expired. But the shape of their future history is concealed” (GA 97: 16). The “mission” is not accomplished, but replaced by a much more reclusive “destiny” carrying the promise of a new beginning, an advent still to come (GA 5: 209, 212, 265). His taking the side of the Germans in the ongoing war is partly caused by simple nationalism, partly by the assumption that the survival of the German people is a precondition for its reaching new heights in the far “future” (GA 90: 221).

As the world is not at all “ready” for “another beginning” (GA 90: 34), Heidegger feels forced to set a new date for this task. In order to do so, he does not hesitate to take on a new profession and become a prophet: “No earlier than in 2300, there may be History again” (GA 96: 225). The dates

set by him vary though. In a letter from December 1939, he is slightly more optimistic and says that the saving of the Occident may be not be postponed by "300," but by "200 years only."⁴⁹ Heidegger also states: "It is . . . virtually impossible to know within time when it is time. Maybe in 2327? . . . *But the Being is*" (GA 96: 196). (It should be noted that, in 2327, the world is expected to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Being and Time*.)

In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger states: "The 'world' is out of joint; it is no longer a world, or, said more truly, it never was a world. We are standing only in its preparation" (GA 94: 210). The "last act" of the play performed by technology will stage an "earth blowing up itself" and the "disappear[ence]" of the "current mankind." "This will not be a misfortune, but the first purification of *Being* from its deep distortion by the prevalence of beings" (GA 96: 238). Entering a "dead-end street" (see above) may eventually be a necessary detour, as it leads to a total "devastation" (GA 90: 222), wiping out the mind-set of self-empowerment and domination. When this point is reached, the "current mankind" will be replaced by figures who, strictly speaking, have to be *aliens*: people radically different from us by virtue of their attentiveness to *Being*.

In a late poem written after the uprisings of June 17, 1953, Bertolt Brecht ridicules the GDR "government" for being unsatisfied with the people and expecting it to redouble its "efforts" to win back the party's "confidence." He concludes by wondering: "Would it not be easier/In that case for the government/To dissolve the people/And elect another?"⁵⁰ This suggestion easily translates into a Heideggerian setting: Would it not be better for *Being* to dissolve this mankind and elect another unmistakably following the destiny of *Being*?

When talking about such a new shift in Heidegger's philosophy of the imperative, I enter a battlefield of interpretations that again leads me to the controversy between Faye and Fried. They provide different answers to the question of whether and when—if at all—such a shift took place. Faye proceeds in two steps: (1) He dismisses the idea that Heidegger develops something like "a critique of National Socialism at the end of 1930s" (62). (2) If there is any "change" at all, Faye dates it to the years "from 1938 to 1950," when Heidegger develops his view of technology and the subject. According to Faye, its main purpose is apologetic: by drawing a line from "the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment" to the technological age, including National Socialism, Heidegger exculpates himself from his own responsibility and presents an unlikely culprit—the very Enlightenment otherwise known as a bulwark against inhumanity.⁵¹

It seems to me that Fried partly agrees with both claims but places some major reservations and criticisms. (1) Fried also talks about Heidegger's

“enduring dedication to Nazism after his resignation as rector,” yet he insists on the fact that National Socialism plays a specific, limited role in Heidegger’s framework of around 1940. This position very much resembles my own view outlined above: National Socialism marks an intermediary step, a regime of “power for power’s sake” that is supposed to be “transcend[ed]” for the sake of a new “non-metaphysical and non-subjectivist” age (22). (For a more detailed account of this development, see Richard Polt’s contribution to this volume.) (2) Like Faye, Fried distinguishes between Heidegger’s wartime writings and the postwar period. Yet he does not regard Heidegger’s critique of the subject as a late bloomer coming to the fore in the postwar writings only, but detects its beginnings to the time around 1940. Fried probably acknowledges the apologetic purposes of Heidegger’s considerations on the link between early rationalism and the technological age but grants them a certain philosophical “merit” (24). I will briefly outline my own view on these matters by focusing mainly on Heidegger’s texts from around 1939.

As indicated earlier, I see Heidegger’s itinerary from 1933 to 1950 as a transition organized in three steps: The first stage, that is, the writings from 1933 to 1934, the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and the early Nietzsche lectures from 1936 to 1937, is still marked by a positive notion of power, will, and so on. This offensive approach is slowly replaced by a more distanced account of power in which it figures as part of a period in the “history of Being” reigned by the forgetfulness of Being. This second step is followed by a third step envisaging a point of arrival: the overcoming of metaphysics and eventually the “task . . . to cease all overcoming, and leave metaphysics to itself.”⁵² These three steps do not constitute a clear-cut sequence. On the one hand, the positive notion of power interferes with Heidegger’s early analyses of the history of metaphysics; on the other hand, the first reflections on a “new beginning” date back to his *Contributions to Philosophy*.

This messy constellation inevitably results in diverging interpretations. Faye chooses to discard or postpone the second step. His reading is based on Sidonie Kellerer’s important findings on the differences between the two versions of Heidegger’s essay “The Time of the World View” (1938 and 1950) that, for lack of space, will not be discussed here,⁵³ and also on Heidegger’s Nietzsche lectures from 1939 to 1940. My comments are limited to two points brought up by Faye in his discussion of the Nietzsche lectures.

First, Faye hints at an interesting difference between Heidegger’s Nietzsche lectures from 1939 and his Nietzsche book from 1961. In the book, he omitted a passage from the lectures where he still worked with an opposition between an egotistic subject and a collective subject (GA 48: 211–13).⁵⁴ Faye regards this as proof for Heidegger’s ongoing support for the power game of a Nazi “subject.” *Second*, Faye reminds us of the fact that Heidegger

called the “motorization of the Wehrmacht” a “metaphysical act” in his lecture from 1940—and omitted this passage in the *Nietzsche* book from 1961 (GA 48: 333).⁵⁵ Faye concludes that Heidegger, far from acting as a “critic of world technology” in 1940, actually “praise[d]” the German people for its attempt to totally dominate the world and to become the representative of a “new humanity” (57).⁵⁶

As to the first point, I feel that it makes more sense to understand the clinging to a collective “subject” in 1939 as a remnant of Heidegger’s earlier view. It looks out of place in the landscape depicted in the texts from this period: a landscape marked by the striving for an “over-coming of metaphysics” and of “subjectivity” as such (GA 69: 24, 44). Just to set the record straight: I have argued as early as 1990⁵⁷ that Heidegger’s metaphysical, technological framing of National Socialism is deeply flawed and serves the crude purpose of obfuscating his own involvement. My disagreement with Faye is mainly a matter of chronology, as he insists on postponing this framing to the postwar period.

With the second point Faye seeks to buttress his view. He claims that the talk about the Germans’ “metaphysical act” is to be read affirmatively. A closer look at the evidence yields opposing results (see, again, Richard Polt’s considerations in this volume). It does not sound like “praise” (Faye, see above), when Heidegger says in 1939: “The unity of these powers of machination [*Mächte der Machenschaft*] founds a position of power for man. That position is essentially violent. Only within a horizon of meaninglessness can it guarantee its subsistence and, ceaselessly on the hunt, devote itself entirely to one-upmanship” (GA 6.2: 26/N3, 180).⁵⁸ Faye’s argument leads to a most awkward, self-defeating conclusion. How could terms like “machination” (see above) or the “absolute ‘machine economy’” (GA 6.2: 165–66/N4, 117)⁵⁹ be used in an affirmative way given that they, at the very same time, play a central role in Heidegger’s anti-Semitic slurs? In 1939, Heidegger does not praise the Germans for their fateful obsession with power, but for their presumed potential to overcome it. This is still repulsive. But criticizing Heidegger works best if his position is not misrepresented.

The anti-Semitic background of Heidegger’s comments on the modern power game finally brings me to the question of how anti-Semitism comes into the picture in Heidegger’s thought around 1939. I have shown above that, until the late 1930s, Heidegger gives the Jews a comparably small role only. When his world-historical play loses momentum and the character playing the leading role (the Nazi movement) exposes its own shortcomings, he settles for a centuries-long drought and wonders who will seize power in the meantime. Given the absence of positive heroes, Heidegger develops a growing systematic interest in negative ones. This is when the Jews move to center stage. They are not really causing the decline of the Occident;

metaphysics has been good enough to get this done by itself. But the Jews become the masters of ceremony when it comes to exploit the leftovers. Whereas Jewry had been left at the margins of society for quite some time, it can now engage in “machinations” (GA 96: 56, 133, 243) and exert “planetary criminality.”⁶⁰

A striking passage from the *Black Notebooks* confirms this reading of the Jews’ rise to power: “The temporary increase in the power of Jewry has its ground in the fact that the metaphysics of the West, especially in its modern development, served as the hub (*Ansatzstelle*) for the spread of an otherwise empty rationality and calculative skill” (GA 96: 46).⁶¹ The key term here is *Ansatzstelle*. By exploiting the anti-Semitic cliché of the parasite, Heidegger specifies the scope of his anti-Semitism, as he sees the Jews as dependent on the input and the resources of others.

When stressing the self-limitation of Heidegger’s anti-Semitism, I do not mean to belittle its import, nor do I ignore the fact that, at certain occasions, Heidegger goes beyond this scenario and escalates his attack on the Jews. The most conspicuous example in this respect is a passage from the *Black Notebooks*, probably written in 1942, where Heidegger bashes Karl Marx for representing the “principle of destruction” in the “Occident”—a principle explicitly linked to “Jewry” (GA 97: 20). It seems that Heidegger wavers about the exact extent of the role of the Jews in the history of metaphysics. In any case, he claims that the current decline is promoted and accelerated by the Jews.

The devastating effect of Heidegger’s anti-Semitism does not primarily lie in the fact that it aggravates his commitment to the Nazi cause; this commitment has a very aggressive form anyway. Even more importantly, it casts a shadow on an aspect of his thought that—for mostly bad reasons—received a pretty warm welcome until recently: the so-called critique of technology mainly developed in his postwar writings. It turns out to be linked to Heidegger’s campaign against “Jewish” machinations. The disappointment with the Nazi heroes from 1933 does not prevent him from further despising his anti-heroes, the Jews, after the Second World War—the Jews who, in fact, were victims of Heidegger’s heroes.

CALLING

National Socialism misconceived the message transmitted by history. It was, as it were, disobedient. Alas, Heidegger does not react to this failure by confronting the idea of the imperative that has led him to totalitarianism. He prefers a less incisive adjustment by keeping the imperative in play and settling for a slightly altered model of it. This revision takes its starting point

from a weak spot in the structure of mission and obedience which has grown stale in the meantime. As this obedience requires the historical hero to fight for a cause, he is prone to overplay his hand and to indulge in his own power. Due to the noise caused by his "machinations," he cannot properly listen to the true imperative, the call of Being. In a passage from the *Contributions to Philosophy* not getting the attention it deserves, Heidegger coins the phrase of a "will to enowning" (*Willen zum Ereignis*; GA 65: 58). The late Heidegger would deem this phrase to be oxymoronic. Will and power on the one hand, *Ereignis* and surrendering to a "destiny" on the other, do not go well together.

Heidegger seeks to launch an imperative breaking with the default setting employed so far. This setting was based on a combination of order and execution. Given that the commander expected his followers to execute his orders, their response had to take on an active form. At best, it was a mighty reaction, a deed fitting the envelope. But Heidegger now feels that he has to curb the fanaticism of the followers of Being in order to save them from the pitfalls of self-empowerment and activism. How does he accomplish this task? My answer to this question will be brief as it is only marginally related to the main problem addressed in this volume and in this paper: the interplay of philosophy and politics.

After 1945, Heidegger envisages a mode of obedience relieved from agency. The proper way of demonstrating the willingness to accept and to respond to one's destiny is an action as *non-action*. Heidegger's semantic starting point for this revision is the word *Heißen*, which has both a designative and an imperative function. ("I am called Dieter" would translate as *Ich heiße Dieter*, whereas a slightly antiquated translation of "He calls upon me to come" would read as *Er heißt mich kommen*.) In one of his essays on Georg Trakl, Heidegger says: "The primal calling [*Rufen*], which bids the intimacy of world and thing to come, is the authentic bidding [*Heißen*]. This bidding is the nature of speaking [*das Wesen der Sprache*]" (GA 12: 26/L, 206). Calling, bidding, and naming are closely intertwined and can be used almost interchangeably. The merit of the imperative enshrined in *Heißen* lies in the fact that it moves away from the notion of a "command [*Kommando*]" (GA 8: 120/117). Heidegger's texts become a demilitarized zone.

This does not mean though that *Heißen* as calling, bidding, or naming is to be understood as a descriptive task. The imperative is only altered to "an anticipatory reaching out for something that is reached by our call, through our calling" (GA 8: 120/117). We ourselves are called upon to speak, to concede to the claim of language, or to respond/correspond to language. The German vocabulary used by Heidegger—*Anspruch*, *Zuspruch*, *Entsprechen*, and so on—cannot be rendered properly in English (see GA 8: 168–71/165–68). The human being follows its "calling" (*Geheiß*; GA 8: 129–30, 170–71/124–25, 167), not by eagerly executing an order but by calling or

naming things. This naming is a mode of loyalty or compliancy with respect to Being.

To cut a long story short: Heidegger's imperative now assumes the function of a demonstrative. His late texts are elaborated variations on the exclamation: Look! In the introductory section of this chapter, I have already discussed Heidegger's preference for "showing" and "naming." They seem to stand for a receptive attitude which is rather modest and innocent, but their appeal is deceptive. Heidegger uses naming for the purpose of decontextualizing things and framing them in a new way. Naming is not complemented by associations, attributions, and the like; it does not set things free, but serves as a preparatory step for tying them down within, for example, the "fourfold." Heidegger remains faithful to the equalization already prevalent in *Being and Time*. He is not concerned with many pitchers nor with this one pitcher here. There is only "pitcher!"—*the* pitcher as such. The plurality generously appearing in his late writings—for example, the introduction of the "mortals"—is deceptive. These "mortals" are under the spell of the all-encompassing singular of *Ereignis*.

CONCLUSION

It is puzzling that the prevalence of the imperative has gone widely unnoticed in Heidegger studies. It is *the* mode of Heidegger's thought and remains a persistent feature of his texts from the 1920s to the 1960s. Setting an exclamation mark—be it real or imaginary—could even be regarded as Heidegger's signature move. As shown in this chapter, this finding casts some new light on the relation between Heidegger's philosophy and politics. This relation is not confined to objectionable statements or particular positions put forward by Heidegger in 1933, or before or after this *annus horribilis*. The very form of this philosophy has political implications.

Philosophical self-descriptions like the ideas that it is "*its own time comprehended in thoughts*" (Hegel)⁶² or that it contributes to the "conversation of mankind" (Oakeshott)⁶³ are trumped by the notion of an order directed at a self, a world, and a time. Heidegger's imperative is peculiar in the sense that the command is not derived or deduced from any law. It has nothing to do with a moral "ought" based on a given norm accessible in propositional language. In Heidegger, the imperative *antecedes* the indicative which appears as a derivative, secondary form of language, or it *marginalizes* the indicative and decries it as a weapon of rationalism. This imperative mode has a distorting effect on language—and on human life.

The thrust of the argument developed so far shows that Heidegger is intrigued by or obsessed with an imperative offensively linked to

authoritarianism and a dismissal of straightforward descriptions of social life. A general question remains: Is this description of the imperative exhaustive? Could we think of another mode of the imperative that deviates from the logic of order and obedience? In conclusion, I would like to at least hint at a more appealing version of the imperative. This charitable reading will take some cues from Rilke and Descartes. Whether it is also applicable to Heidegger remains to be seen.

In his poem "Archaic Torso of Apollo," Rainer Maria Rilke envisages a statue which irresistibly captures the attention of the observer and concludes: "There is no place/that does not see you. You must change your life."⁶⁴ In this poem, the imperative is represented by the modal verb "must." Like Heidegger's groundless imperative, it expresses an obligation not anteceded by any given order. Rilke means to say that each detail of the statue, every spot, detail, or *Stelle* (a little helplessly rendered as "place" in the English translation above) has such a presence and radiance that a turn-around in the relation between subject and object occurs: the statue looks at you, not the other way around. This means that you are defined by its appeal. Rilke's poem does not give yet another example for the regime of an almighty imperative but turns the tables and explores the *crisis of the indicative*. I lose my own ground when I face the torso. I don't have a stable position, an indicative standpoint independent from the external object. I am overwhelmed by it. I am awestruck. My would-be existence has vanished. This situation is the domain of a charitable, appealing mode of the imperative: it is paired with unsettledness, with a collapse of regular reality. My being moved is born out of necessity, and my willingness to change my life stands for turning the necessity into a virtue. This imperative is an appeal to conceive life not as something that *is* but as something that needs to be performed and enacted. This appeal is invoked by an image or role model challenging observers to become what Jacques Rancière calls emancipated spectators.⁶⁵ In order to further illustrate this shift from the indicative to the imperative, I take the liberty to introduce a second example which will lead me back to the controversy between Faye and Fried one last time.

Cogito sum—this phrase is the centerpiece of Descartes's theory of self-consciousness. Ralph Waldo Emerson takes on this phrase and takes issue with reading it as a theoretical assertion. He regards thinking and being as a task or challenge: "Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am.'"⁶⁶ Those who are called upon to make this daring move perceive "I think, I am" as a practical appeal. Stanley Cavell draws on Emerson's reading of Descartes and combines it with Jaako Hintikka's and Bernard Williams's reservations against reading cogito sum as an inference. Cavell spells out the imperative implications of this phrase as follows: "I think one can describe Emerson's progress as his having posed

Descartes's question for himself and provided a fresh line of answer, one you might call a grammatical answer: I am a being who to exist must say I exist, or must acknowledge my existence—claim it, stake it, enact it.⁶⁷ I read these considerations on what I “must” do as a tale about the birth of the imperative from the spirit of “weakness,”⁶⁸ uncertainty, and unrest—and this is meant as a compliment. Instead of clinging to an ontological foundation of individual existence, this reading of *cogito sum* implies an imperative anteceding the indicative mode of self-assertion. This imperative stands for the practical appeal of becoming oneself or becoming a self. Cavell's reading of Descartes is meant not as a faithful interpretation of what he actually meant, but as an attempt to plausibly modify it. It has a refreshing, liberating effect as it goes beyond the all-too familiar controversies circling around Cartesian individualism or dualism—or both.

Cavell's proposal is at odds both with Faye's plea for Cartesian rationalism and with Fried's cautious endorsement of Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian subject. He does not just reinstate a stable, rational subject (like Faye) nor does he assume (like Fried) that the Cartesian subject is enmeshed in the “titanism” of modern self-empowerment.⁶⁹ More importantly, this charitable reading of the imperative is incompatible with Heidegger's compact history of metaphysics allowing for mission or submission only. Instead, it offers an independent opportunity to explore the inadvertent connections between Descartes and Heidegger. Cavell says: “That what I am is one who to exist enacts his existence is an answer Descartes might almost have given himself It is a way of envisioning roughly the view of so-called human existence taken by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: that Dasein's being is such that its being is an issue for it.”⁷⁰

A charitable reading takes some of Heidegger's philosophical moves—in particular those from the early 1920s, where self-assertion is bound to self-becoming—as allusions to an imperative born from the spirit of uncertainty and unrest. They actually have some political bearings as well, as they lead to an account of social relations and institutions defying dogmatism. In Heidegger, such tentative steps are trumped by an imperative born from the spirit of strength, command, and mission. It is pinpointed by Löwith's comment: “The apodeictic character of Heidegger's emotive formulations corresponds to the dictatorial style of politics.”⁷¹ In this chapter, I have tried to show that *this* particular, overtowering imperative is—almost—omnipresent in Heidegger's philosophy at large. It comes to the fore in his quest for the “word which is not simply a matter of gossip, but the word that addresses us and summons us to action and to being” (GA 29/30: 249). A critical engagement with Heidegger takes its cue from confronting and rebutting this imperative.

NOTES

1. On “naming,” see Dieter Thomä, “The Name on the Edge of Language: A Complication in Heidegger's Theory of Language and Its Consequences,” in *A Companion to Heidegger's "Introduction to Metaphysics,"* ed. R. Polt and G. Fried (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 103–22, 297–303.

2. This essay employs the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time*.

3. In order to avoid an “overkill” of references, I will only very rarely refer to the work by other scholars who have contributed to the controversy on Heidegger and politics. This paper is very loosely based on a German text: Dieter Thomä, “Heidegger als Philosoph des Ausrufezeichens,” in *Heideggers Weg in die Moderne: Eine Verortung der "Schwarzen Hefte,"* ed. Hans-Helmuth Gander and Markus Striet (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2015), 243–66. Many changes and amendments have been made, including the extensive comments on Fried and Faye.

4. Hanns Johst, *Der junge Mensch: Ein ekstatisches Szenarium* (Munich: Delphin-Verlag, 1916), 17, 45, 90.

5. Dieter Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach: Zur Kritik der Textgeschichte Martin Heideggers 1910–1976* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 113–33. In this book, I describe Heidegger's development as leading from a “time of the self” to a “time afterward” (or after the self).

6. Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Letters 1925–1975*, trans. Andrew Shields (New York: Harcourt, 2004), 21; Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim Storck (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1989), 23.

7. Martin Heidegger and Karl Löwith, *Briefwechsel 1919–1973*, ed. Alfred Denker (Freiburg and Munich: Alber, 2017), 20, 53.

8. Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach*, 382–429.

9. Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933: A Report*, trans. Elisabeth King (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 30.

10. McNeill translates *seines einzigen Vorbei* as “singular past,” but Heidegger clearly refers to the moment when life will be over. I have adapted the citation accordingly.

11. This argument is developed in further detail in Dieter Thomä, “The Danger of Being Ridden by a Type: Everydayness and Authenticity in Context—Reading Heidegger with Hegel and Diderot,” *From Conventionalism to Social Authenticity: Heidegger's Anyone and Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Hans Bernhard Schmid and Gerhard Thonhauser (Berlin: Springer, 2019).

12. Günter Figal, *Martin Heidegger—Phänomenologie der Freiheit* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1988).

13. Dieter Thomä, “Worldlessness and Groundlessness: Heidegger and Jewish Thought,” in *Heidegger and Jewish Thought*, ed. Micha Brumlik and Elad Lapidot (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

14. Emmanuel Faye, “Kategorien oder Existenzialien: Von der Metaphysik zur Metapolitik,” in *Martin Heideggers "Schwarze Hefte": Eine philosophisch-politische*

Debatte, ed. Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016), 101, 120; cf. Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 11–18.

15. Faye, “Kategorien oder Existenzialien,” 118.

16. Faye, *Heidegger*, 16.

17. Martin Heidegger, “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview,” in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to “Being and Time” and Beyond*, ed. John van Buren (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 169.

18. Faye, “Kategorien oder Existenzialien,” 118.

19. Heidegger, “Schlageter,” *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 42.

20. Hanns Johst, *Schlageter: Schauspiel* (Munich: Langen/Müller, 1933), 26, 28, 52, 74.

21. On the notion of fusion, cf. Thomä, “Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus,” in *Heidegger Handbuch*, ed. Dieter Thomä (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013 [2nd ed.]), 108–33, here 116 (a first version of this text was published in 2003); id., *Puer robustus: Eine Philosophie des Störenfrieds* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016), 373, 428, 452, 529.

22. Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 199. I have altered the translation: *Verschlossen* does not mean mysterious, but secretive or withdrawn.

23. This phrase from Heidegger’s letter to all university departments on December 20, 1933, is quoted in Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1988), 229. It is unclear to me why this letter has not been published in GA 16 or elsewhere.

24. Martin Heidegger, “The Call to the Labor Service,” in *The Heidegger Controversy*, 54–55.

25. Heidegger, “German Men and Women!” in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. Richard Wolin, 49.

26. Martin Heidegger, *Nature, History, State. 1933–1934*, trans. G. Fried and R. Polt (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 49.

27. Martin Heidegger, “National Socialist Education,” in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. Richard Wolin, 55–60, here 56.

28. Heidegger, “Declaration of Support for Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State,” in *The Heidegger Controversy*, 51.

29. Heidegger, “National Socialist Education,” 55.

30. Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, 49.

31. On Jaspers cf. Otto Pöggeler, “Den Führer führen? Heidegger und kein Ende,” *Philosophische Rundschau* 32 (1985), 29.

32. For a more detailed account, cf. Dieter Thomä, “Wie antisemitisch ist Heidegger? Über die *Schwarzen Hefte* und die gegenwärtige Lage der Heidegger-Kritik,” in *Martin Heideggers “Schwarze Hefte”: Eine philosophisch-politische Debatte*, ed. Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016), 211–33, here 214–16, 224–26.

33. Faye, “La ‘vision du monde’ antisémite de Heidegger à l’ombre de ses *Cahiers noirs*,” in *Heidegger: le sol, la communauté, la race*, ed. Emmanuel Faye

(Paris: Beauchesne, 2014), 307–27, here 310–11. Another term making it onto his list of compromised Heideggerian concepts is *Umwelt*. It is situated in the context of biological and racist theories; cf. Faye, *Heidegger*, 14. Unfortunately, Faye does not seem to realize that the genealogy of the term *Umwelt* leads back to Dilthey's philosophy of life where it appears as a translation of Auguste Comte's *milieu*. By the way: Dilthey complains about the biological narrowness of Comte's use of this term; Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works*, vol. I: *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 156.

34. Thomas Sheehan, "Emmanuel Faye: The Introduction of Fraud into Philosophy?" *Philosophy Today* 59, no. 3 (2015), 383.

35. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 212.

36. Faye, *Heidegger*, 16.

37. *Bodenständigkeit* comes up in other writings by Yorck published in 1956 only. As Farin has shown in his critique of Charles Bambach's interpretation, these writings do not develop a straightforward racist ideology either; cf. Ingo Farin, "Count Paul Yorck von Wartenburg," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/yorck/>, note 8.

38. Wilhelm Dilthey and Graf Paul Yorck von Wartenburg, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Sigrid von der Schulenburg (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923), 254; cf. Faye, *Heidegger*, 12.

39. Cf. Dilthey and Yorck, *Briefwechsel*, 39.

40. Cf. Dilthey and Yorck, *Briefwechsel*, 250.

41. Faye, "La 'vision du monde' antisémite de Heidegger à l'ombre de ses *Cahiers noirs*," 310.

42. Sheehan, "Emmanuel Faye," 385. Yorck does refer to such historians—like Ranke—at other occasions, but not in the passage on *Bodenlosigkeit*; cf. Dilthey and Yorck, *Briefwechsel*, 59–60, 143.

43. Dilthey and Yorck, *Briefwechsel*, 39, 128. The debate on Darwinism in 1883/4 was triggered by Emil du Bois-Reymond, "Darwin und Kopernikus," id., *Reden. Zweite Folge* (Leipzig: Veith & Comp., 1887), 496–502.

44. Dilthey and Yorck, *Briefwechsel*, 66, 128.

45. David Nirenberg, *Antijudaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* (New York: Norton, 2013), 455–56.

46. Shortly before causing a tumult by sharply criticizing a Nazi professor at a conference in 1933, the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga criticized *bodenlosen Kosmopolitismus* in a lecture given in German; Huizinga, "Die Mittlerstellung der Niederlande zwischen West- und Mitteleuropa," in *Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Kurt Köster (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1954), 355. (Huizinga was persecuted by the Nazis during occupation.) The theologian and socialist Paul Tillich wrote in 1930: "Being held [*Getragenheit*] is primordial. Only on this ground [*Boden*] the human being in its endangeredness and fatality is at all possible." Tillich, *Religiöse Selbstverwirklichung* (Berlin: Furche, 1930), 193. (Tillich went into exile directly after Hitler seized power.) The theologian Ernst Troeltsch stated in 1918: "If at all a new beginning takes place based on historical cultivation [*Bildung*], it has to primarily rely on our own [German] history. This history alone makes us gain and establish the groundedness [*Bodenständigkeit*] that we are longing for." Ernst Troeltsch, *Deutscher Geist und*

Westeuropa (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1925), 206. (Troeltsch was one of the few renowned professors adamantly defending the young German republic after the First World War. The innumerable political articles published by Troeltsch from 1918 until his untimely death in 1923 still are a good read.)

47. In 1928, Park described the Jew, who is “unsettled” and seeks to “find a place,” as a personification of the “marginal man” and a key figure in open societies; Robert Ezra Park, “Migration and the Marginal Man,” *American Journal of Sociology* 33 (1928), 887, 892. In 1931, Wittgenstein noted that “the Jew must [. . .] ‘make nothing his business,’” referencing Goethe’s line “Ich hab’ mein Sach’ auf Nichts gestellt” and alluding to his uprootedness. Shortly before his death, he subverted the logic of ground and building by stating: “I have arrived at the rock bottom [*Boden*] of my convictions. And one might almost say that these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house.” Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 16; also, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), 33E (§248). In 1992, Flusser published his autobiography under the title *Bodenlos* and turned the necessity of becoming an emigré into a virtue. In 1995, Zygmunt Bauman described the postmodern, nomadic condition in his book *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995).

48. Monika Schwarz-Friesel and Jehuda Reinharz, *Die Sprache der Judenfeindschaft im 21. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 37, 109–10.

49. Martin Heidegger and Kurt Bauch, *Briefwechsel 1932–1975*, ed. Almuth Heidegger (Freiburg and Munich: Alber, 2010), 62 (letter from December 18, 1939). Cf. Heidegger, *The History of Beyng*, 73: “Such thinking must think two hundred years ahead in order for the first Germans to awaken into a site cleared for the decision between the truth of beyng and the precedence of beings that has become a wasteland.”

50. Bertolt Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956*, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (New York: Routledge, 1987), 440.

51. Faye, “Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger’s Writings,” *Philosophy Today* 55, no. 3 (2011), 269, 272.

52. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 24.

53. Sidonie Kellerer, *Zerrissene Moderne: Descartes bei den Neukantianern, Husserl und Heidegger* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2013), 230–49.

54. Faye, *Heidegger*, 269 and “Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger’s Writings,” 271.

55. Cf. Faye, *Heidegger*, 271.

56. Cf. Faye, “Subjectivity and Race in Heidegger’s Writings,” 269, 272, 279

57. Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach*, 760; also, “Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus,” 128.

58. Cf. Heidegger’s *Besinnung*: “As the highest will to power of the predator, the military thinking that comes from the World War and the unconditionality of armament always indicate the completion of the metaphysical epoch” (GA 66: 28). In this text written in 1938–39, Heidegger refers to the First World War.

59. On “mechanization” (*Machinalisierung*) and on the “metaphysical essence of every mechanical arrangement [*machinale Einrichtung*] of things and the racial breeding of man,” see GA 6.2: 308–09/N3, 230–31. These passages are to be found in the original text of the lectures from 1940 as well: GA 48: 205; GA 50: 57.

60. In the manuscript of *History of Beyng*, Heidegger writes that the “Jews” are “predetermine[d] [. . .] for planetary criminality.” This passage is missing from the text of the *Gesamtausgabe* and has been made public by Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014), 52; cf. GA 69: 77–78.

61. I gratefully use Richard Polt’s translation of this passage.

62. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

63. Michael Oakeshott, “The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind,” *Rationalism and Politics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen & Co, 1962), 197–247.

64. Rainer Maria Rilke, *New Poems*, trans. Edward Snow (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001), 183.

65. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London and New York: Verso, 2009).

66. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte (New York: Library of America, 1983), 270.

67. Stanley Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 109, 112.

68. Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary*, 109: “The beauty of the answer lies in its weakness.”

69. Faye, “The Political Motivations of Heidegger’s Anti-Cartesianism,” *Insiders and Outsiders in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers, Tom Sorell and Jill Kraye (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 177–91; Fried, (24).

70. Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary*, 109.

71. Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, 37.

Chapter 7

Philosophy or Messianism?

Sidonie Kellerer

Some even savour Heidegger's special language; he "stalks" language like a hunting dog "stalks" (*stellt*) its prey. Rare are those who dare describe this language as the intense cultivation of a flowery rhetoric that produces only—*cauliflowers*.

Max Ernst, 1954¹

Gregory Fried's 2011 open letter to Emmanuel Faye showed an attitude of dialogical openness that deserves to be stressed. Such an attitude remains rare in the field of Heidegger studies, which is all too often characterized by the refusal of sober and reasoned debate, even going so far as refusing to read the analyses of commentators said to be radically critical of Heideggerian thought.² The violent tone that often characterizes the debate on Heidegger results from adhering to an authoritarian form of thought that, criminalizing reason, implicitly rejects argumentation and dialogue. Heidegger himself lays claim to "a philosophy that can never be *refuted*" (GA 94: 238). Such a way of thinking, both anti-rationalist and peremptory, has had a decisive impact on the apologetics of its reception among Heidegger's defenders: denial, questioning the motivation of critics, and insults frequently take the place of measured and reasoned discussion. Fried's initiative, which has made this volume possible, is therefore particularly welcome.

The present contribution examines a series of questions raised by four texts in this volume. It begins with a thesis about the central role of the codification of language in Heideggerian thought. It concerns a fundamental methodological point: *How* are we to read Heidegger today? Then it examines Heidegger's alleged distancing from Nazism, focusing particularly on the nature of his anti-Semitism and his relation to technology and subjectivity. Finally, this chapter concludes with some reflections on Heidegger's legacy.

HOW IS HEIDEGGER TO BE READ?

A Discriminatory Language

The *Black Notebooks* testify to their author's profession of faith in Nazism. While Heidegger's defenders have for decades treated this profession as an epiphenomenon, it now seems as though that faith was a constant foundation of his thought. The *Black Notebooks* certainly do not merely reveal—they *confirm* that Heidegger's political engagement was not just a momentary, personal weakness, one that should not bring his thought into question. They also enable us to clarify the connection between this engagement and his thought, including his best-known work, *Being and Time*.

The *Notebooks* bring to light a long ignored but central aspect of the peculiar mode of expression that Heidegger employed for his thought, a method that has only recently become the subject of research: his recourse to a deliberately indirect language, even a politically coded language. The opacity of this language is not the unavoidable result of a particular philosophical profundity, just as it has little to do with a concern to “articulate the pure wonder that precedes any determinate, articulated philosophy.”³ It is rather a means of establishing, by way of exclusion, the philosophical and political power of a German spiritual elite. This strategic cryptography—which in the specific form he employed is unprecedented in the history of philosophy—has been main source of illusions about the philosophical depth of the Heideggerian oeuvre for almost half a century.

Heidegger's allusions to a need for a strategically indirect language constitute, by their sheer number, something of a leitmotif in the *Notebooks*. To take just one example, toward the end of 1940 Heidegger does not hesitate to declare that “*any* concession made to comprehensibility is already destruction” (GA 96: 222). This veiled language deliberately addresses a “small number” (GA 95: 76), the “essential men” (GA 95: 230), and keeps others at a distance. For Heidegger, “authentic saying” (GA 4: 37) must never be addressed to humanity (*Menschheit*) as a whole but only to certain kinds of human groups (*Menschentümer*; GA 96: 257). This is a distinction that Oswald Spengler, for example, also uses when he denies the universal equality of human beings.⁴ Dieter Thomä thus falls prey to a major misinterpretation when he supposes the existence of a Heideggerian concern for “the future of humanity.”⁵ This misinterpretation can also be found in Jean-Luc Nancy, who mistakenly translates Heidegger's *Menschentum* into French as *humanité*, “humanity.”⁶

This Heideggerian “saying” is addressed only to a small number of initiates, who are understood as the “new lineage” (*Geschlecht*), those who are “to come” (GA 94: 115, 299) but who are also a “concealed lineage of

those who are capable of questioning” (GA 94: 286). Heidegger specifies in the spring of 1938 that this indirect mode of speaking also applies to *Being and Time* (1927). He claims he did not “fully express” himself in that book, whose text is dressed in the “robes [*Gewand*] of ‘research’ and ‘demonstration’” (GA 94: 503). This is contrary to the erroneous assessment of Peter Trawny, the editor of the *Black Notebooks*, who, without further explanation, describes *Being and Time* as “a completely exoteric text.”⁷ Hence it is not correct to think, like Fried does, that “the text speaks for itself” (35).

A Language of Struggle

Why does Heidegger write in this cryptic way? The conviction that one must wear a mask when engaging in “another way of communicating” is the result of Heidegger’s belief that an invisible struggle is underway between different human types: between those, on the one hand, whom he describes as thoughtless (GA 97: 18) and as *Unwesen* (GA 96: 255–56) and, on the other, those who alone possess an “essential force (*Wesenskraft*)” (GA 96: 179). The word *Unwesen* is ambiguous; while its meaning, literally translated, is “non-essence,” it can also simply mean *mischief* in ordinary language. In 1940, Heidegger denounced what he supposed was the real danger posed by that “species of the human type” (GA 96: 243) whose attitude is characterized by “weakness in the face of meditative thinking” (GA 96: 113). According to him, this species of human beings uproots the authentic human in his or her “essential species” (*Wesensart*) (GA 96: 258). Here as elsewhere, Heidegger employs a term, *Wesensart*, which was widely used under Nazism.⁸ It is “the German essence” that must be protected against the “devastation” of the “non-essence,” because the type of human beings, who do not know how to die but only at best “perish” (*verenden*; GA 96: 251), refuse to accept the inferior rank that is properly theirs (GA 96: 36). Instead, they actively seek to ensnare and destroy historical peoples (GA 96: 255). These degraded types threaten the essence of properly historical peoples, which is tantamount to deracialization (*Entrassung*; GA 96: 56), as Heidegger argues, thereby drawing upon an explicitly Nazi vocabulary. The conviction that there is an essential inequality among human types leads to a discriminatory and polygenist vision of humanity. This vision asserts that the majority of human types are “incapable” of “listening to the voice of *Seyn*” because they do not belong to the essence of history (GA 97: 9). According to the conspiratorial logic at play here, this fractured vision of humanity justifies a reaction that is a kind of self-defense of the genuinely historical human types against the devastation threatened by the degraded. Heidegger conceives this reaction as the “struggle of meditation” (GA 95: 33) or even as the “struggle for . . . [the] ownmost *essence*” (GA 95: 11).

Already early on, Heidegger was convinced of the necessity of fighting those whose pretensions to rationality and reasoned dialogue, which he sees as being mere subterfuge, the expression of a lack of force (*Unkraft*), and a devastation of essence (*Unwesen*). Already in March 1916, at the age of twenty-seven, Heidegger wrote to his fiancée Elfride that he wanted to declare “war on rationalism right through to the bitter end.”⁹ This declaration of war is not just a figure of speech but rather a guiding thread and foundation of his thought, now confirmed by the *Black Notebooks*. Contrary to the platitude repeated ad nauseam, Heidegger never sought to preserve rationalism from its excesses; rather, he never ceased to fight rationalism in all its forms. In fact, even before the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger attacked the ideal of certainty in knowledge, an ideal he considered to be an expression of “cowardice in the face of questioning,” that is, a symptom of fear in facing life in its fundamental uncertainties. In 1941, he continued to repeat the claim that the idea of progress, and faith in it, is an “idol” that holds at bay the productive “anxiety of the beginning” (GA 96: 222).

Heidegger goes even further: the theoretical attitude is not only a symptom of cowardice but also the expression of an aggressive will to “seize power” (*Bemächtigung*; GA 17: 65). This is what he describes from *Being and Time* onwards as a “dictatorship” of anonymous mediocrity in which the “they” (*das Man*), in Heidegger’s anthropomorphic characterization, exerts its domination in a way that is as “stubborn” as it is “inconspicuous.”¹⁰ Reading between the lines, the consequence is that true philosophy will consist in knowing how to resist and struggle against this slide into mediocrity.

Heidegger states in 1925 that it is a matter of fighting against “rootless beings,” in other words, against the liberals, socialists, communists, and Jews who populate the uprooted and paved-over world of cities. Knowledge and progress: that is the motto of these unattached and ahistorical city-dwellers. The November traitors guarantee themselves an audience and readership through the radio and press, in cafés and in all the anonymous public places of major cities. To speak of a genuine thinking as expressed for a *public* would be nonsense for Heidegger, because authentic thought must be esoteric. Even more: *Being and Time* does not aim at opening up a reasoned dialogue; on the contrary, it implicitly rejects such dialogue, seeing it as the expression of a flight from life.¹¹ In a vision of the world that presents some, by virtue of their very essence, as engaged in a rootless struggle against those who are properly Dasein, not every man or woman is Dasein. The “they,” whose essential feature is being without soil and roots, does not so much designate an alienating social structure as tacitly refer to human beings who are unattached in their very essence. It is not a matter of arguing but of awakening, inciting and, if necessary, doing violence to a Dasein somehow chloroformed by a perfidious “they.” As Ernst Jünger says, you do not argue with the bourgeoisie, you fight

it.¹² For Heidegger, real thinking does not concern cognition (*Erkenntnis*) but a knowing (*Wissen*) which aims at “recalling to life” (*wiederbeleben*) the power of *being* or “awaking” (*erwecken*) and thus securing what he calls from 1923 onwards a “state of enrooted wakefulness” (GA 63: 16). In *Being and Time*, the notion of argument does not have any positive meaning because it is a matter of seeking to awaken a Dasein narcotized by the “they” through attunements that are always related to an attachment to the soil (*Befindlichkeit*). In effect, what constitutes humanity for Heidegger is not primarily reason as shared by all, but rather an essence that destiny has either bestowed or not. Belonging, awakening, and reverence are the key words of this thinking.

An Indirect Language

But why does Heidegger not conduct this struggle openly? Why employ a cryptic language? This use of language is a reaction in keeping with the supposedly insidious character of the enemy’s attacks, which take place in the shadows. Even before 1927, Heidegger describes the “they” as essentially perfidious, invisible, and elusive. The enemy’s attacks are not open, honest, and face to face, hence the need for disguise in order to conceal the counterattack from an enemy who is all the more dangerous because embedded everywhere and nowhere. What is truly terrifying, according to Heidegger, is the “invisible devastation” brought about by the “merchants” (*Händler*) and the “press” (GA 96: 146–47). It takes no great effort to see who these metonymies designate: this is the language employed by the German far right to designate the Jews and their cultural influence.

The theme of invisible danger is a leitmotif in the *Notebooks*. This danger gives rise to a defense in the form of an “invisible philosophy” (GA 96: 87). Heidegger believes he has to camouflage how he expresses his thought so that it reaches only ears worthy of hearing it. Even in the *Notebooks*, the way he expresses himself remains coded until the military confrontation can actively and openly take over the spiritual struggle. When the enemy is forced to unmask himself, the struggle can become direct. Armed warfare continues, by other means, the war of words and the combat of the spirit.

An important aspect of this indirect language is its implicit anti-Semitism. The explicitly anti-Semitic passages are only the visible aspect of a resolutely equivocal discourse. In code, but nonetheless decodable—at least for the informed German reader, who can see without much difficulty the anti-Semitic undertones of phrases that refer to the “vain money changers” (*eitle Wechsler*; GA 94, 173) who, with malice and cunning, favor machinations, those “merchants” (GA 96: 114), alternately maliciously false and obsequiously cajoling, those “schemers and grabbers” (*Rechner und Raffer*), those “fanatics” (*Eiferer*; GA 96: 94) with their “tenacious dexterity in trafficking”

(GA 95: 97). Anti-Semitism already appears in his texts prior to the Nazi seizure of power. To give one instance: In the summer semester of 1923 Heidegger taught that “everything modern” obscures itself in a cowardly fashion, and he provides the examples of “busyness, propaganda, nepotism” and “spiritual racketeering” (GA 63: 18–19). The anti-Semitic character of this last turn of phrase, *geistiges Schiebertum*, was clearly perceptible in 1923, the year of terrible inflation in Germany that was quickly attributed to the Jews by anti-Semites. Furthermore, in the well-known 1929 lecture course, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger writes of “the uncreative activities of menials or profiteers” who suppress the “history of Dasein” (GA 29/30: 270).¹³ Failing to take into account these elements of his discourse inevitably means missing the significance of Heidegger’s use of certain notions, for instance the “soil” (*Boden*) and the semantic field it occupies. So, while Thomä is certainly correct in saying that the word “soil” is not inherently anti-Semitic, we cannot ignore that in Heidegger, as in Nazi discourse in general, it definitely takes on that signification.

The defeat of Nazi Germany only reinforced Heidegger’s anti-Semitic paranoia. Besides the sudden and obsessive theme of vengeance that emerged at that time in his writings, the theme of an invisible struggle remains prominent in volume 97 of the *Black Notebooks*, written in the years 1942–1948. In the summer of 1946, Heidegger introduced the idea of a “killing machine [now] set against the Germans” (GA 97: 151), a machine that he insisted is “invisible” (GA 97: 156) and crueler than an immediate extermination, because this machine “metes out measured doses of suffering and torture while keeping everything inconspicuous and insidious” (GA 97: 151).

Being and Time does not escape this latent anti-Semitism. When discussing Heidegger’s texts, Hans-Georg Gadamer noted in 1986 that “he who does not have an ear for the German language cannot know the intended concepts.”¹⁴ Gadamer alludes to an important feature of the xenophobic coding that upends the usual claim that Heidegger’s conceptual language applies universally to all human beings. Adorno, who certainly did have an ear for German, perceived over fifty years ago what the *Black Notebooks* today confirm: “In the philosophy of 1927, the uprooted intellectual wears the yellow mark of those who undo the social order.”¹⁵ The extension of the metaphors of soil and rootedness to characteristics such as calculation, skill, seduction, lack of attachments, makes palpable the anti-Semitic atmosphere of *Being and Time*. Heidegger’s references to the Yorck-Dilthey correspondence in §77 only confirms an anti-Semitism already perceptible without this reference. Moreover, the characteristics just mentioned will crystallize after 1933 in the anti-Semitic term “machinations” (*Machenschaften*), first found in the *Fundamental Questions of Philosophy*, a course from the summer semester of 1933 whose language is particularly violent. In this period of his work,

Heidegger's term *Machenschaft* was associated with rootlessness, with dispersion (*Zerstreuung*) and decomposition (*Auflösung*) (GA 36/37: 10).

If we do not take account of the central role of strategically equivocal language in Heidegger's thought, it is possible to maintain, as does Thomä, that "until the 1930s, Heidegger gives the Jews a comparably small role only" (167). Thomä does indeed admit the possibility, in theory, that there is a discourse in Heidegger that is "stripped of direct designations" and whose context should be examined in order to bring out its anti-Semitic undertones. However, with regard to Heidegger's formulation concerning the enemy to be flushed out, Thomä just sticks to the surface level of the text in which this violent language appears (GA 36/37: 89–90). He fails to establish the connection between this text and the seminar from the same period, 1933–1934, in which Heidegger mentions "Semitic nomads" who do not have access to "our German space."¹⁶ Thomä therefore isolates the texts instead of considering what unites them and thus ends up concluding that Heidegger's discourse is brutal, yet remains "vague."¹⁷ But this is not the case. To state it again: the main issue today is knowing *how* to read these texts.

Heidegger hoped to obtain a professorship in a German University because of *Being and Time*, which is probably an additional reason why he employed euphemisms and coded language. It does not formulate an *explicit* political program, and it is not in fact an "outright paean to National Socialism" (35). Faye's work draws attention to an element that should be recalled here, even though it has never been discussed by those who deemed Faye's reading exaggerated. Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß wrote in a 1954 letter to Erich Rothacker that "the wisdom, for example, of a Heidegger—I'll say what I think when I am a full professor—was a wisdom that I lacked when I was young and today it is too late."¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu's work on the sociopolitical discourse of the academic world and "the effect of disguise through the imposition of form"¹⁹ is illuminating on this point.

THE NECESSITY FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION

Decoding a Mythico-Political and Xenophobic Language

Fried points to several aspects that Faye highlighted as early as 2005, especially the importance of the historical, semantic, discursive, and philological contextualization of Heidegger's texts so as to grasp their full meaning. He rightly emphasizes that the contextualization of Heidegger's texts is all the more essential given that Heidegger uses a "tactic" "worthy of an Odysseus" (29). Thanks to this tactic, Heidegger has been able to seduce

an entire generation of French scholars, thereby preserving his thought and ensuring its influence in the academic community. Faye's work shows that carrying out a philosophical study in no way excludes drawing upon history, semantics, and philology. On the contrary, these different approaches are indispensable in that they complement each other.

Contextualization is all the more essential for non-German readers because Heidegger's systematic use of allusions, connotations, and wordplay is constitutive of the cryptic language that keeps foreign readers (*die Fremden*) at bay. There are innumerable examples of these word games, of derivative figures of speech, and especially of paronyms. To give just one example, Heidegger brings out the following meanings from *hören*: "to be a part of" (*zugehören*), "to belong to" (*gehören*), and "to obey" (*gehörchen*) (GA 97: 9). In his political thought, with its mythological twist, the resonances of Germanic words ensure the truth of being, without argumentation.

For Heidegger—and this follows from his conception of reason—philosophizing is not so much explaining a line of reasoning but of "preserving" "the force of the most elemental words" against the "common understanding."²⁰ This force is not proportional to argumentative significance but to *Befindlichkeit*, a key term in Heidegger's work, which can be translated by "enrooted attunement" and which refers to the resonance or atmosphere that words have the power to evoke. It is important to note, as I have pointed out elsewhere,²¹ that *Befindlichkeit* has a double meaning in German, both spatial and emotional, which means that Dasein's "mood" is inseparable from the location it finds itself in. Consequently, what Heidegger's thinking expresses is to be found in the allusive and equivocal use of "code words,"²² dog whistle language (e.g., *Schiebertum*), suggestive wordplay, and so on. Very few scholars have seen that this language is fundamentally a kind of incantation, intended to evoke conviction through associations and connotations rather than clear argumentation. This deliberate and continual use of doublespeak makes Heidegger's texts extremely difficult to translate and therefore especially difficult for non-German speakers to comprehend.

Heidegger's words therefore never refer to general, abstract notions. They are always linked to a concrete, situated struggle that renders determinate their significance. What Carl Schmitt says of political terms, namely, that they are only comprehensible when it is clear "who these words concretely target, contest, combat, and refute,"²³ is also fully applicable to how Heidegger expresses his thought.

Yet even though it has been over a decade since Faye's book on Heidegger and Nazism was published, it has had little to no effect on how most scholars approach Heidegger's texts. Commentators on his writings "are in the habit of paraphrasing his various texts in isolation, and of decontextualizing them more or less completely."²⁴ This corresponds to what Bourdieu summarizes

as “the expectation of a pure and purely formal treatment, the requirement for an internal reading circumscribed by the space of the words” and as “the irreducibility of the self-engendered work to any historical determination.”²⁵ This decontextualization is subtly encouraged by various Heideggerian strategies, and it plays an integral role in the muddying of textual waters. This helps explain why this thinking has been successful, despite its discriminatory undercurrents.

We can draw a useful parallel: just as Heideggerian discourse subtly holds historical contextualization at a distance, its language also immunizes itself against critique. Henri Meschonnic noted nearly thirty years ago: “The major paradox of Heidegger’s language is that it allows us to observe the forgetting of language. Nonetheless, language is of the utmost importance in Heidegger.”²⁶ In other words, the indirect character of how Heidegger expresses his thought has rarely been studied as such, which is precisely the sign of its disconcerting effectiveness.

An Illustration of the Necessity for Contextualization

Providing historical contextualization means taking into consideration works like those of the historian Jürgen Falter. He has ascertained that 750,000 members of the NSDAP, the *Parteigenossen*, returned their party membership cards between 1925 and 1945. That means that it was possible to withdraw membership from the party without necessarily having to fear reprisals.²⁷ This finding sheds new light on the fact that Heidegger, who received his membership card in 1933, never returned it.

The importance of both historical and discursive contextualization was illustrated a few years ago in a case study of the expression “invisible war” (*unsichtbarer Krieg*) that Heidegger uses. In a letter of November 25, 1939, addressed to Doris Bauch, the wife of Kurt Bauch, Heidegger expresses his hope that this war will come.²⁸ We should connect this inherently sibylline formulation of an “invisible war” with the “invisible philosophy” that Heidegger advocates in the *Black Notebooks*.²⁹ At that moment in the history of Nazi Germany, the term “invisible war” referred to the Nazi counterespionage campaign under the slogan of “The enemy is listening to us.”³⁰ This campaign was based on the anti-Semitic platitude, encouraged by the Nazis, of an underhanded, omnipresent, and invisible Jewry seeking to seduce a naturally credulous and trusting people, the Germans.³¹ According to the Nazis, it was necessary to make the German people more distrustful and discreet. Hence, Hitler wrote: “during the War, how often did we hear the complaint that our people knew so little about keeping silent! How difficult it was to keep even important secrets from coming to the enemy’s awareness!” That is why Hitler counted the ability to keep silent, reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*), among the

cardinal German virtues that must be inculcated. In an atmosphere dominated by mistrust and fear, the conviction that there was an invisible war, a war “of spirit and soul,”³² made the use of indirect language a national duty. One must know how to keep silent when faced with an invisible enemy. But at the same time, it was necessary to try to expose the enemy to everyone’s view. The yellow star, which identified the Jews and which they were obliged to wear after September 1939, served this purpose. There is a clear connection to be made between this imposition of a visible mark and the injunction Heidegger issues in one of his 1933 courses: “Find the enemy, bring him to light . . . single out the enemy” (GA 36/37: 91). The theme of an invisible war, which is recurrent in Heidegger’s texts, is a mainstay of anti-Semitic ideology and the propaganda campaign against the allegedly deceitful and invisible Jews. Heidegger did no more than transpose the linguistic camouflage used by the executors of the “final solution” onto the level of an ostensible philosophy.

An Illustration of the Effects of Decontextualization

If the fundamentally polemical and discriminatory intent of Heidegger’s language is not taken into account, then this can only lead to misunderstandings. Heidegger himself gives a passing indication, something like a wink, as to how to understand his texts: “To consider what is said as immediately and only what is stated—that is one of the inexhaustible sources of misunderstandings to which thought is exposed” (GA 97: 224).

Some of Richard Polt’s claims illustrate this misunderstanding. Polt thinks he can corroborate the fact that “Heidegger describes Nazism as brutal and criminal” by referring to a series of passages from the *Notebooks*. For example, there is a passage from around 1946 where Heidegger mentions the “horrors [*Greuel*] of National Socialism” (GA 97: 98) and then “the horror of the ‘gas chambers’ [*Greuelhaften der ‘Gaskammern’*]” (GA 97: 99). However, in Heidegger’s work such phrases do not speak for themselves. This is a crucial point, but largely ignored in the debates about Heidegger. To understand what they mean, we must consider the fact that the word *Greuel* was, at the time that Heidegger uses it, a very loaded term. Under Nazism, the word *greuelhaft* designated a supposed mendacious agitation (*Greuelhetze*) against the Third Reich by foreigners—especially the Jews—by means of their tool, the lying-press (*Lügenpresse*). Thus, there is good reason to think that Heidegger is carrying out a subtle reversal of meaning here, with “the atrocities [*Greuel*] of National Socialism” intimating calumny *against* Nazism. The doubt introduced by the adjective “atrocious” (*greuelhaft*) imbued with the *Lingua Tertii Imperii*—the pervasive and intentionally politicized, propagandized, and manipulated “Language of the Third Reich” that Victor Klemperer describes so well—is reinforced a few lines later by the use of quotation marks around

the term “gas chambers.” Then, a page later, we read that the real concentration camp is in fact *Germany*, after its defeat by the Allies (GA 97: 100). Finally, it should be noted that when Heidegger explained in 1941 that a “people without history, blind to the point of not seeing its own rootlessness” is something more “horrible” than war, he used another term, *grausig*, and not *greuelhaft* (GA 96: 131). All these elements must be considered so as not to risk inverting the sense of what Heidegger actually intended to say. This is what happened when, in a discussion with Faye in 2007, François Fédier claimed that the use of the term “barbarian” was a criticism of Nazism. Today we know that the precise opposite is true. The barbaric principle that Heidegger calls for is opposed to what he calls “*brutalitas*.” He states that the latter term is deficient because it is of Roman origin (GA 95: 394). We know that for Heidegger the Romans are “entirely non-nordic and utterly non-German” (GA 95: 326). Far from being a critique of Nazism, his blatant contempt for *brutalitas* reflects a rejection of the objectifying relation to reality, which he considers too one-sided and “crass” (*pöbelhaft*; GA 95: 396) as a conception of the human essence reduced to rationality (GA 95: 395). “The complexities of Heidegger’s positions” (Polt, 122) appear to be quite trivial when properly contextualized. By way of comparison, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, in his racist magnum opus of 1899, calls the “Germanic peoples” “great harmless barbarians” who are “youthful, free and capable of achieving the utmost.” In Chamberlain’s understanding, this barbarian character is indicative of the “innate freedom” of the “German essence” as opposed to “those who are born slaves” (*Knechtgeborenen*).³³ Heidegger resonates with this when he states that barbarity is profound whereas brutality is bestial. This is, of course, a way of reversing the negative significance of the onomatopoeia that was originally used by the Romans to designate the Germanic “savages.”

Polt also refers to Heidegger’s use of the expression the “Nazi regime of terror [*Schreckensregiment*]” (GA 97: 156). But it should be recalled that in 1929, from the heights of his professorship, Heidegger called for “the one who can inspire a terror in our Dasein.” It should also be remembered that the invocation of terror is by no means negative in the *Black Notebooks*. On the contrary, Heidegger mentions “terror and grace [*Schrecken und Segen*], the great attunements that enlist man” (GA 94: 91).

PHILOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The contextualization needed to decode Heidegger’s doublespeak also requires philological work. This is because the cryptic expression of this thought is coupled with the shrewd editorial strategy implemented in the *Gesamtausgabe*. We now know that this edition of Heidegger’s “complete

works” was to a large extent conceived as a means of saving the author’s reputation after the fall of the Nazi regime and giving a philosophical guise to texts proclaiming extermination. This strategy consists in suppressing or rewording compromising passages, in hiding editorial criteria, and in publishing such a large number of texts—unprecedented in the history of philosophy—that not even the specialists are capable of mastering them all.

Faye was the first to demonstrate the full importance of these frequent editorial manipulations after the war and to stress that “an entire generation of French intellectuals engaged themselves with a Nietzsche distorted by Heidegger’s interpretation and largely reduced to his published texts.”³⁴ The textual manipulations do not only involve Heidegger’s courses on Nietzsche. Heidegger revised many of his texts without indicating that he had done so.³⁵ He also described the edition of his collected works as “complete” when in fact it is selective—and far from transparent in its manner of selection. Faye has not only analyzed this deceptive editorial policy, which Theodore Kisiel had already called an “international scandal of scholarship” in 1995, but also called for the opening up of the archives in 2006.³⁶ It is ironic to note that those who allege that Faye wants to “ban books from zones of the library and to relegate them to an ‘index’ of proscribed works!” (15) or that those who, like Jean-Luc Nancy, claim that Faye wants to “put [Heidegger’s] work on trial before the Nuremberg Tribunal,” have not signed the appeal against the censorship practiced by Heidegger’s heirs.³⁷ And following the schema of the victim becoming the accused—a classic, but rather unexpected in an academic setting—it is not Heidegger and his heirs who are deemed guilty of censorship, but the commentators who dare to point out the falsifications and to question the philosophical nature of his thought. Thomä does not hesitate to write that Faye “suffers from an identification with the aggressor” (161). This kind of inversion has become a tradition in the debate about Heidegger’s relation to Nazism. Similarly, Fried writes that Faye wants to “sniff [. . .] out apostates and destroy [. . .] their careers” (31–32). This is an odd formulation if we recall that because of the particularly critical nature of his 1999 book,³⁸ Johannes Fritsche has been ostracized in the field of Heidegger Studies in the United States.

So, while Fried’s willingness to engage in dialogue is to be welcomed, it should be stressed that a real dialogue would mean refusing invidious conflation, renouncing the questioning of the interlocutor’s good faith, and not falling back on preemptive avoidance tactics by treating those, like Faye and myself, who are willing to probe the depths of his Nazism, as engaged in a malign conspiracy to discredit Heidegger. Some go so far as to invent a “clique” or to write that Rastier is “working the streets” for Faye.³⁹ Such remarks are certainly interesting from a sociological point of view. Rastier thinks that “insults here are a diversion tactic: increase the provocations,

aim low, sow confusion and create the impression of a free for all where no holds are barred, thus rendering philosophical debate impossible.”⁴⁰ The following conclusion seems warranted: the very idea that Heidegger’s thought can pertain to anything other than the philosophical domain is inconceivable or intolerable to scholars who embrace Heidegger as the great philosopher of the twentieth century. Some of these scholars, who have devoted their professional lives to that idea, understandably find it difficult to admit their blindness.

WHAT CRITIQUE OF NAZISM?

Heidegger Does Not Describe Nazism as Criminal before 1945

Despite the publication of the *Black Notebooks*, many readers remain convinced that Heidegger distanced himself from Nazism toward the end of the 1930s. In 2016, the journalist Justus Wenzel spoke of “Heidegger’s (passing) enthusiasm for Nazism.”⁴¹ And Nancy thinks that the German thinker “overcame” the Nazis with the “virulence” of his critique and that he wrote “the opposite in private” to what he maintained in public.⁴² How can this alleged distancing be reconciled with the anti-Semitism that becomes explicit in the *Black Notebooks* from around about 1938 onward (GA 95: 97)? Some scholars think that this anti-Semitism is not National Socialistic because there is no biologism in it. Others argue that the Jews are not the cause of devastation in the Heideggerian view but instead only accessories, “the profiteers of modernity’s bankruptcy.”⁴³ Lastly, there is an interpretation, widely shared by Heidegger’s defenders, that in his *Seinsgeschichte*, the Jews are just one element among many in the broader leveling off of civilization at the end of the so-called first inception of the West’s history. On this account of the twilight of an epoch, the Nazis, the communists, and the Jews are supposedly all equally “masters of machinations.”⁴⁴

And yet, this is a man who, in the spring of 1934, used the power conferred on him as rector of his university to obtain the establishment of a professorship for “Racial Teaching and Hereditary Biology” from the Ministry of Education (GA 16: 269). Are we to believe that he was an opponent of racism in private? This is the same man who, until 1942 at least, remained a member of the Academy for German Law, presided over by “the butcher of Poland,” Hans Frank.⁴⁵ This is a man who never turned in his party membership card, who never uttered a word of regret *after the war*, and who had a lasting friendship with the eugenicist Eugen Fischer, who in 1937 had participated in the forced sterilization of children described by the Nazis as “bastard Rhineland

negros”? Did this Heidegger really “overcome” the Nazis with the “virulence” of his critique?

Polt claims that Nazism was a non-essence (*Unwesen*) to Heidegger. This is far from certain. Heidegger only uses this term to refer to Nazism *after* 1945 and always in an ambiguous way (GA 97: 250). *Before* the defeat of Germany, Heidegger associates neither Nazism as such nor Hitler with non-essence. Nor does he associate them with criminality or the absence of history, as claimed by Polt, who nowhere raises questions about Heidegger’s supposed “break” with his previous thought after the war. During the Third Reich, Heidegger nowhere likens Nazism to an “epidemic” (*Seuche*; GA 96: 259), or to “gangsterism” (*Verbrechertum*; GA 96: 266), or “scum” (*Abschaum*; GA 95: 96) that must be fought and eradicated. Yet this is precisely the language that Heidegger uses for the enemies of the Reich. At the time of the German-Soviet Pact, Heidegger wrote that the Germans and the Russians, the “peoples with an originary historical force” (GA 96: 56), must distance and protect themselves from what is “devoid of history,” which he claims is much worse than all bombs, than all wars (GA 96: 131). In contrast, there are the human types—especially the Jews—who are “the very principle of destruction” (GA 97: 20) and “blind to essence” (*wesensblind*; GA 96: 256), and thus incapable of meditating, that is, ultimately incapable of thinking (GA 96: 113). It is therefore untenable to claim that “National Socialism is discussed on hundreds of pages of the notebooks nearly always in a critical mode” (132).

Critique of “Petite Bourgeois” Politics

The Distinction between the Führer and the Political Apparatus

Heidegger’s critiques of Nazism cannot be understood outside the historical reality in which they are situated. This is a methodological principle ignored by dominant interpretations of Heidegger. By the end of the 1930s, the German population tended to cease conflating the cult of the Führer with the Nazi party, which was often associated with an incompetent and corrupt bureaucratic apparatus. Hence around 1937, Heidegger attacks “bureaucratism” which, he said, arises from an excessively mechanistic, technological, and ultimately excessively liberal conception of reality that is not attuned to being. He wrote in 1946 that if Nazism and fascism have not “succeeded” (*geglückt*), it is primarily because of the fact that “everything was seen only from a ‘political’ perspective, not even a metaphysical, not to mention a historical perspective . . . the ‘Party’ angle spread confusion everywhere” (GA 97: 130).

In the *Hitler Myth*, Ian Kershaw showed that the cult of the Führer became ever more prevalent as attitudes to everything connected with the party

became more critical. This cult of the supreme leader only began to unravel after 1942, when the first military defeats took place. The same holds true of Heidegger's texts up to this time: there were no substantial criticisms of the Führer before 1942.⁴⁶ The passages Polt cites, and notably the one mentioning "Hitler's murderous madness," date from *after the war*. Heidegger's critique is directed especially at the Nazi party officials. He reproaches them for being "petite bourgeois," for being one-sidedly fixated on blood, and for not linking blood to essence. What exactly do these criticisms mean?

Not Only Blood: Ontologizing Racism

In 1940–1941, Heidegger writes that "non-essence cannot be avoided solely by breeding and disciplining [*Züchtung*] the body" (GA 96: 190). Around 1936–1937, he denounces "those who want to improve the quality of the people through 'biology' and selection" (GA 94: 364). For Heidegger, this one-sided biological way of trying to ensure the greatness of the German people is the result of "a 'liberal' idea of progress that has not yet been overcome" and that originates in Descartes (GA 94: 365). With regard to blood and biology, Heidegger opposes an "all too cheap either-or" (GA 94: 426). He thus agrees on this point with Hitler, who had written that "parallel with the training of the body, the fight against the poisoning of the soul has to set in."⁴⁷ Hence, when in the autumn of 1939 Heidegger maintains the "'principles' of 'blood and soil' are also based on machination" (GA 96: 55), he is not opposing racism but ontologizing it, that is, deepening and amplifying it. He advocates a racism that is not *only* based on blood but *also* and above all on a meditation on being assimilated to the "struggle for the liberation of the essence" (*Wesensbefreiung*; GA 96: 126). He does not deny the importance of blood; instead, he qualifies the role of blood, because spirit and essence play the superordinate role (GA 94: 351). To be satisfied with blood purity alone would be to lower oneself to the level of the Jews and their reductionism, because blood purity is a merely physical conception of race (GA 96: 56). In fact, one of the commonplaces of Nazi ideology was that focusing *only* on the physical attributes of race is a Jewish way of thinking. To give just one example, Chamberlain writes the following: "Never did an excessive sentimentality concerning humanity [. . .] let the [Jews] forget even for one moment the holiness of physical laws. One sees with what mastery they use the *law of the blood* to extend their dominion."⁴⁸

The theme of overcoming (*Überwindung*), in the sense of a revision or even of a radicalization of an already existing but superficially understood concept or phenomenon, is recurrent in Heidegger's work. Heidegger expresses disgust at the merely superficial "Hölderlin fashion" of the day and contrasts it with a deeper Hölderlin that he elucidates. In the same way, he

opposes a vulgar racism, whose concerns is only a self-interested calculation, and contrasts it with a more elevated racism understood as an essentialism. Heidegger deploys this schema of rejecting a so-called cheap alternative in numerous contexts. This also applies to his view on modernity, idealism, subjectivity, and technology. For instance, he contrasts the “idolatry of technology” (GA 94: 261) with another, more essentialized conception.

Heideggerian discrimination by essence is really just an avatar of the racism propagated by the Nazis. It is a pseudo-philosophical elaboration of the latter and one that can pretend to be less vulgar. Instead of speaking of “vermin,” it speaks of “non-essence,” although sometimes it does speak more explicitly of an epidemic and of scum. We should recall another aspect of Faye’s work here, an aspect that like many others is never, or almost never, discussed by those who claim to be moderate interpreters of Heidegger’s work: the racist anti-Semitism that was a central element of Nazi ideology always mixed the biological and the spiritual. For example, in the Nazi period the term *Artung*, which is difficult to translate, designated a sensibility that surpasses what is inscribed in the blood, a certain “spiritual attitude” and “essence” that is at the foundation of the racial unity of the people.

Essence Instead of Razza, Nazism Instead of Fascism

Also crucial is that preventing Nazism from being gradually “suffocated” by invisible agents, according to Heidegger, means fighting against what he calls the imperceptible “deracialization” of the German people. This fight primarily concerns the German language, which is threatened with a “total uprooting” (*völlige Entwurzelung*; GA 95: 94). The proposed remedy is Germanization. Heidegger thus places himself within a long *völkisch* tradition, which has been well documented by the historian Uwe Puschner, who has traced it back to the creation of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein* in 1885. The aim of this association had been to cultivate the “most exquisite treasure of our stock: our mother tongue.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, for Heidegger, the Italian *razza* must give way to “stock” (*Stamm*) and “lineage” (*Geschlecht*), whose union is the “German essence.” This is an essentialization that gives a semblance of depth to a murderous ideology. It should be noted that from *Being and Time* onwards, Heidegger prosecutes a deliberate strategy for the “elimination of foreign words in Eduard Engel’s radical pan-German sense,” as Robert Minder noted at the beginning of the 1980s.⁵⁰

What holds of *razza* is equally true of *fascio*. Heidegger does indeed attack fascism, but should this be seen as a critique of Nazism? By no means: Heidegger carefully distinguishes between Nazism and fascism (GA 95: 408). He claims that the latter is on the side of Catholicism and “Romanism” which are “*completely non-Nordic and non-German*” (GA 95: 326; emphasis added). To transform Heidegger’s Nazism into an “archi-fascism,” a kind of transcendent Nazism,

as Nancy did, following Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, is a widespread misinterpretation firmly anchored in Heidegger scholarship.

Far from expressing a “horrified fascination” (130) with Nazism, as Polt puts it, Heidegger instead advocates a National Socialism that expresses an inflexible will to power. He makes this explicit in a text from around 1941, “Nietzsche’s Metaphysics” (GA 50). As Faye has shown, Heidegger writes an apology for the so-called “extreme” nihilism of the will to power and the increase of this power, particularly in the service of the “machinalization” (*Machinalisierung*) and the “shaping of man” (GA 50: 56–7). Only a few historical peoples have enough “commanding force” (GA 50: 59) to measure up to this nihilism. In the winter of 1941, when the invasion of the Soviet Union and the implementation of the plans for the extermination of the Jews of Europe were underway, the only truly decisive question, according to Heidegger, was finding out which people would measure up to the challenge of conquering the earth in the service of the will to power.

Preventing a Weakening of Power

In 1933, Eugen Fischer had lamented that “women today of inferior quality” were having “mentally incapable” children and were “reproducing at an above average rate.” He added that what was at stake was “eliminating pathological hereditary lineages.”⁵¹ At this time, Heidegger explained to the Institute of Pathological Anatomy at Freiburg that “a people and an era,” “in accordance with their Dasein,” inscribe into marble the law of “what is healthy and what is sick” (GA 16: 151). That is precisely what constitutes the “will to power” for Heidegger, properly understood as “overpowering” (*Übermächtigung*; GA 48: 6). Power must not lose its edge. Such aims are consistent with Heidegger’s letter of June 7, 1936, to his friend and colleague Kurt Bauch, where he writes that “National Socialism would be beautiful *as a barbaric principle*—but it should not be so bourgeois.”⁵² This is one of the many elements rarely mentioned in the debate over the nature of Heidegger’s philosophy. Heidegger criticizes Nazi policy because he does not consider it radical enough. He states that “the danger is making [Nazism] harmless by preaching about the True, the Good and the Beautiful” (GA 94: 194). He does not vilify the movement as such but rather the “party policy” which is too inclined to the routine. Faced with the petty bourgeois (*spießbürgerlich*) everydayness of the Nazis, what is urgently needed, he insists, is to “light the flame” of the “struggle for the ownmost essence of the German people” (GA 95: 11). Heidegger is not a representative of a Nazism that is, so to speak, idealized and therefore more reputable; instead, he is an advocate for a radicalized version of it that risks much higher stakes. This is clearly a central point that neither Polt nor Thomä consider.

The texts known to us today testify to Bourdieu's foresight. As early as 1975, he had emphasized that Heidegger thought that Nazism was not radical enough. He observed that "Heidegger was 'disappointed' by Nazism, that is, undoubtedly by the 'vulgar' and insufficiently *radical* aspects of the movement." Bourdieu also hypothesized that Heidegger's resignation from the rectorate in 1934 was the result of the insufficient institutional power that the Nazis, themselves "probably frightened by his *radicalism*," were willing to grant this philosopher of the movement, who nonetheless believed himself to have been called by destiny to guide the *Führer*.⁵³

Avoiding Ensnarement by the Jewish Non-Essence

Finally, the determination to raise the stakes and the notion of the will to power as a perpetual movement are all the more indispensable in Heidegger's view because one of the defects of the Germans is their susceptibility to seduction by an alienating distraction. "The German's hereditary defect is their looking to what is foreign" (GA 95: 10). The struggle against alienation (*Entfremdung*) in the face of what Hitler calls the "diabolical dexterity of these seducers," the Jews, is all the more urgent. Will the Germans have enough force—because it is this that really is at stake here—for "essential decisions" (GA 95: 388)? It is obviously not a matter of physical but rather of spiritual force. The greatest imaginable danger for Heidegger is dependence on an invisible and monstrous enemy who, like a hydra, grows more powerful in the struggle. Hence in 1939, he writes that "the danger of 'spiritual' struggle does not consist in defeat or annihilation but in the certainty of an inevitable dependence on the opponent, the *adoption* of *its* essence and its non-essence" (GA 95: 326). To put it otherwise: in this particular struggle, which remains invisible until the moment of open confrontation, it is especially necessary to ensure that the enemy does not insidiously and imperceptibly destroy the spiritual essence of the Germans and with it the German race. This is why the best way to combat this enemy is to avoid all contact with it, thereby driving it to exclude itself of its own accord (GA 95: 97). At the precise time when Hitler began his war of extermination in the occupied zones of Eastern Europe, Heidegger writes that "the highest political deed" consists in "imperceptibly implicating the enemy in a situation in which he finds himself forced to carry out his own self-extermination" (GA 96: 262). For the Heidegger of the *Notebooks*, therefore, it is a matter of preventing Nazism from being weakened by the non-essence, from being insidiously rendered incapable of fighting its enemies.

HEIDEGGER'S ANTI-SEMITISM

Destructive Parasitism

In a line of argument mirrored here by Dieter Thomä, Peter Gordon in 2014⁵⁴ argued that the Jews were not the real cause of the intrigues in modernity. But what did Heidegger actually say in 1942? “Jewry,” he wrote, “is the principle of destruction in the era of the Christian West, that is, of metaphysics” (GA 97: 20). It would be difficult to issue a more overwhelming condemnation of the Jews. Nonetheless, Thomä thinks that this statement expresses hesitation as to the “exact extent of the role of the Jews in the history of metaphysics” because this maximal accusation is counterbalanced elsewhere (168). Thomä insists that Heidegger accuses the Romans of having corrupted the original Greek conception of truth (GA 5: 8) and that Heidegger supposedly describes the Jews as “only” parasitic on modern metaphysics, which is the original evil. Fried, in a recent article, makes a similar point.⁵⁵ But the contrary is actually the case: In a 1932 lecture course, Heidegger taught that it was in fact a Jewified and Roman Christianity that “distorted the emerging philosophy, namely the Greek”; what is too often ignored is that “Rome, Judaism and Christianity” are inseparable for him (GA 35: 1). Such claims by Heidegger are hardly original. Hitler himself wrote on the theme of an alleged coincidence between the rise of the Jews and the expansion of the Roman Empire in *Mein Kampf*.⁵⁶ So, while Heidegger describes the lack of soil as Roman, it is also Jewish. Heidegger treats this Jewified Christianity as the source of the “modern spirit,” hence of rationalism and especially of Cartesianism. Two conclusions must be drawn. The first is that anti-Semitism plays a fundamental structural role in Heidegger’s thought. It is in no way just the expression of a general and superficial affect or attitude common among right-wing Germans of the time. The second is that Jewified Christianity does indeed have a “creative agency,” contrary to Polt’s view (129), for example.

According to Heidegger, what defines “Jewry” is above all its lack of attachments and its worldlessness (GA 95: 97). “Empty rationality and calculative ability” (GA 96: 46) and the lack of history, of thought, and of world all go together. Furthermore, Jewry is that “species of human beings” whose historical role is to lie, to seduce, to alienate, and thus to annihilate other peoples. They are the ones who are “chosen” (*ausersehen*) to deceive and to seduce (GA 95: 96) and ultimately to uproot and to deracialize. In summer of 1941, at the time of the invasion of the Soviet Union, Heidegger writes: “The question concerning the role of *world Jewry* is not racial. It is the metaphysical question about the type of human beings who, being *absolutely unattached*, can assume the ‘task’ in world history of uprooting of all beings

from being” (GA 96: 243). Far from being just incidentally anti-Semitic, Heidegger’s critique of rationalism rests on a fundamentally discriminatory vision, an ontologized racism.

Thomä refers to the supposed parasitic status of the Jews to corroborate his thesis about Heidegger’s thought, namely that the Jews are not the real evildoers but rather those who profiteer from modern decay. But are we then also to conclude that for Hitler the Jews, being parasites, are not the root of all evil because by definition a parasite ensures its survival by living off another being? Obviously not. Heidegger asserts altogether logically that although the parasitic Jews do not have their own vital resources—Heidegger says that this “‘race’” is incapable of “‘understanding the occult domains of decision’” “‘on its own’”—that does not mean that this race is not the “‘principle of destruction’” (GA 96: 46). There is no contradiction here. He simply claims that “‘Jewry’” is not a “‘creative,’” but rather an exclusively destructive principle, which is another anti-Semitic platitude if there ever was one—and certainly one that Hitler promoted.⁵⁷

The hackneyed anti-Semitic trope of the Jew as parasite, which Heidegger here deploys, stresses above all that the Jews are devoid of any “‘self’” (*Selbst*), any essence, and also any enrooted attunement (*Befindlichkeit*), that they have no access to being and hence no homeland. The Jews are the embodiment of non-essence and non-being. With respect to such remarks, Faye has spoken of an ontological negationism and the “‘complete dehumanization of Judaism.’”⁵⁸

A CLEAR-SIGHTED CRITIQUE OF MODERN RATIONALISM?

After the Second World War, Heidegger succeeded in presenting himself not only as uncompromised by Nazism, as did many other Nazis, but also in making it appear as if he had developed an analysis of Nazism as the product of the excesses of modern rationalism. He accomplished this strategic *mise-en-scène* primarily in the “Letter on Humanism” (1947) and in the two volumes *Nietzsche I* and *Nietzsche II* (1961). Heidegger thus staged himself as the thinker who had transcended the will to power, the thinker of serenity (*Gelassenheit*), even as a precursor of ecological philosophy. It is remarkable that even the publication of the *Black Notebooks* has not definitively discredited this deception. Hence the interpretations of Fried, Polt, and Thomä agree in that they all think that during the Second World War Heidegger aimed at “wiping out the mindset of self-empowerment and domination” so as to extol an “‘attentiveness to Being’” (165).

Against this line of interpretation, it is first important to remember that we now have a number of indications that contradict the assessment that “Heidegger conflated any and all modes of technology,” as Peter Gordon notably claims.⁵⁹ Is it necessary to recall that Heidegger chose his words carefully in the 1966 *Der Spiegel* interview when he claimed that Nazism had taken a satisfactory direction with regard to the “relation” between the human and the essence of technology?⁶⁰ When Heidegger spoke in 1940 of the “motorization of the *Wehrmacht*,” he was, according to Polt, attacking the Nazis as representatives of a “perverse essence.” But Polt does not say a word about Heidegger’s letter of May 18, 1940, written at roughly the same time, to his wife Elfride. Far from “slaying” technological reason, Heidegger does not hesitate to praise it—as long as it is put in the service of the German essence.⁶¹

What do the *Black Notebooks* say about Heidegger’s view of technology in the Nazi period? Around 1934, Heidegger advocates a “creative [*schöpferisch*] and not just an organizational [*organisierend*] relation to technology” (GA 94: 178). He does not call technology as such into question but rather what he describes as the “idolatry of technology” (GA 94: 261). Around 1937, he wrote that what is at stake is “mastering” “the essence of technology” (GA 94: 356). In the summer of 1941, when Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa was underway, Heidegger noted that “previously,” in his book *The Worker* (1932), Ernst Jünger had “perceived the fact of technology” better than he did later (GA 96: 212). What does Jünger say about technology in *The Worker*, where he had properly aligned himself with Nietzsche, according to Heidegger? There, Jünger emphasizes that technology is not a “universally valid, neutral domain that grants access to any force.” There is no technology in general, but every form of life “has the technology commensurate and innate to it.”⁶² Hence the bourgeois, who is only concerned with his security and comfort, “is not capable of using technology as an instrument of power proportional to his existence.”⁶³ Jünger speaks of “technology’s double face,” emphasizing that “the martial aspect of technology’s Janus face” deserves approval. Heidegger espouses just that distinction when he writes that the machine must be “ventured as a counter-God” (GA 96: 257). He adds in a tone of approval: “Only unconditioned human types, who do not shrink back before the highest subjectivity, are strong enough to submit to the metaphysical essence of technology” (GA 96: 257). This implies and thus explains Heidegger’s alliance with a “reactionary modernism,” one intent not to retreat back behind the Enlightenment, but instead to beat it at its own game.⁶⁴

All this only confirms Faye’s 2005 interpretation of Heidegger’s 1941–1942 course on *Nietzsche’s Metaphysics*. Faye concludes that the “all too famous Heideggerian ‘question of technology’ is above all a cover for a

revisionist strategy.”⁶⁵ Just as Heidegger distinguishes between an authentic and an inauthentic technology, he also distinguishes between different forms of subjectivity. My own archival research has showed that Heidegger distinguished between an “authentic modernity and an inauthentic modernity” at a famous 1938 conference.⁶⁶ Thomä mentions the “important findings” of this study in passing, but even though this article was published seven years ago and has been available in English for four years, it has never been discussed until now by any of the commentators who believe that Heidegger’s thought still has something to offer us today. Neither are the problems of the editorial policy in Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* and the textual manipulations that this policy involves, nor the philological research on the archives that have given us a detailed illustration of these manipulations even so much as mentioned in the 2013 reissue of the *Heidegger-Handbuch*, supervised by Thomä.

The first volumes of the *Black Notebooks* confirm that Heidegger does not completely reject modern subjectivity and that he does not seek to deprive the subject of its will to power but rather the exactly opposite. Hence, around 1938–1939, Heidegger notes that German idealism is a specifically German metaphysics that finds its highest expression in Leibniz, Hegel, and Schelling (GA 96: 7). It is worth noting that this line of “argument” can also be found in *Mein Kampf*, where Hitler writes that “real idealism” is a “fundamental disposition” of the Germans, in opposition to “egoism,” and it means “the individual’s ability to sacrifice himself for the community, for his fellow citizens [*Mitmenschen*].”⁶⁷ The Nietzsche course corroborates this assessment. Heidegger lauds German idealism, which had perceived and elaborated “the uttermost possibility of the essence of subjectivity” as will to power (GA 50, 48ff.). German idealism is the expression of an “ownmost nature” (*Eigenart*) of the German people. The German people have in themselves “the experience of the essence of being at its beginning” as its “original ownmost capacity” (GA 96: 9). Accordingly, German idealism is an authentic form of metaphysics, which is called historical (*geschichtlich*), in contrast to historical (*historisch*). So, when Heidegger calls for the overcoming (*Überwindung*) of metaphysics, he nowhere advocates a break, neither with modern times nor with metaphysics in general (e.g., GA 96: 9), contrary to what Thomä maintains. It is instead a matter of thinking “the subjectivity of the subject” in a way that is “deeper and thus also more threatening” than Descartes, the father of inauthentic metaphysics (*metaphysische Wichtigkeit*; GA 96 : 258). For Heidegger, the task is to overcome Platonic and Judeo-Christian subjectivity, the latter being nothing but “veiled” (*verhüllt*) and “suppressed” (*niedergehalten*) subjectivity (GA 50: 46, 49).

WHAT PHILOSOPHICAL LEGACY?

At the end of his open letter, Fried lays out what he thinks Heidegger's thought can still offer us today. First of all, he maintains that because no philosophical question is inherently bad, all subjects should be open to discussion. He writes: "I believe that a philosophy may be evil and still be philosophy" (32) and draws our attention "to other philosophers whose ideas are very distasteful to us," like Voltaire and Kant. But it must be pointed out that anti-Semitism plays a completely different role in Heidegger's philosophy to these thinkers and one that is in no way comparable to Kant, who always defended rationality, the universality of human rights, dialogue, and tolerance.

I will not address here the absurd question of whether the love of wisdom can include racism and calling for extermination. We can simply ask if it is really possible to read *Mein Kampf* as a philosophical work, as Donatella Di Cesare thinks.⁶⁸ In order to clarify Heidegger's thought, it is necessary to insist on a crucial point that Fried either takes for granted or ignores. He speaks, as if it were self-evident to do so, of Heidegger's arguments, his methods of justification, and so on. But Heidegger neither respects nor accepts the *sine qua non* of all philosophy: I hold it to be legitimate to require, at least at the beginning of philosophy, that we recognize reason as the means of advancing in thought and, correlated with this, that we recognize and practice reasoned argument in the rational framework accepted as a shared dialogue with the interlocutor. One of the achievements of twentieth-century philosophy, one for which Heidegger cannot claim parentage, is the insight that the course of genuine thinking may lead it, in its search, to run up against the limits of its own rational requirements and thereby to recognize, from *within* thinking, those moments when it is necessary to renounce exposition that is transparent and discursive. Heidegger, however, abdicates all claim to rationality at the outset of his thinking. To say that silence is the essential form of discourse because it is necessary to put a stop to the idle chatter of the "they" (SZ, 296), to affirm that "reason" is "the most obstinate enemy of thinking" (GA 5: 247), and to say that the "mania for refutation constitutes the first falling away from authentic thinking" (GA 95: 410)—all this means immediately putting oneself *outside* of the limits of thinking and thus outside the premises of philosophy. Furthermore, Heidegger did not deceive himself on this point because he did not maintain that his thought should be described as philosophy (see, for example, GA 94: 115), preferring instead the term "stance" (*Haltung*, GA 27: 341–42) 354) and ultimately "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*; GA 27: 397–98).⁶⁹

This abandonment of reason and argument, in favor of a form of "thinking" that takes an incantatory "stance" that evades all refutation, obviously

lies at the heart of the current debate that will decide the future of research on Heidegger. It is because Fried takes it for granted that Heidegger's thought, at least before 1933, is not sustained by dogma, faith, or Messianism that he claims that "to answer Heidegger [. . .] we must do so on the field of philosophy" and speaks of Heidegger as a "genuine philosopher" (38). However, for reasons that I could only outline within the limited framework of this essay, I think that this amounts to submitting to Heidegger's obsessive and conspiratorial form of thought, one that tends to neutralize the critical faculties. "To answer" Heidegger means breaking with hermeneutics based on trust and thus breaking with any such submissive attitude. Hence, Derrida spoke of Heidegger in 1999 in terms of (dis)obedience and of "obsessive fear" (*hantise*) under the eye the "overseer" (*contre-maître*).⁷⁰ At the turn of this century, Derrida also maintained that the "incalculable future" of Heidegger's thought lies in "deciphering" his *Gesamtausgabe*, but still in the form of an interpretation *immanent* to Heidegger's thought. In turn, Nancy urged the "dyslexics"—meaning Heidegger's critics—to learn to read the Freiburg thinker's texts properly.⁷¹ Both of these statements are tantamount to imposing the authority of a corpus of texts that are declared a priori philosophical, but that is precisely what must now be contested.

The task today consists in freeing up what Heidegger meant and in assessing it, rather than in embroidering endlessly on the platitudes of his reception, such as Fried saying that the German thinker represents "the inevitably of confrontation with our planetary politics" (41). That is why it now seems necessary to stake out a methodological principle: if understanding Heidegger really does begin with the reading of his texts, it cannot end there. Recent research has demonstrated this conclusively. In confronting his texts and determining the meaning of his thought, a careful consideration of the historical context and a meticulous reliance on philological work are particularly important hermeneutical requirements. Of course, like all critical work, this also implies avoiding overly hasty generalizations. For example, instead of generalizing about the significance of the term "invisible," any hypothesis should be carefully weighed against intertextual considerations, such as the historical and discursive context. In short, this means drawing careful distinctions, in the best sense of the term, when we read Heidegger.

REJECTING ARGUMENTS FROM AUTHORITY

The reception of Heidegger's thought is the history of a success. Does this success vouch for the quality of his thinking? If so, then the syllogism would be as follows: (1) Sartre was a great mind. (2) Sartre took Heidegger to be

a great thinker and was inspired by him. (3) Conclusion: Heidegger's thinking is profound, because Sartre's thought is profound. But the logic that moves from (1) to (3) is specious. It would be just as specious to deduce in an inverse fashion that Sartre's work is invalid from his misunderstanding of *Being and Time*.

In the debates over Heidegger, as in all philosophical debates, the argument from authority cannot be valid. What should matter instead is answering a question that is arduous because it is totally new in the history of philosophy. It is the question concerning a philosopher who deliberately uses indirect and veiled language to mislead his readership and as a means to domination. Something must be understood that is particularly difficult because it is unprecedented in the history of philosophy: What is at issue here is an intentional philosophical deception for the purposes of domination and taking power in the spiritual and political fight for Nazism. For example, even if, like Heidegger, Joseph de Maistre and Edmund Burke also devised their writings as war machines—against the French Revolution and the Enlightenment—then at least they waged their wars *openly*.

We might also ask: How could Sartre be mistaken about *Being and Time*, and why did Herbert Marcuse think it was possible to reconcile this work to some degree with Marxism, and why did Emmanuel Levinas hold this book in such high regard? Answering this important question requires striking the right balance, and above all it means asking what these different authors thought they would find in Heidegger's body of work. Then, by drawing upon recent research on what Heidegger did actually say, we can assess to what degree a thinking like that of Sartre—or of Marcuse, or of Levinas—is situated in the trajectory of Heidegger's own thought.

Of course, nothing forbids “turn[ing] to ‘his’ questions and answers and . . . wrest[ing] them from him,” as Fried suggests (36). But it is still necessary to determine *what* his questions and answers are and if his questions are really even his own, since we know that one of Heidegger's ploys is, to put it politely, borrowing from other philosophers. He never, or almost never, acknowledges his indebtedness, be it to Kierkegaard, Carl Braig, Franz Rosenzweig, Cassirer,⁷² or others. To add insult to injury, he then grafts these borrowed ideas onto extreme right-wing banalities, sublimated into a pretended ontology with the veneer of an apparent profundity.

And of course, there is nothing stopping us from thinking a thinker against himself or herself. But in this case, we should rather ask the question in terms of the *coherence* of the thinking. Current research leans toward confirming that the thought of the author of *Being and Time* is actually very coherent—and that coherence has to do with his long-standing anti-Semitism, blood-and-soil nationalism, and racism, not with a genuinely philosophical project in which we can share, even in disagreeing with him.

What is likely to remain of Heidegger's thought is the unique history of its reception. As Robert Minder ironically puts it: Heidegger's philosophy is "in its own way something as real and factual, as unwavering and steady on its feet as the beautiful cattle at the Messkirch fair."⁷³ The bankruptcy of Heidegger's thought opens up a field of research on the fact of its success after the war and especially on how enduring this success was. How was this possible, given the self-evident and virulent extremity of his views? The illusions that his thought have engendered point to the unprecedented nature of the strategies of exclusion, submission, and control brought to bear by a body of work flying the false flag of philosophy. Leo Strauss has examined the manner of writing between the lines that is induced by persecution, but what do we know of the writing between the lines whose objective is annihilation?

Translated by Michael B. Smith

NOTES

1. Max Ernst, *Écritures* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 404. I take this opportunity warmly to thank Gregory Fried for his careful reading of my contribution and his many helpful comments.

2. Alain Badiou, "Lettre d'Alain Badiou à propos d'une recension autour de Faye/Heidegger sur Acta Philosophia," *Strass de la philosophie* (blog), April 6, 2014, <http://strassdelaphilosophie.blogspot.de/2014/04/lettre-dalain-badiou-propos-dune.html>.

3. Fried, (34).

4. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Munich: Beck, 1963 [1918]), 28–29.

5. Dieter Thomä "Heidegger als Mitläufer des Seins," in *Heidegger und der Antisemitismus* ed. Walter Homolka and Arnulf Heidegger (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 370.

6. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Banality of Heidegger*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 15.

7. Peter Trawny, "A dyton," in *Lire les Beiträge zur Philosophie de Heidegger*, ed. Alexander Schnell (Paris: Hermann, 2017), 33.

8. For example, Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf: eine kritische Edition*, vol. 1, ed. Christian Hartmann et al. (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 2016), 741. See also Google Ngram Viewer.

9. Martin Heidegger, "Mein liebes Seelchen!" *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfride; 1915–1970* (Munich: btb, 2007), 35; Heidegger's emphasis.

10. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2013), 126.

11. For a detailed study, see Sidonie Kellerer, "Sein und Zeit: Ein Buch für alle und jeden? Zu Heideggers Begriff des 'Dasein,'" in "*Sein und Zeit*" *neu verhandelt*, ed. M. Heinz and T. Bender (Hamburg: Meiner, 2019), 113–60.

12. In a passage manifestly threatening violence, and in reference to the "outrageous tragicomedy" of the worker and soldier councils after the First World War,

which Jünger condemns for “petty and high treason against all that constitutes Germany existence” in favor of an alien bourgeois liberalism, he writes that “all dialogue” (*jede Unterhaltung*) must cease, “because here the silence that conveys a premonition of the silence of the grave is required.” Ernst Jünger, *The Worker: Dominion and Form*, trans. Lawrence Hemming and Bogdan Costea (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 14.

13. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

14. Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Der eine Weg Martin Heideggers,” in *Neuere Philosophie I: Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 421–22.

15. Theodor W. Adorno, *Jargon de l’authenticité de l’idéologie allemande*, trans. Eliane Escoubas (Paris: Payot, 1989), 148.

16. Martin Heidegger, “Über Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte und Staat,” in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus I: Dokumente*, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg / Munich: Alber, 2009), 82.

17. Dieter Thomä, “Wie antisemitisch ist Heidegger?” in *Martin Heideggers ‘Schwarze Hefte’: Eine Debatte*, ed. Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2016), 224.

18. Quoted by Volker Böhnigk, *Kulturanthropologie als Rassenlehre* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002), 131.

19. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 78.

20. Heidegger, *Being and time*, 220.

21. Kellerer, “Sein und Zeit. Ein Buch für alle und Jeden?” 2019, 117.

22. M. Heidegger / K. Bauch, *Briefwechsel 1932–1975*, ed. Almuth Heidegger (Freiburg: Albert, 2010), 92.

23. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 30–31.

24. Emmanuel Faye, “Being, History, Technology and Extermination in the Work of Heidegger,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 50, no. 1 (January 2012), 127.

25. Pierre Bourdieu, “Censure et mise en forme,” in *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris, Fayard, 2001), 367, n39.

26. Henri Meschonnic, *Le langage Heidegger* (Paris: Puf, 1990), 185.

27. Jürgen W. Falter, *10 Millionen ganz normale Parteigenossen: neue Forschungsergebnisse zu den Mitgliedern der NSDAP 1925–1945* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 2016).

28. M. Heidegger/K. Bauch, *Briefwechsel*, 2010, 61.

29. Sidonie Kellerer, “Heidegger et le nazisme au travers du prisme de sa correspondance,” in *Critique* 811, Heidegger: la boîte noire des Cahiers (December 2014), 988–98.

30. Andreas Fleischer, “Feind hört mit!” *Propagandakampagnen des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Vergleich* (Münster: Lit, 1994).

31. See Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 805: “In seiner tausendjährigen händlerischen Gewandtheit ist er [der Jude] den noch unbeholfenen, besonders aber grenzenlos ehrlichen Ariern weitaus überlegen,” 805; *Mein Kampf: Complete and Unabridged, Fully Annotated* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941), 425–26: “In his versatility

of a thousand years' trading he [the Jew] is infinitely superior to the clumsy and boundlessly honest Aryan, so that after a short time trade threatens to become his monopoly."

32. Bernhard von Rechenberg, *Der unsichtbare Krieg und seine Abwehr durch den deutschen Soldaten!* (Berlin: Nationalsozialistischer Reichskriegerbund, 1939), 14.

33. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1900), 528–29.

34. Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger, l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie. Autour des séminaires inédits de 1933–1935* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005), 410.

35. Sidonie Kellerer, "Reworking the Past. The Post-war Publication of a 1938 Lecture by Martin Heidegger," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 3 (November 2014), 575–602.

36. Emmanuel Faye, "Pour l'ouverture des archives Heidegger," *Le Monde* (January 4, 2006), https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2006/01/04/pour-l-ouverture-des-archives-heidegger-par-emmanuel-faye_727243_3232.html.

37. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Dyslexies philosophiques," *Libération* (November 21, 2017), http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2017/11/21/dyslexies-philosophiques_1611561.

38. Johannes Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

39. Thomas Sheehan, "L'affaire Faye: Faut-il brûler Heidegger? A Reply to Fritsche, Pégny, and Rastier," *Philosophy Today* 60, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 514, n90.

40. François Rastier, *Heidegger, Messie antisémite. Ce que révèlent les "Cahiers noirs"* (Lormont: Le bord de l'eau, 2018), 132.

41. Uwe Justus Wenzel, "Im Zwielficht der Zweideutigkeit," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (January 19, 2016), <http://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/im-zwielficht-der-zweideutigkeit-1.18679371>.

42. J.-L. Nancy, "Dyslexies philosophiques," 2017.

43. D. Thomä, "Wie antisemitisch ist Heidegger?" 2016, 220.

44. Thomä, 218.

45. S. Kellerer, "Heidegger n'a jamais cessé de soutenir le nazisme" [Heidegger never stopped supporting Nazism], *Le Monde* (October 27, 2017), 18.

46. On the passage in *Besinnung* in which Heidegger uses one of Hitler's formulations (GA 66: 122), see Faye, *Heidegger, l'introduction du nazisme*, 458–59.

47. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 667; *Complete and Unabridged*, 346.

48. Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 324.

49. Adolf Reincke cit. by Uwe Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich: Sprache-Rasse-Religion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 33.

50. Robert Minder, "Heidegger und Hebel oder die Sprache von Meßkirch," in *Dichter in der Gesellschaft: Erfahrungen mit deutscher und französischer Literatur* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1983), 234.

51. Eugen Fischer, "Die Fortschritte menschlicher Erblehre als Grundlage eugenischer Bevölkerungspolitik," in *Mein Heimatland. Badische Blätter für Volkskunde, ländliche Wohlfahrtspflege, Denkmal-, Heimat- und Naturschutz, Familienforschung* (1933), no 20, ed. Landesverein Badische Heimat, 210–19; also published in: *Deutsche Forschung* 20 (1933), 55–71.

52. Heidegger/Bauch, *Briefwechsel*, 29–30 (Heidegger's emphasis).

53. Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique*, 113.
54. Peter E. Gordon, "Heidegger in Black," *New York Review of Books* (October 9, 2014), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/10/09/heidegger-in-black/?pagination=false&printpage=true>.
55. Gregory Fried, "'Whitewashed with Moralism': On Heidegger's Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism," in *Heidegger and Jewish Thought: Difficult Others*, ed. Elad Lapidot and Micha Brumlik (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 61.
56. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 803; *Complete and Unabridged*, 425.
57. For example, see Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 785; *Complete and Unabridged*, 417: "What [the Jew] achieves in the field of art is either bowdlerization or intellectual theft. With this, the Jew lacks those qualities which distinguish creatively and, with it, culturally blessed races."
58. Faye, 2005, 482; also E. Faye, "La 'vision du monde' antisémite de Heidegger à l'ombre des Cahiers noirs," in *Heidegger: le sol, la communauté, la race*, ed. E. Faye (Paris: Beauchesne, 2014), 312.
59. Gordon, "Heidegger in Black," 2014.
60. M. Heidegger, *Antwort: Martin Heidegger im Gespräch* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1988), 105.
61. Faye, "Being, History, Technology, Extermination," 125.
62. Ernst Jünger. *The Worker*, ed. L. P. Hemming, trans. B. Costea (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 23.
63. Jünger, 46.
64. For a discussion of this period, see Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
65. E. Faye, *Arendt et Heidegger: extermination nazie et destruction de la pensée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2016), 209.
66. Kellerer, "Rewording the Past," 588.
67. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 775; *Complete and Unabridged*, 410.
68. Donatella Di Cesare, "Heidegger, das Sein und die Juden," in *Information Philosophie* (August 2014), 10.
69. See, on this point, E. Faye's conclusion in the work directed by him: *Heidegger, le Sol, la Communauté, la Race*, 321ff.
70. Catherine Malabou and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida: la contre-allée* (Paris: Quinzaine littéraire-Louis Vuitton, 1999), 57.
71. Dominique Janicaud, "Entretien avec Derrida," in *Heidegger en France*, vol. 2, ed. D. Janicaud (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 108; J.-L. Nancy, "Dyslexies philosophiques," 2017.
72. Stéphane Mosès, *The Angel of History: Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). On the borrowings from Braig and Cassirer, see E. Faye, "Das Sein als Mythos oder als Begriff: Heidegger und Cassirer," in "*Sein und Zeit*" neu verhandelt, ed. Heinz and Bender, 67–112.
73. Robert Minder, "Heidegger und Hebel oder die Sprache von Meßkirch," 285.

Chapter 8

A Second Letter to Emmanuel Faye

Gregory Fried

Dear Professor Faye,

Why do we read? This may seem an absurd question, but I mean it seriously, especially in the case of an author as deeply controversial as Heidegger. I think the answer is connected to what it means that we are the *zōon logon echon*,¹ the animal who speaks, who reasons, and who makes arguments. For you, the defense of rationality is of central importance in the Heidegger affair. At the most fundamental level, we read and we talk not merely to exchange information, but because we realize that we are not suited to address the meaning of things in isolation. Discourse, whether spoken or written, is only rational if we are prepared to force ourselves against our own limits in conversation. Comprehension is always ongoing for us discursively and therefore must unfold over time and through dialogue, with partners either real or imagined. So, as I did when we first entered into this discussion several years ago, I would like to present my remarks in the form of a letter to you. At issue is who we are—as thinking persons, as scholars, as citizens, and as inheritors of the Western tradition, for good or ill.

From your first book on Heidegger, which provoked our initial exchange, to your subsequent research on Heidegger and his followers, your work suggests that you would agree with me about the broad outlines of what is at stake in the Heidegger controversy. You have claimed that Heidegger's work was pro- or proto-Nazi long before Hitler's rise to power in 1933, including in *Being and Time* (1927); you have insisted that there is an indissoluble link between Heidegger's supposedly philosophical concepts and projects and his commitment to the racially motivated, anti-Semitic politics and policies of National Socialism, including the Shoah; you have accused Heidegger of assaulting the

most important achievements of the Western philosophical tradition of ethical humanism, opting instead for mythologies of *völkisch* destiny and racial identity; you have argued that Heidegger's method and his project undermine reason itself, and therefore cannot even properly be called philosophy; in addition, you regard Heidegger's influence, through his students and followers, as deeply pernicious, because—whether deliberately or unintentionally—that influence advances the debasement of rationality and the elevation of an anti-humanistic politics, or, more ominously, of outright fascism or Nazism.

Such concerns could hardly be more relevant either to philosophy itself or to the challenges of our times. Our previous exchange demonstrated that we disagree on certain fundamental aspects of the meaning of Heidegger's political engagement. I agree that in the case of Heidegger, what is at stake is both the nature of philosophy itself and the consequences of that for ethical and political thought and life. I agree that Heidegger's own politics is intimately bound up with his philosophical work; I have always thought this, but as I wrote in my first letter to you, after reading your book, despite my disagreements with you, I found it impossible to see him in the same way—not because I had believed his self-justifications, but because above all, your archival work demonstrated conclusively that Heidegger was even more deliberately duplicitous about the extent of his affinity for National Socialism than I myself had described in *Heidegger's Polemos*. This is why I also agree that the kind of archival and philological work pursued by your school of thought is absolutely necessary for the field.² This does not mean that I agree with all the conclusions you draw, but it does mean, especially after the publication of the *Black Notebooks*, that scholars cannot remain naive about Heidegger's willingness to obfuscate or even manipulate and falsify the political significance of his own work.

OTHER READINGS

As you will have the last word in this dialogue, in discussing the contributions of the other authors in this volume, I will focus mainly on the essay by Sidonie Kellerer. Because Kellerer is a colleague in your school of thought for reading Heidegger, by addressing her, I may be able to anticipate some of your concerns as well. I will confess two misgivings, though. The first is that I fear that we may end up talking past each other, despite our best efforts. This is because while I think that it is both possible and important to address vital questions facing us in philosophical confrontation with and against Heidegger, you and Kellerer think this is simply impossible, both because his

conceptual apparatus is so deeply compromised by his Nazism and because he does not even make arguments that are properly philosophical. That might leave us squabbling over technical details rather than addressing what is at stake beyond Heidegger himself.

The other misgiving relates to your methodology, which relies on minute examination of the editorial history of Heidegger's texts, as well as on the meaning of his conceptual vocabulary in the historical and political context of the rise and rule of the Third Reich. While I do think such analyses are an important undertaking, I hope you will allow me to defer intensive examination of such terminological questions to another occasion, which I do hope we can arrange, and for two reasons. One is that a comprehensive discussion of these issues would require a volume of its own. To some extent, Richard Polt's essay here does address this aspect, and so I will let that stand as the representative for that debate here. I agree with Polt when he writes that you make "the error of taking superlative expressions such as *Erfüllung* [i.e., the fulfillment of subjectivism] as expressions of simple approval" (138) and that you mistake Heidegger's analyses of phenomena such as brutality or the mechanization of the German army as endorsements rather than as decisive examples of modernity's full-blown nihilism. I would invite you to join Kellerer in showing that such readings are wrong as interpretations of Heidegger's perverse ambiguity. The other reason that I don't want to get into technical discussion of Heidegger's terminology here is that I hope to address the broad scope of what I think is at stake in the reading of Heidegger on politics, and for that, I think an overly technical discussion would get in the way.

To some extent, I believe that Sidonie Kellerer and you misunderstand me: I am not trying to defend Heidegger; I am trying to defend reading Heidegger as an opportunity to do philosophy, especially in confronting the deterioration of liberal democracy and the heritage of the Enlightenment. I have studied Heidegger as a negative pathway to understand philosophically why the Enlightenment has become vulnerable, and I believe it is simply inadequate to say it is as a result of irrationalism. The defense of reason and decency is a concern we share, but my worry is that your merely defensive proclamations in favor of rational argumentation fail to meet the challenge of our times, especially in the age of Trump, America's first postmodern president. Despite his vulgarity, his hatefulness, and his mendacity, we may yet find that Trump is a world-historical figure, in a negative sense, however, because he has instinctively tapped into powerful currents at a watershed moment, and that moment must be addressed philosophically, as well as politically. What Heidegger, as well as Trump in his own way, articulates in an explicit—and in Trump's case, implicit—critique of reason is a longing that has a very real attraction in our age of universalizing, globalizing homogenization: a longing

for belonging, for connection, for distinctive rootedness in the sense that even Simone Weil acknowledges. This is not to give in to Heidegger's politics; it is to recognize that this longing wedded to a specific historical finitude is profoundly human, that it has a logic of its own that cannot be counteracted simply by piously insisting on rationality and argument. By confronting Heidegger philosophically, we can confront the pathologies specific to our times in the debasement of the otherwise natural longing for belonging.

I do wonder if, after the successes of Donald Trump and of far-right and alt-right parties in Europe (only narrowly avoided in France), you see that the foundations of Western liberal Enlightenment are tottering. My view is that those foundations cannot be restored simply by insisting upon reason, universal rights, and so on, without also thinking about why those principles and ideals have lost much of their effective philosophical force today. Nor do I think it is simply because too many people have become enamored of the anti-rational jargon of Heidegger and postmodernists; in the United States almost no one even knows who they are. At this historical juncture, there are forces at work larger than Heidegger, but which can be addressed through him and against him to reconstruct the Western tradition.

So, while I would be very glad to know whether you agree with Dieter Thomä's analysis of the hierophantic imperative as the key to Heidegger's politics, I am even more interested to risk this question: How should we understand reason or rationality in order to defend them today? What troubles me as a broad feature of your critique of Heidegger is not the politics, for we share a revulsion for the choices Heidegger made, but rather that your defense of reason, the Enlightenment, humanism, and the like, is largely a *negative* one in the form of an attack on Heidegger. Ironically, then, your invocation of the ideals of Enlightenment strikes me as hierophantic as well, for they are presented without argument as the holy of holies that Heidegger has blasphemed. Please understand me: to the extent that faith in human dignity and in reason is at stake, I am on your side; however, I think the crisis we face is dire enough that mere piety about the articles of this faith or even a resolute defense of the putative saints of the philosophical tradition will not be adequate to confront what is facing us today. We cannot make the case by dismissing Heidegger as a pernicious fraud; we must meet him on the field of philosophy or cede the ground to him and those who wear the new masks of atavistic politics. In other words, I would ask, can we convert what Thomä calls Heidegger's imperative mode and reappropriate it as a *question* about our own principles so that we have a chance to renew and reformulate them before the shocks become too much for us to bear? I could not agree more with William Altman that Americans have almost entirely foregone this kind of self-reflection as a body politic and that this leaves us dangerously vulnerable to the kind of authoritarian ethno-nationalism for

which Nazism was just one avatar, leaving us blind to recognize, let alone resist, its new forms.

KELLERER'S READING

In the scope of a concise chapter, Sidonie Kellerer provides an excellent example of the methodology that you have insisted upon for over a decade: that to understand Heidegger's project and his politics properly, one must have a philological understanding of the history of his texts, especially how he manipulated them to camouflage the extent of his political commitments, as well as of the historical context of his terminology, both with respect to anti-Semitism in Germany and to the very particular language of the Nazi movement, the *lingua tertii imperii*. I think that any reasonable reader must agree with the need to take these philological considerations into account.

In particular, Kellerer is at the very least right that Heidegger engages in a complex discourse with the political jargon of the period. Her argument is that for certain key words and concepts, such as race, metaphysics, and subjectivity, it might *seem* that Heidegger critiques these terms as features of Western philosophy and, more specifically, the use of some of them (such as *Rasse* or *Volk*) by the Nazis. A naive reader might then fall into the trap set by Heidegger after the war by thinking that he was a subtle critic of the movement. Instead, however, he in fact engaged in this critique not to oppose Nazism but to expose how inadequately ideological rivals and insufficiently revolutionary strands of the movement had understood these concepts. By reappropriating such words and concepts in a revolutionary new manner, he might then reveal himself as having the deepest insight into the historical meaning of National Socialism. I do think this is a possibility that we must keep in mind, and I have myself argued along precisely these lines in *Heidegger's Polemos*, where I try to show that Heidegger sought to prove himself as having a deeper understanding of *polemos* as the fundamental mode of Being than figures such as Jünger and Schmitt, or even Hitler himself, whose *Mein Kampf* could be rendered as *My Polemos*. So, it is indeed possible that what Heidegger seems to reject he in fact goes on to validate, but at a new and supposedly higher level that only someone who properly understands him could grasp. Then it becomes a question of assessing each relevant concept for whether that is in fact what is happening and if it is politically significant that is in fact what is going on. Again, this is where I must ask your indulgence: I would like to defer that analysis to another occasion, because it would necessarily require intensive textual work for which I simply do not have the space here. Very briefly, I am not yet convinced by you and Kellerer that key terms in Heidegger's vocabulary, such as Dasein and Being, are esoteric masks for a

racialized conception of the German *Volk*. Also, despite how important for Heidegger scholarship these textual debates are, I want to focus on another feature of Kellerer's argument that I think goes to the heart of the matter.

Kellerer insists on something else that is certainly correct: that in philosophy, the appeal to authority cannot serve as the decisive foundation for an argument. It is true that in work on the history of philosophy and in what Anglo-American academics call Continental philosophy, there is a real danger of this. In focusing on a particular author in the history, philosophers can fixate on striving to resolve problems of clarity and inconsistency of that figure's thought in order to make it as consistent as possible. There is nothing inherently wrong with this attempt, and indeed it is absolutely vital for a proper evaluation of the thinker's argument. One risk, however, lies in forgetting that the question of the truth of the arguments can recede behind the intensity of conceptual and historical analyses of the work, and so what might once have been an opportunity for a philosophical encounter with a figure mutates into a project in the history of ideas. But an even greater risk is that by investing so much intellectual labor, as well as personal dedication, to making sense of a figure, that thinker becomes something like a prophet of the truth to the interpreter; then, the claim to have made sense of the author's ideas and arguments becomes a claim to the truth itself. We all know what this can look like in a community of scholars dedicated to a figure in the history of philosophy, and how it can degenerate into possessive and vain contests to take on the mantle of the prophet. I think that Kellerer is right to point out that the danger of this is particularly acute with Heidegger, given the spell his language and method may cast and given the significance of his involvement with National Socialism.

On the other hand, while the appeal to the authority of a supposedly great thinker can certainly derail genuinely philosophical consideration of the ideas and arguments at issue, those of us working on historical (or indeed contemporary) figures, rather than on problems in domains of inquiry as do many analytic philosophers, must keep the following in mind. If we intend to do philosophy with such a figure, and not history of ideas, we must necessarily concede in advance at least some degree of authority to that figure. On this point, I agree with Gadamer that philosophical study of authors inherently grants such authority as the orienting prejudice that allows to take them seriously in the first place. This by no means prevents us from concluding that we were deceived about an author's importance, nor does it imply that we must agree with all or even some of the author's observations, concepts, arguments, or conclusions. But at a minimum, it requires that we remain provisionally open to being convinced by some of them. Even more importantly, it requires that we believe that the author at least raises and addresses questions worth asking, even if we end up disagreeing with most or even all of

that author's responses. This provisional grant of authority is what it means to engage with a thinker philosophically.

If I understand you and Kellerer, you think that such philosophical engagement with Heidegger is *a priori* impossible. I can imagine that you, too, though, might have begun by taking Heidegger seriously as a philosopher—but then that your philological research into his conceptual terminology and historical context lead you to conclude that everything that seems to be philosophical in Heidegger is in fact a mask for a poisonous worldview that seeks to corrode philosophy with Nazism and unreason. That is certainly your right. Kellerer's rejection of the appeal to authority in part serves the purpose of warning readers from granting Heidegger even the provisional benefit of the doubt, because his method requires a kind of submission of reason, so that the reader becomes vulnerable to the obscurantist seductiveness of his discourse. Furthermore, her argument against the appeal to authority intends to block the common reply that Heidegger must be philosophically important because he influenced so many of his students, many or even most of whom cannot be accused of being Nazis, both, directly, in the case of his own students, and indirectly, in the case of others.

It seems to me, though, that the extreme hermeneutic of suspicion directed at Heidegger leads to difficulties. It entails that one cannot accept that any of Heidegger's conceptual innovations or any of his arguments (if they be arguments at all) have any philosophical legitimacy whatsoever. I understand that if you think Heidegger is, after all, nothing but an imposter attempting to infect his readers with Nazi ideology in the guise of philosophy, then denying him the credit of authority for any contributions in philosophy becomes a matter of intellectual hygiene and probity. Nevertheless, the extremity of this strategy does not strike me as convincing, at least in this case. For one thing, Heidegger's conceptual vocabulary arose in the context of phenomenological approaches to the question of the lifeworld of human beings in authors such as Dilthey and Husserl, as is well documented by the scholarship.³ Even if Heidegger did bend this discourse to Nazism, it simply is not plausible that none of his core ideas had or have any philosophical status as a conversation partner in this tradition.

Kellerer does raise a fascinating question: If you and she are right about the inherent and pervasive Nazism of his thought, how was it possible that so many thinkers were seduced into the delusion of taking Heidegger seriously? She concludes her essay with an equally suggestive question: If we can understand why Leo Strauss would have developed a hermeneutic to understand esoteric writing designed to evade persecution, should we not also attend to a hermeneutic to unmask an esoteric writing designed to hide the intention to persecute? But these questions raise questions of their own. If Heidegger's anti-Semitism should be self-evident to any careful reader familiar with the Nazi terminology and reactionary German anti-Semitism, how could so many

of his initial readers and students, many of them German-speaking Jews living in the very midst of that political-linguistic context, have missed that not only was he an anti-Semite (which they would have understood as common among conservatives such as him in Germany) but also a proto-Nazi whose entire philosophical edifice was a sham? This defies credulity. There is, then, a tension between the purported obviousness of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism in his published texts of the time, such as *Being and Time*, and the claim that he wanted to hide it.

I realize that in your book, *Arendt et Heidegger*, you do argue that Arendt, one of his most influential Jewish students, was indeed corrupted by Heidegger, smuggling his thought into her own, excusing her mentor of his allegiance to Nazism, and promulgating, in a new guise, his critique of reason and modernity in favor of a politics of exclusivist belonging.⁴ Presumably, you would argue that some such corruption afflicts all of Heidegger's students. But even if we grant that Heidegger somehow managed to fool his highly educated and perceptive students, what do we then say about the subsequent work of a Habermas, a Marcuse, a Löwith, a Levinas, a Jonas, or a Strauss, to name but a few, if influenced by Heidegger? The rejection of the appeal to authority cuts both ways. To put this another way: if the proto-Nazi meaning of Heidegger's central concepts (Dasein, Being, etc.) were so well masked that almost no one took them that way, even at the time, then those concepts took on a life of their own in subsequent scholarship, despite Heidegger. Kellerer's thesis—and, I take it, yours—assumes that an author has a complete and dictatorial control over his ideas and arguments, such that any subsequent thinking that takes it up is necessarily infected by its worst implications, even if they are so well hidden that subsequent scholars do not detect them. That would mean that Heidegger's thinking could surreptitiously dictate the meaning of any other thinker who takes him up, like a malign spirit possessing a body.

While this certainly might happen, must it necessarily? Again, this does not mean that I disagree with you and Kellerer that we must exercise caution. Heidegger did endeavor to hide the ardor of his allegiance to National Socialism after the war; he manipulated his texts to this end, and that he did so as a strategy to preserve his legacy. Also, as with any thinker with whom we might seriously disagree on ethics and politics, we must be on guard that adopting his ideas might lead in directions we would not expect or intend. For example, anyone taking seriously Marx's contention that all history is the history of class warfare must consider whether that idea had, as its literal implementation, the extermination of tens of millions by Marxist-Leninist regimes. Nevertheless, and with these cautions in mind, if we refuse the appeal to authority, then surely we must also deny that an author is the absolute owner of his questions, ideas, insights, and arguments, which must only

be understood in the way he intended. While we should make every effort to understand an author as he understood himself, if philosophy is an essential freedom of thought, then we must ultimately have it on our own authority to understand ideas as we ourselves make sense of them, even taking them in directions the author would disagree with vehemently.

This is a methodological feature of philosophy as ancient as the phrase attributed to Aristotle: *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas* (a paraphrase of *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a11–15); if Plato's invention, if we may call it that, of the *idea* as a philosophical term were his eternal possession, whose meaning were locked in place by his intention, then Aristotle would have been unable to transform the idea of the *idea* in his own way. This is the inherent declaration of independence from authority in philosophy; it is what makes genuinely philosophical dialogue possible, even with thinkers long dead, rather than the mere reconstruction of argument or ideology in the historiography of ideas. We engage in philosophical dialogue when we listen or read carefully, because we accept on authority that there might be something to learn from someone; we then endeavor to understand the other as fully as possible, remain open to persuasion, but reserve the right to disagree or to take the argument in new directions.

This does not preclude a right of refusal to enter into dialogue. One might find an author's views so offense or style so alienating that one cannot stomach a close encounter. But it seems ungenerous and perhaps even patronizing to demand this same refusal of others, on pain of being denounced as delusional or, worse, as Nazi sympathizers, or at best the useful idiots of that vile ideology. Also, surely the subsequent reception of Heidegger illustrates my point here. Thinkers too numerous to name have drawn on his conceptual apparatus—agreeing, disagreeing, or taking his insights in new directions. Very few of these have been Nazis, and whatever one might say of Heidegger's methods, it would be unjust to say that all such subsequent scholars fail even to make arguments. Do you really want to argue that all of these scholars and thinkers have produced meaningless pseudo-philosophy or that they are the unwitting carriers for the noxious infection of Heidegger's Nazi ideology? Perhaps it is the matter of a case-by-case study, but I would rather say that their work is testimony to the fact that Heidegger's corpus has a life beyond him, because no author has the power to dictate in advance all the possible inflections, permutations, and reinterpretations of his or her ideas. That is not how language works. It is not how thinking works. To point this out is not to rely upon Heidegger's authority as an influential figure in the history of philosophy to establish his legitimacy; it is to insist upon philosophy's self-authorizing, absolute freedom. The alternative is a radical form of reductionism about ideas that locks us in a prison house of authorial intent.

READING REASON AS REVELATION

Kellerer writes that I fail to recognize that “Heidegger neither respects nor accepts [argument as the] *sine qua non* of all philosophy” (201). I understand why she would claim this, given his critique of reason and his frequently hieratic style, but here we do disagree. Heidegger does make arguments (e.g., about the nature of truth), but they often depend on something common to phenomenology, whose methodology involves description of experience or things in a manner to get us to see them in a new way. That seeing cannot itself be a matter of direct argument, but it is vital to rigorous thinking nonetheless. At issue, I believe, is the role of intuition in rational thought. This question goes to the heart of what it means to think, to think rationally, and to do philosophy.

By *intuition* here, I do not mean guesswork, emotional instinct, some mystical perception, or even intuition in the Kantian sense of *Anschauung*, meaning sensory perceptions (either spatiotemporal sensations or the intuitions of space and time themselves). Rather, I mean the capacity for intellectual receptivity that Plato and Aristotle called *nous* and that has played a deep and persistent role in philosophy ever since. For Plato, *nous* is the highest form of thinking, for it intuits the ideas (*Republic*, 510–11). For Aristotle, *nous* is what grants access to the most fundamental insights, the first principles, upon which all further thought is predicated.⁵ Aristotle is quite explicit about this: the first principles that *nous* apprehends are something indemonstrable (*anapodeikton*), and so it is not a rational argument (*ou logos*) that attains them. Does this mean that *nous* is an *irrational* feature of thinking? No, but it does mean that rational understanding depends on insights that cannot be coerced, as it were, by a deductive process. We can arrive at understanding by induction, but success is never guaranteed. This is what Euclid meant by the axioms of geometry, for example. As Aristotle says, only *nous*, this faculty of direct insight into an ultimate truth or first principle (*archê*), can show us, for example, that the most basic geometric shape is the triangle. It is in this sense that Aristotle endeavors to save the phenomena through his frequent, proto-phenomenological method of exploring the *endoxa*, the common experience and opinions, to get us to see the matter at issue.⁶

I think we all have had experience of what Aristotle means: it is about receptivity, or as we say in colloquial English, whether one “gets” something or not, which echoes the French *com-prendre*, to take something in as a unitary whole. For example, while it is true that in Euclidean space, parallel lines will never meet, no matter how far they are extended, this cannot be proven. One either “gets” it or does not. If not, then one does not get very far in geometry. Or consider the concept of the limit in calculus: I will confess that it took me some time to “get” that the function $2x-1$ divided by x equals 2 , given the

limit of x approaching infinity. I “get” that $E = mc^2$ is a formula describing the relationship of energy and mass and that it shows that both are aspects of the same thing, but I doubt that I will ever *fully* comprehend the mathematics underlying this equation. Kant rather cruelly wrote, “Deficiency in judgment is just what is ordinarily called stupidity, and for such a failing there is no remedy, and such an affliction cannot be remedied.”⁷ I would simply add that there is no one who is not stupid about something.

You cannot intellectually coerce someone to get these axiomatic foundations, no matter how rational and clear your arguments may be, but that does not make them any less true. Despite however much I might want a complete understanding of modern physics, the fact that I do not have, and probably never will have, full noetic insight into the mathematical foundations of relativity theory that predicted the existence of black holes does not mean that black holes do not really exist. Any good teacher understands what Socrates meant in the *Republic* when he said that education is a matter of “turning the soul” of the student to see the truth (518b–d, 521c), not force-feeding the mind with information, like pouring water into a cup or grain into a sack. In his Seventh Letter, Plato writes that the most important insight of his philosophy “does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself.”⁸ There are axiomatic foundations to a field of knowledge that one cannot simply coerce a student to understand, no matter how good one’s logic, because these foundations, what Socrates called hypotheses, are not demonstrable in the sense of provable by deduction; they are the basis from which any deduction in that field may proceed. They are not justified by the field as such, for that would be circular reasoning.

As Aristotle says in the *Posterior Analytics*, “not all knowledge is demonstrable, and in fact knowledge of the ultimate principles is indemonstrable [ἀναπόδεικτον]” (72b18–20).⁹ Nevertheless, these foundational principles are *potentially* demonstrable by *induction*, in the Latin sense of that word as a leading-into; they are not apodictic, in the sense of the Greek root ἀποδεικτός, something that can be demonstrated as true from something else. These foundations are instead *hypodictic*, if I may coin a word from the Greek ὑποδείκνυμι, meaning to bring to notice, to show or teach in the sense of indicating, intimating, or alluding. Some knowledge can only be attained through such hypodictic insight; even though a teacher cannot force such insight upon a student, a very good teacher may be able to “turn” the student’s attention in various ways so that the student may eventually “get” the necessary insight. So, although neither teacher nor student can make this moment happen, the best teachers can make it more likely by having *insight* into the particular difficulties of the subject, as well as the particular learning style of

the student. This is not Gnosticism; it is an unavoidable feature of coming to a rational understanding. If we study alone, all we can do is prepare ourselves as best we can by rigorously studying the matter at hand and wait for insight to come like a revelation, that moment of *eureka*. Every such instance of insight, an act of *noiêsis*, is grounded in reason's general faculty for insight, *nous*, that grasps the *noêton*, the thing perceived. Such insights are not mystical just because they cannot be forced to happen or because some get them while others do not, but they are mysterious in the sense that reason cannot justify them or explain how to acquire them according to some formula; we can only recognize that they can happen and are the starting points for any fuller understanding.

Furthermore, Aristotle claims that *nous*, the capacity for insight into indemonstrable truths, is necessary not just for theoretical wisdom, in fields such as geometry, but also for practical wisdom both in individual ethical conduct and in political activity. He writes, in Book 6 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, that

insight [*nous*] also discerns the ultimate particulars [*eschatôn*] in both respects [that is, in the theoretical sciences and in practical action], as it is *nous*, not reasoning [*ou logos*], that discerns primary definitions and ultimates: in demonstrations, insight discerns the unchanging and primary definitions; in practical action, it apprehends the ultimate, contingent fact and the minor premise, because these are the first principles from which the purpose of action derives, as universals derive from particular cases; therefore, one must have perception of particulars, and this immediate comprehension is insight. (1143a-b)

We must have insight into the specificity of a situation to conduct ourselves ethically, and such insight does not come equally to everyone, however “reasonable” they might be otherwise. General ethical or political principles, however well founded, are not enough. A comedian, a diplomat, a politician, or indeed anyone at all must be able to “read the room,” as we say in English—whether that “room” be as personal as whether to give money to a homeless person or as political as whether to amend a nation’s constitution. This ability to “read” means gaining insight into the particulars in that particular context in order to act in accord with both principle and the actual circumstances.

This is why Aristotle argues that insight, *nous*, is needed to apprehend both the ultimates of ethical or political theory, their first principles, as well as the ultimates understood as the relevant particularities of a given context. So, when he says that “we must have perception of particulars, and this immediate perception is insight,” this “immediate perception,” though perhaps mediated by sensory perception, is more than that. If I am trying to determine if and how I should aid a homeless person I encounter, I will take in what I see, hear, and even smell or touch, but these sensory perceptions alone do not

necessarily result in the insight necessary to determine whether and how to act in this particular case. I must have a refined capacity for insight into how such observations inform the appropriate action in this particular case; this insight often happens in an instant and cannot be arrived at by reason in the sense of a formulaic calculation.

If the insights of *nous* are necessary for rational thought but indemonstrable, does this mean that the foundations of rational thinking, the axioms and first principles and ultimates, are *irrational*? No, but it does mean that just as some people may not get—at least not immediately—what a limit is in calculus, so too might they fail to grasp fundamental principles of ethical and political life, as well as how specific situations relate to those principles.

You may well ask what all this has to do with Heidegger's strange claim, one that you hold up, not implausibly, as evidence that he is not entitled to the name "philosopher"; it bears repeating: "Thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries, is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought" (GA 5: 267/WoN, 112).

I want to suggest that this can be understood as an appropriation of Aristotle's conception of *nous*, insight, but an appropriation that radically historicizes it. In the first half of the 1920s, Heidegger developed his conception of the practice of phenomenology as "formal indication" (*formale Anzeige*). As Lawrence Hatab convincingly argues, formal indication plays an enduring, if background role in all of Heidegger's subsequent work in philosophy as phenomenology:

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not offer any explicit discussion of formal indication, yet the importance of this notion for his phenomenology has been made clear by the explicit accounts in lecture courses surrounding the publication of *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, all philosophical concepts are formal indications (GA 29/30: 425/293), "formal" in gathering the focal meaning of lived experiences, and "indications" in pointing to (*an-zeigen*) engaged circumstances and practices that cannot be fully captured in, or exhausted by, formal concepts.¹⁰

For Heidegger, the practice of phenomenological thinking is not about inert, free-standing facts and information, but rather about how meaning happens to us as the temporal unfolding of the intelligibility of the world as we ordinarily inhabit it.

Heidegger's phenomenology, then, endeavors to reveal the structures of how understanding coalesces in a meaningful world, and these structures get analyzed as the terms now very familiar to Heidegger's readers as *existentialia*, such as care, angst, and Being-in-the-world itself. These phenomenological features cannot be demonstrated empirically, because they are modes of Being, not things open to sensory perception, and so they can only be shown

through phenomenological descriptions that indicate their formal role in the construal of meaning. This is akin to what Wittgenstein means in the *Tractatus*, where he says, “There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical”¹¹—with the rather significant difference that Heidegger believes that phenomenological description is indeed a form of saying that can show. But what formal indication shows is not self-evident, and not everyone gets it, because these structures, while closest to us in how we inhabit our everyday world, are farthest from us conceptually, precisely because they are so alien to our everyday categorization of things. As such, formal indications cannot be either demonstrated or applied formulaically.

As when we read a poem or hear a joke, we either get what phenomenology indicates, or we do not. Heidegger’s formal indication, as method, is like the faculty of *nous* and a moment of *noësis* in that it cannot simply force a realization by describing something; it attempts to “turn” the mind toward, but cannot coerce, insight. Nevertheless, the existential categories “are” there as what makes meaning possible for us at all, just as *nous* in Aristotle operates as the foundation for all forms of understanding, even if never made conceptually explicit. An important difference is that Aristotle’s *nous* is an intellectual faculty of the human soul, while formal indication is a philosophical method, but what it can show are aspects of our understanding that are otherwise indemonstrable by empirical or logical deduction and that function to make the world intelligible in the way that *nous* does.

Furthermore, just as in Aristotle there is both theoretical insight into axiomatic foundations of the sciences and practical insight into the ultimate particulars of any given ethical or political situation, so too for Heidegger is there this double aspect in the constitution of meaning. On the one hand, there is the phenomenological insight into the existential structures of meaning-construal, which are universal to *Dasein*, which can be grasped by formal indication, and which then provide the ontological basis for any other domain of inquiry; on the other, there is the specific insight into the nexus of meanings of any particular, existing world of a given person or community as *Dasein*. In this sense, *nous* is fundamental because it provides the constitutive insights that animate a lived world of meanings, things, and practices. Heidegger says that “reason . . . is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought” because insight, both into the ontological structures of existence and into the constellation of meanings in a particular historical existence, cannot be forced by logic or proven by induction or applied by abstract formulae or theories.

It is the insight into the particulars of meaning in a given world which makes *nous*, as a form of ontological insight, radically historical in Heidegger. For Aristotle, the insights, the *noêmata* as ultimates and axioms, that we may gain in the theoretical sciences such as geometry are eternal truths that, once realized, need no further deliberation; in practical ethical life, *nous*

may grant insight into the specific contingent factors that is necessary to act ethically as an individual or justly as a community in a given context. But a chasm opens between Aristotle and Heidegger with respect to the relationship between the theoretical and the practical, or lived, world. In Aristotle, while theoretical wisdom, *sophia*, is not strictly necessary for practical wisdom, knowing what the human condition is, as human *nature*, grants a deeper and broader understanding of what is universally true about what is best in human conduct and institutions. For Heidegger, while the existential structures of Dasein are fundamental to the Being of all Dasein, it is precisely because “Dasein is time” (GA 64: 61), or more precisely *temporality*, because Dasein’s meaningful existence is always already historical to its core, that there is no universality to meaning as we inhabit our disparate historical worlds. This is why Heidegger would say that *nous* in Aristotle is foundational in a still metaphysical sense: it grants access to supposedly permanent and universal features of the natural and the human worlds, whereas phenomenological insight, at least for Heidegger, grants access to the radically historical finitude of human existence in its understanding of the world, in how it interprets and construes meaning in that world.

To sum up, “thinking” in its most proper sense for Heidegger means a kind of reflective activity that lays us open to an insight, a realization, a revelation that may come, that may happen to us, which is why he calls it “preparatory thinking” or *Besinnung* (meditation) starting in the latter 1930s. It is not thinking in the sense of reasoning deductively from established principles or calculating on the basis of established scientific formulae or systems of ethical-political doctrine. Heidegger obviously wants to argue against the notion that thinking is, at least purely and exclusively, a form of ratiocination, that is, argumentation—inductive or deductive—that can proceed according to logical rules. For example, when a painter or a poet or a composer pauses to ponder a next brush stroke or word or note, does it make sense to say she or he is not *thinking* when doing so? But this kind of contemplative thinking does not proceed as calculation, as deduction, or according to some logical methodology: the stroke, the word, or the note *comes* to the artist. This surely is thinking, too, so to restrict the title of “thinking” only to reason understood as, say, logic and the scientific method would rule out some of the most defining aspects of the life of the mind.

Perhaps you would respond that such cases are certainly examples of *thinking* in a broad sense, but not as what it means to think *philosophically*, which requires argument, logic, precision, and clarity. The examples drawn from the arts, by contrast, involve work of the mind that is notoriously difficult for even the artist to explain,¹² which is why the ancients attributed inspiration granted to the Muses. One might be able to give a cognitive-neurological explanation of how the mind works in a moment of inspiration, but that is not

the same as personally inhabiting a self-aware process of thought, explicable on its own terms. It is also very different from that Cartesian clear and distinct account that we expect from philosophy in making a rational argument that can be tested and revised through methodologically rigorous scrutiny, challenge, and defense.

This does strike me as an issue that goes to the heart of the matter. It may well be that to privilege the mode of thought in the arts, to stay with that example, as a more genuine form of thinking than philosophy, understood as logical argumentation and rigorous methodology, has wider implications. These implications would be more serious than the standard objection to Heidegger that philosophy in his style is lax, wooly, imprecise, self-indulgent, and subject to gross logical errors. The charge would be that Heidegger's style of "thinking" relies upon accepting insights made in the pretentious and hieratic style of the pontiff, as A. J. Ayer described Heidegger's method, not defended with sober argument.¹³ This is a style suited to the hypnotic rhetoric of a charismatic guru, not to a teacher who respects his student's autonomy. This leads to the imperative, even totalitarian style of thought that Thomā identifies. In politics, this means appealing not to reason as the basis for principles, institutions, and actions, but rather to exclusive insights and revelations of meaning that others unable to experience them cannot share. That does seem a good description of Heidegger's political speeches in 1933–1934, as well as his style more generally. The danger is that promoting such experiences and insights would provide, as the basis for political affiliation and motivation, not reasoned principles but instead the passions of an atavistic belonging to a group, something one either is or is not part of (e.g., by race, ethnicity, or religious revelation), but which one cannot rationally choose to be.

As I understand the more expansive meaning of thinking, though, it should not have to mean that rationality as rigorous, logical thought must be discarded, only that it requires a critique, establishing its limits and limitations. It is only when reason in the sense of this calculative rationality oversteps its bounds, claiming to be the whole function of thinking, that it becomes the "stiff-necked adversary of thought." As such, it becomes a tool of humanity's hubristic subjectivism, which conceives of thinking as the formulations of laws of nature and systems of all kinds, ethical and political included, that we can master and apply to the objective world.

Forgotten, then, is the kind of thinking that yields insights that come to us but that we cannot compel to happen and for which we then should be thankful, rather than arrogantly assuming we can produce insight at will; such thinking, then, demonstrates that the total mastery of "thought" is beyond us. This is what I had in mind with the critique of the passage in Descartes's *Discourse on Method* where he predicts that his method could lead to so full an understanding

of the world's fundamental elements and forces that we human might become "masters and possessors of nature" (23). I found your dismissal (63) of what I take to be the self-evident meaning of this passage puzzling, both because Descartes here displays the soaring extent of his ambition for the fruits of rationality and because this very ambition seems to me to underlie the hubris of a modernity whose technologies, as you yourself warn, threaten to annihilate us if the madness of Nazism were to rise again. It strikes me that a crucial point about the nature of human reason is that it has its limits. What ingenuity can unleash, wisdom often cannot control. To understand thinking as fundamentally a gift of insights whose coming we cannot master, which are nevertheless rational but not our absolute tool or possession, is a necessary restraint on human hubris and thoughtlessness.

WHY SHOULD WE READ HEIDEGGER?

Let me cite this declaration in Polt's essay, which is at least a partial validation of your position:

To oppose someone on ethical and political grounds, without seriously considering the potential truth of his arguments, is indeed unphilosophical. But can we afford to be philosophical about every point of view? Can we afford to expose our conscience to corruption? It may be prudent to condemn and reject dedicated Nazis, and even to avoid reading them—in order not to waste our precious time, and not to run the risk of having our sound moral and political instincts subverted. (121)

Let me be absolutely clear, so that there be no misunderstanding: I share what I take to be the conviction of yours and Polt's that Nazism, fascism, racism, assaults on reason, and the like are anathema, and I oppose them in the small ways that an academic can. The decisive phrase here is that we might not want "to run the risk of having our sound moral and political instincts subverted," and the key word is "instincts." I imagine that you would want to say something even stronger than "instincts," such as "principles," because I assume you would argue that our reasons for opposing Nazism are fully rational. Let's not quibble about that, because the issue is how we ground those instincts or principles, which are, for me, other ways of naming the foundational insights upon which the rest of the liberal democratic tradition, in the broad sense, is built, but which are themselves indemonstrable. Perhaps we could agree that something's being indemonstrable does not mean it is irrational.

I think Heidegger might agree, too, but with an essential caveat. For Heidegger, we do indeed inhabit a world of meaning whose fundamental

assumptions are indemonstrable, even mostly invisible, and precisely as such orient us to the ordinary understandings and practices of that world. We are “thrown” into these orienting fundamentals by the radical contingency of history, but this foundation, this ground as our meaningful orientation, is founded on an abyss. In that abyss, what a good “liberal” might take as the bedrock, the “self-evident” “truths,” as the American Declaration of Independence puts it, of political life—liberty, equality, human rights, and so on—are “ultimates,” not in the Aristotelean sense of rational yet indemonstrable truths, but rather as ultimately contingent. While most people, most of the time, interpret their world through the common lens of such fundamentals in some concatenation that allows them to share that given historical world in meaningful ways, Heidegger holds that the work of great philosophers, great poets—and, in the 1930s, great statesmen (GA 40: 66)—takes the risk of shattering such self-evident truths and either plunging the given meaning of the world into catastrophe or reconfiguring it in a new beginning within history. For Heidegger then, the pre-rational insights of *nous* do not grant us unshakable, eternal foundations in truth conventionally understood; either insight orients us to the everyday intelligibility of a given world, or, in exceptional cases, in genuine thinking in Heidegger’s sense, it intuits the pressure points where the foundations may either be reinforced, at least for a while, or cracked open and shattered.

I disagree with Heidegger here because, for reasons I have defended elsewhere, including my letter to you, I consider myself a Platonist. As a skeptical idealist, I believe that it makes sense to seek insight into such fundamentals as rationally defensible, even if not apodictically demonstrable.¹⁴ That means that even what we take as “self-evident” truths must be open to philosophical questioning, leading to their reconfirmation, revision, or rejection. I would not advocate engaging in such philosophical work if, say, I lived in Munich during the Weimar Republic in 1923 and Hitler was leading his fellow Nazis in the Beer Hall Putsch. Such a moment of crisis, when a whole way of life is at stake, is not the time to read a Locke, a Marx, or a de Tocqueville, to refute a de Maistre, a Schmitt, or a Heidegger, and only then to figure out what to do. In such a crisis, we do not have time to think but only to act; we put philosophy aside and rely on our “instincts,” as Polt puts it. So, again, this is one of my most urgent questions to you: Are we now in such a crisis?

In my view, we both are and are not. Liberalism in its broadest sense that I would want to defend—as a respect for reason and truth, for universalism in the conception of the human person, for civic liberty, for human rights and equality before the law, for structural limits to the power of government, for individual conscience and freedom, among many other features, and whose historical examples may range from social democracies to market economies—is indeed experiencing a slow-motion crisis in which these norms are fraying

and even threatening to collapse. We see this in Europe and the United States in the rise of parties and leaders that embrace xenophobic nationalism, a contempt for the rule of law and constitutional government, a shamelessness in manipulating the truth, and a longing for authoritarian leadership. But a slow-motion crisis is not the same as an emergency demanding immediate action. As of this writing, we still have time to *think*, and I believe that it is crucial that we do, precisely because this is indeed a looming crisis. In your reply to my first letter, you yourself write that the question of Heidegger and of National Socialism “is not just an ethical question; it is a question of survival for humanity” because if something like Heidegger’s vision of politics were to take hold again, given today’s terrifyingly destructive technology, we might very well destroy ourselves in a frenzy of ethno-nationalist irrationality (57).

I agree; that crisis does lie before us. The question is how philosophy should address it, if it can at all. The problem is that what Polt has called *instincts* are, in my view, an impediment to thinking through such a crisis. If I am right that it is *nous*, as insights or intuitions, that allows us to recognize and function within the operative norms of our community by providing a largely instinctive orientation to those norms, then my point in my first letter stands: philosophy is a form of absolute freedom, because no norm, no instinct, is immune to questioning. This is why Socrates so infuriated Athens, which accused him of impiety—for what are our instincts about such norms if not the most gripping form of piety about how life should be lived? Socrates’s famous question from the *Euthyphro* asks, “Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved [by the gods]?” (10a). I would meta-translate as follows: “Is what is righteous—the instinctive norms that we live by, acknowledged as binding by whatever authority we accept as supremely legitimate—because it is righteous, or is it righteous because the supreme authority we accept acknowledges it as such?” If it is the latter, then the reigning norms are unassailable and we must submit to them and to the instincts for what counts as righteous that they imbue in us; if the former, then the absolute freedom of philosophy is both possible and potentially dangerous to existing norms, because we can *think* through these norms and allow reason to modify our instincts for personal and social righteousness. If we do not, the grave danger is that new instinctive norms will subvert the old ones under the guise of reason, which is surely part of what we fear in exposing ourselves to views we instinctively abhor. So there is risk on both sides.

But is this not both the threat and the glory of philosophy wherever it arises? In the United States, for example, we have measured the norms of our social and political order in the light of the still unfulfilled idea that “all *persons* are created equal”—with my deliberate emendation—in order to reform

both laws and social practices that at one time were entirely and instinctively normal and unassailable to most of society, but which we have nevertheless made some progress in overcoming. These include once deeply rooted norms about race, gender, and, most recently, sexual orientation. This progress may be far from complete, but it was made possible, in my view, by a philosophical confrontation with the existing norms of society through what I am calling skeptical idealism: a willingness to question the sacred in the light of an idea in order to confirm that norm (as we have tried to do with equality), reformulate it, as we have done by implicitly revising “all [white] *men* are created equal” to all *persons*), or reject it entirely, as we are still endeavoring to do with the stain of racism.

READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

At my most generous, this is what I believe Heidegger might have meant by saying that “questioning is the piety of thinking” (GA 7: 36). Without the absolute freedom to question the most sacred of norms, philosophy as the opportunity truly to *think* would be impossible, but if reason and rationality as their deepest level include this ability to question even our most intimate instincts—cognitive, social, and emotional—and if this questioning defines what we most properly are, then such questioning is not blasphemy or impiety, but rather the most pious loyalty to our calling as human beings. To paraphrase Heidegger, a faith unwilling or unable to face questioning is no faith at all but dogma already long past its prime.¹⁵ Or Tennyson: “There lives more faith in honest doubt/Believe me, than in half the creeds.”¹⁶ Faithful philosophy means trusting that this absolute freedom is worthwhile; it does not mean relativism or skeptical nihilism about our ethical instincts. This is why I think Socrates’s protest in the *Republic* that it would be impious (*mê hosion*) of him not to defend justice when it comes under attack (368b-c) is so pivotal for understanding what it means to live and think philosophically, both within and outside one’s ethical intuitions: Socrates does not simply reject out of hand the arguments made by Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus, arguments deeply shocking to conventional Athenian norms: that justice is merely a tool of the strong to fool their prey and that a life of exploitative injustice is the best. He is willing to risk thinking through his instincts in favor of justice, despite the risks entailed, because of his trust in philosophical reflection.

This brings me to my next question for you: Do you think there is any truth to my contention that what will allow the slow-motion crisis of our time to slip into an outright emergency is precisely our failure in this generation to have the courage to submit to questioning our articles of faith, our instincts, about liberal democracy and the Enlightenment? It strikes me that our failure

to halt the rise of authoritarianism and new, if still masked, versions of fascism has something to do with our allowing our rational faith (or, if you prefer, trust) in the bedrock of the West to degenerate into mere declarations of piety about truth, reason, equality, universal rights, and so on. What were once living insights nourished by philosophical struggle have become the hollow idols of a dogma with less and less power to resist the surge of unreason, fear, and xenophobia that serves the cause of authoritarian ethno-nationalism. I would therefore be very glad to hear your *positive* defense of what these pillars are or should be, in addition to how you see Heidegger threatening them.

This is why I believe a confrontation with Heidegger remains essential, because he forces us to revisit the entire sweep of the Western tradition in order to restore its vitality. This is what I have tried to do with Plato. Against Sharpe, who opposes Heidegger history of the West as a history of Being, I would argue that precisely at this juncture of history, we need to reexamine and renew our history. This means not dismissing Heidegger but taking him seriously as a philosopher, even and especially when disagreeing with him about the meaning of that history. Heidegger's style, to say nothing of his actions, can be an insurmountable impediment to some. I will only say that I find his challenge unavoidable in thinking through the menace still facing us now, and I think the simple fact that you have devoted so much of your own energies to the task of confronting him shows that you must agree, at least in part.

READING YOU, READING ME

This brings me to three final points I wish to underline about our previous exchange. First, in your reply to me, you rejected out of hand my contention that Heidegger's challenge is important because he raises in a new and powerful way the conflict between universalism and particularism, championing the latter in the name of our finitude and historicity, against the former, which he deems metaphysical and liberal, reaching back to the idealism of Plato. I could defend my interpretation. It is, I think, what is at stake when Heidegger says in the Winter Semester of 1933–1934, in lecture for students in an introductory course at the height on his engagement with National Socialism, that “here [i.e., in Platonism in all its forms], the conception of the human being is one of a *rational being in general*. In the Enlightenment and in liberalism, this conception achieves a definite form. Here all of the powers against which we must struggle today have their root. Opposed to this conception are the *finitude*, *temporality*, and *historicity* of human beings” (GA 36/37: 166). I would invite you to consider this point again, not merely as a matter of a putatively correct interpretation of Heidegger but as an occasion to think about the looming crisis confronting us now.

Is it not plausible to understand this crisis, at least in part, as a confrontation between the universalizing tendency of the global age and the very human desire to preserve local traditions, autonomy, and idiosyncrasies? This universalizing globalism includes not only the advocacy of human rights that apply to all but also the leveling or even obliteration of cultural differences, and the particularism of populations choosing to resist this tendency. That resistance takes many forms, some more benign than others: resistance to the Disneyfication and McDonaldsization of local traditions in everything from language to cuisine (a resistance certainly alive in France, from vigilance against “Franglais” to the protection of the hundreds of local cheeses against international regulation); resistance to neoliberal capitalism in protests against the G-20 or in the form of protectionism and retreat from international trade agreements (Trump’s trade wars and Britain’s Brexit); decolonial resistance to social homogenization and obliteration of national identity (a feature both of indigenous peoples’ movements, with which I have much sympathy, as well as of the emerging ethno-nationalist or religious-nationalist movements across the globe, from the United States to Hungary to Myanmar, against which my own instincts recoil).

Second, then, is that I have tried to argue that the human condition is necessarily riven (as in torn) by this tension between universalism and particularism. We are, to use Heidegger’s idiom, always already thrown into a world in which our affections and aversions, our intuitions and our instinctive sense of obligatory norms, are given to us, not rationally chosen. That givenness is not absolutely binding, but it does articulate the piety of our everyday lives, in the sense of piety I delineated above. This immersion within a given world, as the fundament from which rational deliberation may then proceed, is what I tried to explicate as “rootedness” in my letter. You took issue with my citing Simone Weil as an advocate of this “need for roots,” which is after all the title of one of her books, because, I take it, you don’t want a victim of the Holocaust confused with an advocate of Nazism. Yet this is precisely what I want to call attention to: that *rootedness* in itself is simply a feature of the human condition, one that can be put to either good or evil uses.

To the extent that Heidegger draws upon the Nazi metaphor of *Boden*, soil, as the precondition for rootedness, I would argue that is an abuse of this aspect of the human condition, because Heidegger wants to argue that what it means to be a human being as *Dasein* is entirely defined by “finitude, temporality, and historicity,” without any possibility of transcending our radically historical situatedness, and so this finite belonging is what we must embrace, to the exclusion of Platonic-liberal universalism. But I do agree with Weil that “to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul” (39), because all human endeavor to understand the world more fully must begin with the embeddedness of one’s own life as part of

the particular traditions and aspirations within which we all dwell. This is not necessarily a retreat into *völkisch* irrationalism; it is a recognition of an aspect of our humanity, which after all comes from the word for *earth* in Latin (*humus*), as does the name *Adam* in Hebrew (אָדָם). Only when this rootedness is perverted by making our historical situatedness an absolute boundary, a basis for inclusion and exclusion, does it become dangerous; but just as dangerous is to treat being human purely as an abstraction, because that leaves the repressed longing for belonging exposed to the manipulation of demagogues.

My own argument has been that Plato shows us that it is possible to transcend this situatedness, but we always begin within it and always return to it. This is also why I described our condition as “between Earth and Sky” (38–43). Against this, you wrote, “I admit that I cannot follow you in that gnostic tension between earth and sky. Those assertions are not of the order of the rational and therefore of the refutable, but I do not think that Heidegger’s gnostic speculations on Hesiod’s *Theogony* pertain to philosophy, especially when one is aware of the ethnic and racist conception he proposes of ‘the land’” (66). My reference to “earth and sky” is, as is ultimately everything in philosophical language, a metaphor. It is shorthand for the tension in the human condition between, on the one hand, our embeddedness in a context of meaning that orients our everyday understanding, binding us in the piety of our loves and hatreds, and, on the other hand, our capacity to transcend this embeddedness, a capacity perhaps rarely fulfilled, to engage in the rational critique and thoughtful reformulation of our opinions, norms, institutions, and habits.

I do not think this is a gnostic proclamation but rather a feature of the human condition. The fact that we are emotional and passionate beings whose everyday thinking is shot through with unexamined assumptions is not itself outside “the order of the rational,” as many philosophers have argued in their own way—Bernard Williams and Martha Nussbaum, to name but two who can hardly be accused of gnostic protofascism for acknowledging the roles that personal attachment and emotion play in ethical reasoning. To be properly rational is to recognize and embrace our attached rootedness as necessary to our existence, but without submitting in thrall to it. This is what I mean by “situated transcendence” as a form of idealism that takes into account our historically embedded finitude while also calling us to the responsibility of critically confronting that finitude in order to reconstruct its norms rationally when faced with a crisis. As is the case today. It is a dialectic that never ends, because human nature is always incomplete, a paradoxical in-between of situated historicity and the ability to transcend our concrete particularity. This is to side with Plato against Heidegger, but without simply dismissing Heidegger’s critique of the pitfalls of excessive abstraction.

Finally, this brings me to the nature of philosophy itself. In your first reply, you disagreed vehemently with my assertion that “your book is primarily a work of history and biography” (59). I probably should have said *intellectual history*, and I take your point that you did not intend to produce a biography of Heidegger, but rather to interpret his work through a treatment of its concepts and language in their proper historical context. I have no quarrel with that; philological, archival, and historical research are essential to understanding a figure as complex as Heidegger. But one of your key claims is that Heidegger’s work cannot be called philosophy, both because he himself denies it that title and because anyone who advocates irrationality and Nazism cannot be a philosopher.

So, what then are we doing when we read or write about Heidegger? Granted, one must know a great deal about philosophy to understand Heidegger’s interpretations of the great thinkers of the tradition and to refute him—or more: to demonstrate that he is a deceiver and a charlatan, as you seek to do. This, then, is like the astronomer who wants to demonstrate that an astrologer is a fraud: one must know enough about astronomy to prove the astrologer wrong, but one is not *doing* astronomy when debunking astrology. To do astronomy means to work on properly astronomical questions.

What, then, does it mean to prove Heidegger a fraud? If there is truly nothing philosophical about his work, how can we be doing philosophy in refuting him? It may be an important task in intellectual forensics, in academic politics, and in ideological polemics, but in what sense is it philosophy?

You and I agree that at stake “is not just an ethical question; it is a question of survival for humanity.” We also seem to agree that confronting Heidegger is an important, perhaps even a crucial way to address the threat of humanity’s nihilism and self-annihilation, because he represents a mode of thinking that is larger than him and that exists apart from him even now. Where I think we differ is in the role of philosophy in confronting what Heidegger gets so terribly wrong. I believe the task is to confront Heidegger by taking him seriously as philosophy, while you seek to demolish him by showing that every important concept and every substantial position he took in his body of work are bound up inexorably with Nazism. With all due respect, I think this is an ideological rather than a philosophical approach to oppose a way of thinking.

I realize that in your *Heidegger* book, you explicitly take up the question of ideology, so it is important that I clarify what I mean here. About Heidegger’s hope in 1933–1934 for an “event” (*Ereignis*) that would, quoting Heidegger, usher in “an essential transformation of man from rational animal to *Da-sein*,” as initiated by Hitler and National Socialism, you write that “this is not just about the formation of an ‘ideology’ but about a domination and total possession of the human being by the Führer.” As I understand you, “ideology” as a particularly aggressive or manipulative formulation of a political worldview

is still a relatively ordinary feature of political life. It cannot compare to what Heidegger has in mind: a radically totalitarian displacement of the freedom of the human spirit by a complete dictatorial control of the human personality. This is why you go on to say that “this is one of the reasons why I have not adopted the traditional presentation of the problem of Heidegger’s Nazism in terms of the relationship between philosophy and ideology—the other reason being that the results of my research have led me to question the very existence of a ‘philosophy’ of Heidegger.”¹⁷

You want to underline the extreme danger of Heidegger’s project by differentiating it from ideology and, more importantly even, from philosophy. But that is about *him*, not about how *we* can or should respond to the challenge that he represents. I want to distinguish ideology as the formulation and propagation of a system of ideas and arguments that a community generally holds as the unquestioned bedrock for its political commitments, from philosophy as the absolute freedom to question any such claim to have hit the final bedrock where inquiry is no longer possible or permitted. Furthermore, I do not believe that we as human beings can ever entirely escape ideology, in that sense that we are always already oriented by our historically situated existence, but we can come to grips with and transcend ideology if we endeavor to respond philosophically to the conflicts and contradictions that pervade all historical human existence.

So, while I think that at the level of ideology, you and I might share many instincts and articles of faith, my fear is that merely ideological refutation is in grave danger of backfiring now. The most important reason for this is that the ethno-nationalist, authoritarian impulse is now awake and stalking the world, on the verge of blooming into full-blown fascism. I do not believe this can be prevented by ideological polemics and refutations. The threat can only be met on the field of philosophy itself, by taking seriously how the atavistic passions emerge from the human condition itself. As I understand it, these passions emerge from the human, all too human longing for rootedness, which can be either nourished in a healthy manner to give people a sense of home and belonging or distorted and perverted for the most barbaric purposes of exclusion by “weeding” the ground of supposedly undesirable growth. To ignore this vulnerability in the human condition is to fail to address an inalienable part of ourselves. There is no way around it, only through.

Therefore, I prefer to think with Heidegger against Heidegger, or for Plato and liberalism in confrontation with Heidegger, in order to make sense of the dialectic between universalism and particularism. I put it to you that you yourself have chosen to devote so much time and intellectual effort to Heidegger because you recognize that something deeply serious is at stake. So why not take full advantage? While rational argument is essential to philosophy, that is not all there is to it. Whenever we read *philosophically*, rather

than inquisitorially, we must be open to discovering something true, and that openness precedes rational analysis. Kellerer complains that such openness leads Donna di Cesare to entertain “reading *Mein Kampf* as a philosophical work” (201), but I think di Cesare does not mean to elevate Hitler to the canon of philosophers but rather to see that even Nazism involves a logic and argumentation, no matter how implicit, that requires we unearth it and confront it explicitly, and not avoid it as just sound and fury, signifying nothing, to borrow from Macbeth. If the only true thing we learn in reading Heidegger is that he was a sly and ardent Nazi with pervasive but nefarious influence, we may have learned something historically important, but not much philosophically. Nazism, as evil and as it may be, is not *simply* meaningless, and that meaning arises from a possibility in human political imagination that cannot be scolded away and that has resulted in the various forms of fascism, and now does so again. To be open to the “truth” in the “philosophy” of Nazism, then, involves *nothing that worldview concludes or intends* but rather what it lays open to us as something in the human heart: an atavistic longing for belonging that entails a radical friend/enemy distinction, against which we must have an *argument*, not just a condemnation.

I would repeat my assertion from my first letter that philosophy has three moments. The moment we are most familiar with is both the most complex and yet the most superficial: it is the delineation of concepts and the formation of arguments to stake out a position, which is what many take to be the full extent of philosophy. But philosophical arguments and systems of thought depend on a prior moment: the formulation of a question, for without the question, there would be no focal point demanding an answer. There is yet a deeper moment: what both Aristotle and Plato recognized as the moment of wonder or amazement that arrests you in the face of some phenomenon, because without that wonder, without meaning cracking open in astonished perplexity, there would be no call to question in the first place.

If philosophy is also present in this moment of wonder, this means that thinking in the sense Heidegger names must be there as well. Such thinking involves an openness to being thunderstruck. This is not gnosticism, mysticism, or irrationalism; it is a simple recognition of what it means to live philosophically. The moment of being thunderstruck by wonder might be about anything, but it must strike us to the heart, or else philosophy becomes as arbitrary a pastime as collecting bottle caps or wine corks. The openness to wonder, and hence to the possibility of a new revelation of the truth, is what challenges us to formulate questions ever-*anew* and never to give up philosophy in favor of dogmatic ideology. The piety of sincere questioning allows us to respond with answers that are as genuine and rigorous as we can make them, which means remaining alive to the first moment of wonder so that we are pushed to sharpen the edge of our reason with fresh questions. I call it

idolatrous to fail in the piety of questioning, because such failure traps us into believing that philosophy resides only in the answers thinkers give to questions worth asking, rather than in what I think is the true spirit of philosophy: entering into the dialectic between question and response, in dialogue with a thinker, but not in the thinker's thrall by taking him as either hero or villain.

You are right: Our very survival is at stake in the confrontation with Heidegger, but not, ultimately, because of Heidegger, but because of the questions that face us through him about history, rationality, belonging, and the nature of our ideals—and whether ideals as such are nihilistic because they falsify the finite timeliness of being-human, as Heidegger contends, or whether, as Plato suggests, ideals are what ground and orient our humanity so that we can aspire to what is best in us and in the world, yet without losing our footing in where we find we belong.

With sincere thanks for this dialogue,

Gregory Fried

NOTES

1. Translations from Heidegger and the Greek in this essay are my own, unless otherwise noted.

2. For the English reader, there is of course your own book, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). An eminent example of this genre of philological and archival research into Heidegger's texts is Sidonie Kellerer, "Rewording the Past: The Postwar Publication of a 1938 Lecture by Martin Heidegger," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 3 (November 2014), 575–602. There is a much larger literature, and a place a reader might start is Emmanuel Faye, ed., *Le Sol, la Communauté, la Race* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2014).

3. For a recent example, see Robert C. Scharff, *Heidegger Becoming Phenomenological: Interpreting Husserl through Dilthey, 1916–1925* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019). A classic in the field is Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

4. Emmanuel Faye, *Arendt et Heidegger: Extermination nazi et destruction de la pensée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2016).

5. For this and what follows, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1142a.

6. For a useful discussion, see Christopher P. Long, "Saving 'Ta Legomena': Aristotle and the History of Philosophy," *The Review of Metaphysics* 60, no. 2 (December 2006), 247–67.

7. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 178 (A133/ B172).

8. Plato, Seventh Letter, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 7, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 341c-d.

9. Ἡμεῖς δὲ φαμεν οὔτε πᾶσαν ἐπιστήμην ἀποδεικτικὴν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν ἀμέσων ἀναπόδεικτον.

10. Lawrence J. Hatab, “The Point of Language in Heidegger’s Thinking: A Call for the Revival of Formal Indication,” *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual*, 6 (2016), 2.

11. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 6.522, 187. See also his *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958), section 127: “The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders”; such “reminders” are of meanings that can only be shown by indication, not proven systematically.

12. A point made as long ago as Plato’s *Ion* or *Apology*.

13. A. J. Ayer, “The Claims of Philosophy,” in *The Meaning of Life* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1990), 2–3.

14. See my “Back to the Cave,” in *Heidegger and the Greeks*, ed. Drew Hyland and John Manoussakis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

15. “If such faith does not continually expose itself to the possibility of unfaith, it is not faith but a convenience” (GA 40: 9).

16. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “in Memoriam A. H. H.,” 96: 11–12.

17. Faye, *Heidegger*, 274.

Chapter 9

Against Heidegger's "Essential Right": The Humanity Principle

Emmanuel Faye

The "principle" of the German is the fight for his ownmost *essence*.

Martin Heidegger, *Black Notebooks*
(GA 95: 11)

Every man bears the entire form of the human condition.

Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, III, XIII

Dear Professor Fried,

Our exchanges began ten years ago, after I learned of your participation in the broad discussion brought about by Carlin Romano's article concerning my first book on Heidegger, published in 2009 by Yale University Press. At that time, you read my book and sent me a long letter on February 13, 2010. That letter was published the following year as an "open letter" in *Philosophy Today*, together with my response. If I may quote you, you wrote to me in an accompanying note: "I sincerely hope [that your book] will prove to be the shock that jolts Heidegger study out of its torpor." You later expressed the wish to publish our exchange in a collected volume, in which we would invite a small number of Heidegger scholars to present their positions on the issues our exchange had opened up, in part to foster a tone of civility that you yourself first ushered in, a tone not common in the debates over Heidegger's politics.

What is at stake here is not just a question of tone but also freedom of research. Today, young philosophers seeking to pursue critical studies on Heidegger such as mine run the risk, whether in the United States or in France, of jeopardizing their chances for an academic career. At best,

as in the case of Johannes Fritsche after the publication of his groundbreaking work on *Being and Time*—one of the two or three major works written on Heidegger at the turn of the last century—they might find only remote academic positions, far from the major American or European centers of scholarship. Hence, all who care about freedom of academic research must support a volume such as ours, with its pluralistic voices, to contribute to keeping this field of study open to critical scholars in the coming decades. I have adopted this concern as my own special responsibility, as scholars in Germany, France, South Korea, and elsewhere have ventured forth along this path as they begin their academic careers.

HEIDEGGER'S LACK OF PHILOSOPHICAL CULTURE AND HIS "VÖLKISCH" PRINCIPLE

The contribution of Matthew Sharpe strikes me as exemplary to illustrate my concern. His essay takes us through the stages of his enlightenment as a philosophy student at an Australian university, where Heidegger was taught in a manner totally divorced from the so-called *Dummheit*, a naive foolishness, that supposedly characterized a temporary commitment to National Socialism. Sharpe relates how, having become a "Heideggerian," he intended to write a thesis on "Ethics after Heidegger." That was before he read, in 2000, Hugo Ott's biography of Heidegger, which opened his eyes and turned him decisively away from such a project. Sharpe rightly stresses the need for a well-informed historical and sociological understanding of Germany at the time of the Nazi rise to power. To be aware of the currents of the "conservative revolution" and the National Socialist outlook on the world is in fact indispensable to avoid limiting ourselves to a merely expository, paraphrastic, and uncritical reading of the Heideggerian corpus. A philosophical interpretation fully informed by a sociological and historical understanding of that period is just as necessary if we are to be aware of the contrast between Heidegger's claim to speak for the entirety of the Western philosophical tradition and his own remarkably inadequate understanding of concrete, historical realities while working at this level of generality of discourse: his silence on Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, his off-handed rejection of the philosophy of the Renaissance; his complete ignoring of English- or Italian-speaking philosophers (with the exception of Machiavelli), or the French-speaking ones (with the exception of a caricatured Descartes); and a self-serving relationship to Husserl. The only figures in the tradition he fully takes into account (and in ways that deserve suspicion) are Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, Eckhart, a handful of scholastic theologians, Suarez mainly, Descartes presented as a foil, Leibnitz reduced to an unnuanced presentation

of the principle of reason, the main representatives of German idealism as exemplified by Hegel, Schelling, and Fichte, and lastly Nietzsche and Paul Yorck, whose "spirit" Heidegger intended to cultivate.

Sharpe describes the present situation with insight. Many of today's practicing academics have made Heidegger *the* reference point of their careers. We can hardly expect much change coming from them. Franco Volpi, whose courageous "Goodbye" to Heidegger constitutes an exception among traditional scholars, has been insolently disrespected by those holding the rights to publish Heidegger's *Nachlass*. His introduction to a translation of the *Beiträge* was unceremoniously censured by Hermann Heidegger.¹ On Volpi's example, I call upon the academic community to demonstrate greater intellectual courage and critical freedom.

Sharpe engages in the necessary task of contextualization of Heidegger's National Socialist thought. He does so by demonstrating that Heidegger's criticisms of the supposed "bourgeois" deviancy of the movement in the 1930s cannot be viewed as a break with the anti-humanist and "völkisch" postulates of the National Socialist worldview, which he made his own. Sharpe demonstrates the same point concerning the development of Heidegger's thought after the Nazi defeat in 1945, particularly in the *Black Notebooks*: that it forms a continuity with, not a departure from, mainstream National Socialism. The fact is that in the introduction to his 1932 summer course, Heidegger asserts that "the Romans, Judaism, and Christianity" have totally distorted and falsified the Greek beginnings (GA 35:1). In the *Black Notebooks* of the same period, Heidegger recognizes in the German alone the ability to "poetize and say being" (GA 94: 27). Indeed, it is a "völkisch principle" that is required by the Heideggerian claim of a "higher rank of being" (GA 65: 42). The word *völkisch*, difficult to translate, often rendered in English as *tribal* and in French as *raciste*, designates a nationalistic, racist, and anti-Semitic conception of the Germanic people. The Nazi party's newspaper was the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The term *völkisch*, which dropped from public use in 1945, is now making a comeback in the discourse of the *Alternativ für Deutschland* (AfD), a political movement of the extreme right that is becoming increasingly influential in German politics. In Heidegger, the bearing of what is *völkisch* is to "free the people for their combative law" (GA 65: 43). In what follows, we will see on how essentialized a conception of the rights of the German people Heidegger's *völkisch* claim is based.

THE LIMITS OF NATIONALISM IN PHILOSOPHY

William A. F. Altman's brief contribution appears the more doubtful due to its nationalist presuppositions. He develops a meta-reflection that does

not get into the details of Heidegger's texts, limiting itself to a set of general remarks that tend to digress somewhat in relation to the subject of this volume. Nevertheless, Altman demonstrates his critical lucidity when he expresses the opinion that, given Heidegger's intimate relationship with National Socialism, he will be of less interest to philosophy than to the history of the twentieth century.

But, because of his desire for a hegemonic dominance over the entire field of philosophy, and because of his complex and deliberately misleading strategies of writing, Heidegger's body of work presents a challenge for which few historians are prepared. The works of the Hungarian philosopher Aurel Kolnai, published in the 1930s, already penetrated deeper into the critical analysis of Nazi thought in general, and of Heidegger's in particular, than do a good many historians, particularly in France, among those who attempt today to describe the norms of Nazi thought.² The difficulty is not overcome by predicting, as does Altman, that "the future of Heidegger studies . . . will belong to historians." This future is being prepared now, thanks to transdisciplinary, critical scholarship. That so many minds should have allowed themselves to be captivated by Heidegger's thought will long remain a subject of enquiry for philosophers.

Although Altman is right to stress, as did Hassan Givsan before him, the role of Heidegger's experience of the First World War in his construction of *Being and Time*, Altman's analyses fail to take into account the ascendancy of the racial paradigm in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the variety of forms it took in Germany during the period of the National Socialist rise to power. This background needs to be studied, especially in its Nietzschean version (*The Birth of Tragedy* and *Genealogy of Morals*), to understand the essentialized version of the people and of race as developed by Heidegger.

Finally, I seriously disagree with the way that Altman speaks of "the national basis of Faye's position." It should be clear that it is not Germany that I oppose, but National Socialism, especially in the field of thought. The basis of my work does not derive from *revanchism*, a term Altman blatantly misuses. The National Socialists capitulated militarily in 1945. There is no need for revenge. To fight the propagation of Nazi thought in different fields of culture is not mainly about its having once been German, nor do I conduct this fight in the spirit of revenge, but because of Nazism's enduring capacity for the destruction of the human being at all levels.

It is as a philosopher, not as a Frenchman, that I have conducted my critique of Heidegger, hence my reservations about the overly identitarian thought that leads Altman to express himself as an "American nationalist." True enough, we are all born with a native language, and sometimes with several; we are born with a culture, and usually in a national context, often with a religion to which we belong and that plays a role in our formation.

From this point of view, the fact of being born a French citizen undoubtedly has something to do with my way of expressing myself. But is it not specific to the philosopher to consider the human being in principle *before* such qualifiers? Descartes wrote his philosophy so that "even the Turks" could relate to it—they being, at the time, the main adversaries of Christianity. But without forswearing his language and culture, and even, according to Descartes, the religion of his nursemaid, the philosopher has much to gain by practicing a form of methodological cosmopolitanism, which Kant's philosophy of history exemplifies. Ernst Cassirer, in his firm and enlightening response to Bruno Bauch's 1916 essay arguing that Hermann Cohen, being Jewish, could not understand Kant, pointed out that he, Cassirer, was not speaking as a Jew but as a "scientific researcher."³

Nevertheless, I respect the concern expressed by Altman, faced with what he believes to be a certain deviation in the academic formation at American universities. What he notes particularly with respect to the philosophically mutilated manner in which Plato is generally received deserves our attention.

A NEW LINE OF DEFENSE

If Sharpe, when briefly exposing his "I am," following your example, and Altman, by the equally personalized tone of his contribution, remain in the spirit of your open letter, it is the conflict of interpretations that regains the upper hand with the contributions of Richard Polt and Dieter Thomä. Nothing is more necessary today in Heidegger studies than debating down to the details of the editorial history and meaning of Heidegger's texts. The important thing is to know what we are talking about and to what degree the foundations of our readings are correct. Thus, I do not have "the project of discrediting Heidegger," as Polt writes, but that of showing what he in fact thinks. If we discern the fundamental positions of the author of the *Black Notebooks*, we must sooner or later end up admitting that he discredits himself, unless of course we share, along with Aleksandr Dugin or Greg Johnson, his radically *völkisch* theories.

Since the publication of our first exchange, Professor Fried, the major event in Heideggerian studies has certainly been the subsequent publication of five volumes of the *Black Notebooks*. That event has contributed to the reconfiguration of Heideggerian apologetics. The most revisionist defense, represented in Germany by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in France by François Fédiér, and in Italy by Francesco Alfieri, refuses to recognize, against all evidence, any trace of National Socialism or anti-Semitism in the writings and thought of Heidegger. A new line of defense, traced out by Peter Trawny, the editor of the *Black Notebooks*, consists in recognizing up to a

certain point Heidegger's anti-Semitism, but only to dissociate it from his National Socialism. Defenders of Heidegger who adopt something like this position concede a brief Nazi period. But they do this only the better to assert that it was followed, from the end of the 1930s to the 1940s, by another period during which Heidegger distanced himself from Nazism when he developed, in his *Notebooks*, a description of the different forms taken on by the "machinations" (*Machenschaft*) of beings in the history of being. Thus, on this view, Heidegger put face-to-face and at the same level the supposed "world Jewry" (*Weltjudentum*) and National Socialism. For a long time, certain apologists, such as the French philosopher Marcel Conche, the author of *Heidegger resistant*, had maintained that the rector of Freiburg was a National Socialist without being anti-Semitic. Forced by the texts to recognize the reality of his anti-Semitism even if they often try to relativize it and attenuate it, as does Dieter Thomä in this volume, Heidegger's new defenders assert, conversely, that this anti-Semitism should be linked with a critique of a National Socialism now conceived, along with Americanism, fascism, and Bolshevism, as one form among others of the nihilism of the modern period (Trawny, in GA 96:282).

Significant objections confront this new apologetics. For one thing, starting in 1938, Heidegger unleashes anti-Semitic terminology in the notes gathered under the title *The History of Being* as well as in the *Black Notebooks*. In this, he follows precisely the timing of Nazism's putting into aggressive and explicit practice the full implications of its anti-Semitic rhetoric. His anti-Semitic terminology corresponds to the moment in which, having been long restrained, Nazi anti-Semitism lashes out publicly with persecutions, destruction, arrests, and murders, both during and after *Kristallnacht*. For another, Heidegger is far from putting National Socialism and Judaism on the same level. He never has a good word to say about what he, in the very language of the Nazis of that period, calls "World Jewry" (*Weltjudentum*). On the contrary, in 1953 Heidegger publishes, unchanged and without comment, his encomium for the "inner truth and greatness" of the National Socialist movement in his lecture course of 1935, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (GA 40: 208). If further evidence for his enduring allegiance is needed, then in his posthumously published interview given to *Spiegel* in 1966, Heidegger declares that National Socialism had moved in the direction of an "adequate relation" between modern man and the "essence" of technology (GA 16: 677).

After the publication of my first book on Heidegger in various languages, most of his defenders abandoned, one after the other, the thesis that he had engaged in some kind of "resistance" to Nazism after resigning as rector. I had drawn the readers' attention to two damning seminars from 1933 to 1935 that were yet unpublished at the time my book appeared, and my interpretation of Heidegger's Nazism was further reinforced by the publication

of the *Black Notebooks*, which, a decade later, confirmed that my critique of Heidegger's *völkisch* politics and his anti-Semitism were not at all exaggerated. Marcel Conche wrote to me, after the publication of my book, that henceforth he would disavow his pamphlet, *Heidegger's Resistance*.⁴ Richard Polt, for his part, also eventually abandoned his theory of Heidegger's secret resistance to Nazism, which he still maintained in 2007.

Is the new theory defended by Polt in his contribution here grounded any better than that earlier one? Is it accurate to say that Heidegger considered National Socialism to be malignant phenomenon (*Unwesen*)? In reality, even if Heidegger did use the word *Unwesen* frequently in the *Black Notebooks*, there is, before 1945, almost no passage in the *Notebooks* in which he employs this term to qualify National Socialism or Hitler explicitly.⁵ The relevant passage quoted by Polt comes after 1945, therefore after the devastating military defeat of the Third Reich and the Führer's suicide in a Berlin reduced to ruins, conquered by the Allies. At that moment in history, it would have been difficult to find a German voice speaking favorably of Hitler, even among those once most involved in Nazism. Moreover, the entire passage must be quoted: there it is clearly above all the Allies, henceforth the masters of European politics, who are the object of Heidegger's ire. He directs his denunciations mainly against the "Western powers," the *Westmächte*, that is, the Americans, the English, and the French, as well as Stalin. The supposed "absence of thought" of the Allies in their European politics seems to him "many thousands of times more serious" (*übersteigt um viele tausende*) than what he calls the "irresponsible misbehavior" (*das unverantwortliche Unwesen*) of Hitler. This is the proper way to translate Heidegger's use of *Unwesen* in this context: as only the mildest rebuke to Hitler and Nazism.

Here, for confirmation, is the entire passage:

One looks upon the helpless fumbling of the "Western powers" in conducting their Euro-politics. Some of them seem to believe that we are still living in the 17th century. The responsibility for such thoughtlessness—or is already something more: an incapacity of thinking?—exceeds by many thousands of degrees the irresponsible misbehavior [*Unwesen*] by which Hitler rampaged across Europe. Stalin need bring only a little more cleverness into play than Hitler: he needs only to wait. (GA 97: 250)

If Heidegger echoes the condemnations of Hitler by the allies, it is to relativize them. It is therefore a forced conclusion to assume, as Polt does, that Heidegger is giving us his fundamental judgment about the *Unwesen* of National Socialism here. A passage from a letter to Elfride, dated Pentecost 1949, brings us a useful corrective. It notes, and it is not to complain about it, that "now . . . the basic reaction against the Hitler era has gradually worn

itself out.”⁶ This gives us the correct perspective on the remarks of the years 1945–1946, which echo above all his fervent condemnation of the Allied conduct at the time of the denazification process in Germany.

Polt, in mentioning the way the author of the *Black Notebooks* portrays Hitler, without quoting the whole sentence in which we see that he is actually minimizing Hitlerian maliciousness all the better to heap abuse on the “Western powers,” does not accurately reconstruct Heidegger’s thought. In a more general sense, it seems an erroneous method to use Heidegger’s words from a time after the German defeat, when he had been sidelined and barred from teaching, in order to deduce from those words his definitive critical views about National Socialism. I concur on this point the critique already formulated by Sidonie Kellerer. Thus, Polt enumerates, in a lengthy note, a series of statements on Nazism and Hitler, including the one we have just examined, shortly after the Nazi capitulation. He does so without analyzing these various passages, and without contextualizing them as would rightly have been expected on such a decisive subject. Furthermore, he does notice the fact that in these quotes, “National Socialism” and “Third Reich” are usually put in quotation marks. This is a sign that Heidegger, far from speaking directly in his own name, is voicing the wry disillusionment that is ambient in Germany when referring to Nazism and Hitler after 1945. So, it is not necessarily the case that these words express his most enduring underlying assessment of the National Socialist movement. The fact is, as I have already noted, that Heidegger, as soon as he had reestablished in his right to teach, reiterates his praise of the movement, in 1953. Lastly, in his *Black Notebooks* after 1945, Heidegger plays on a scandalous reversal by asserting that “the German people and their country” would constitute, under the occupation of the Allies, “a unique KZ,” or concentration camp (GA 97: 100). Such talk characterizes the way of thinking of the most hardcore Nazis.

The point here is not to argue that Heidegger expressed no reservations with respect to National Socialism, but to understand what motivated them. We see him mocking “vulgar National Socialism” (GA 94: 142) in opposition to a “spiritual National Socialism” that has nothing theoretical about it (GA 94: 135–36). He deplores the fact that National Socialism does not conform sufficiently with the “barbaric principle” that constitutes its greatness (GA 94: 194), or even that it may drift toward a “*rational socialism*” (GA 96: 195) when it is contaminated by “calculation” (*Berechnung*), which Heidegger associates with Judaism (GA 95: 97; GA 96: 56). Nevertheless, as we shall see, he maintains an “essential approbation [*Bejahung*]” with respect to National Socialism and its “essential historical force” (GA 95: 408–09). Heidegger reproaches Nazism not for its inhumanity, nor for its barbarity, but for *its lack of radicality*.

VERJUDUNG AND MACHENSCHAFT

In the years 1910–1920, it is Heidegger's private letters that reveal what haunts him: the frightful prospect of a spreading Jewification (*Verjudung*) of the German culture and universities. In his usual professional academic reports and public writings, he cannot, as he specifies to the ministerial adviser Victor Schworer, express his diagnosis of this growing Jewification, in both the narrow and the broad sense of the term, otherwise than "only indirectly" (*nur indirekt*).⁷ It is up to us, therefore, to study within the Heideggerian corpus, what Sidonie Kellerer has done well to designate as Heidegger's indirect language.⁸

In the second half of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, Heidegger uses one word to express "Jewification" in the broad sense: the machinations (*Machenschaft*) of beings in their insurrection against being (*Seyn*), which Heidegger now writes, following Schelling's archaic usage, with a "y." There is, therefore, one point on which I agree with Polt: the publication of the *Black Notebooks* provides a sufficient number of decisive passages to oblige any well-informed and serious reader to reconsider, revise, and complete a responsible interpretation of Heidegger's thinking. He never tires of evoking the gigantic power of those machinations, which express themselves in phenomena as diverse as humanism or Bolshevism, as well as fascism and Americanism. But the expression of machination, according to Heidegger, was originally and now remains closely connected with Judaism and its supposed propensity for calculation. The effect of a spreading Jewification, then, would be a complete "deracification [*Entrassung*] of peoples" (GA 96: 56). In a key passage of his notes on *The History of Being* (1938–1940), Heidegger describes such Judaism as characterized by a "predestination" for "planetary criminality"; those words were deleted by Trawny in his edition of the volume, a censorship he revealed only fifteen years later.⁹ "World Jewry" thus appears as the first and foremost vector for the propagation of these rootless machinations.

Those machinations of "Jewry" go so far as to infiltrate National Socialism itself. It is Judaism that has lived the longest according to the "principle of race" (GA 96: 56). But Heidegger does not call into question the concept of race *as such*. On the contrary, he worries about the risk of "deracification" of the historic peoples—the Germanic, the Russian. Moreover, he thinks that the manipulation of race has turned against Judaism itself, which National Socialism now intends to eradicate, sparing neither women nor children. In referring to "the Jewish element," Heidegger goes so far as to speak of arriving at "the high-point of self-annihilation in history" (GA 97: 20). This is the apex of perversity. For the author of the *Black Notebooks* it is not enough

to describe the supposed project. He endorses and praises it, in asserting that “the highest art and the highest act in politics consists in maneuvering the opponent into a position in which he is forced to march to his own self-annihilation” (GA 96: 260).

Far from condemning the Nazi project of annihilating the Jews, Heidegger clearly thinks this genocidal politics must be carried to its completion in order to prepare a “new beginning.” Such is the “task” he persists in recognizing as the mission of the Third Reich. At stake is the future of the “German essence” and of the most hidden, and not yet realized, German destiny. The German is still *to come*.

In his *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger continues to think that National Socialism, “in a much deeper way than fascism,” represents “the fulfillment of modernity” (GA 95: 408). This requires deciding “what is historical and technological.” This then demands the “necessity for approving of” National Socialism, an approval he believes to be “essential.” He criticizes fascism, on the contrary, as unable to differentiate itself from Christianity. Furthermore, Heidegger again calls into question the *Unwesen* of the intellectuals and the inability of the universities to “assert an essence” (*ein Wesen zu behaupten*) (GA 95: 409). Beyond flinging these often stinging barbs against “vulgar National Socialism” and the “intellectuals” who promote it, he has not lost confidence in “the inner truth and greatness” of the movement. As I have reminded the reader, up to and including the 1966 *Spiegel* interview, he continued to evaluate positively the direction taken by National Socialism with respect to man’s relation to technology. That relation was concretized, in May and June 1940, by the motorization of the Wehrmacht, which gave the German military mastery of the skies and supremacy in land confrontations. This motorization allowed the German military, with its blitzkriegs, to invade and overrun Belgium, Holland, and France. In Heidegger’s history of being and the political-military conflicts that mark its real embodiment, it is no longer a matter of one humanity (*Menschheit*) but only of multiple humanities (*Menschentümer*), struggling to win the final combat (*Endkampf*) for the purpose of world domination and the salvation of the German essence.

How can we seriously consider as a full-fledged philosophy the scheming and paranoid view of the “history of being” developed by Heidegger in the *Black Notebooks* and in collections of fragments from the 1930s? Heidegger draws on the most secret and occult roots of National Socialism. The struggle he calls for turns out to be perfectly compatible with the sarcasm he flings at what he deems the superficial version of Nazism. For Heidegger, the leaders and ideologues of this superficial Nazism, such as Ernst Krieck with his *völkisch*-political anthropology, show themselves to be incapable of attaining the depth of vision required by the destiny—concealed, yet to come—of the German essence.

The anti-Semitism characteristic of that vision goes well beyond a simple cultural affect. There is nothing “banal” about it, contrary to the unseemly

remark made by Jean-Luc Nancy, paraphrasing Hannah Arendt apropos of Eichmann.¹⁰ In the sense of the expression appropriately coined by Saul Friedlander, this a *salvific* anti-Semitism according to which the salvation of the German essence, in what Heidegger calls its uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*), passes through the annihilation of the internal enemy that supposedly threatens it.

For having introduced this radical anti-Semitism into the field of philosophy, Heidegger must be studied critically by philosophers who have at their disposal (and Sharpe has pointed out the necessity for this) the historical and philological training indispensable to the study of Nazi thought and language. Given the radical positions that Heidegger circulates, is it not our responsibility to study his body of work as part of a renewed research into genocides and their causes? For such scholarship, a philosophical and critical approach to Nazi authors like Heidegger and Schmitt, and to the problems arising from the history of their reception, should play a significant role.¹¹ It is not at all a question of destroying Heideggerian scholarship but of rethinking it from the ground up in terms of an interdisciplinary and meticulous critical methodology. Such a methodology must be adapted to bodies of work that cannot be studied with the rigor appropriate to them simply by using the same scholarly criteria as have served, and still serve, to understand and explicate the works of an Aristotle or a Kant.

THE MOTORIZATION OF THE WEHRMACHT AND ESSENTIAL RIGHT (*WESENSRECHT*)

Let us return with more precision, then, to the conclusion of the course taught in May and June 1940. Polt has challenged certain aspects of my interpretation of this course, in which Heidegger comments spontaneously, as is his usual practice, on the latest military and political news. Hitler's Germany, in violation of its international promises, has just invaded a neutral country, Belgium, and thanks to its armored divisions, supported by air force, has succeeded in what it had not been able to accomplish in 1914: to reach Paris in three weeks and to push as far south as far as the Loire, inducing the new government of Philippe Pétain, which had retreated first to Bordeaux, to sign an armistice on June 20, 1940. Heidegger endows the military victory of the Wehrmacht and the French defeat with a "metaphysical" dimension, which in itself is already extremely questionable. He expresses himself as follows:

We today are witnesses to a mysterious law of history which states that one day a people no longer measures up to the metaphysics that arose from its own history; that day arrives precisely when such metaphysics has been transformed into the absolute. (GA 48: 205)¹²

Heidegger transforms the military defeat of France into a trial by ordeal, the result of a mysterious law of history, while he presents modern metaphysics as arising from the history of a people, in this case the French people through the figure of Descartes.

It seems difficult to subscribe to this *völkisch* paradigm, tying metaphysics to the history of such and such a people. In philosophical parlance, the term “metaphysical” is applied to a body of thought, not to military tactics. Can a philosopher consent to the act of interpreting a military defeat as the manifestation of a mysterious law of history, a defeat whose causes, both material and human, have been exhaustively delineated by historians? It is regrettable, therefore, that Polt is satisfied with paraphrasing these Heideggerian presuppositions without discussing their pertinence or demonstrating a sufficient critical distance to them.

It is true that Heidegger underlines the limits of metaphysics with respect to the so-called truth of being. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he grants the victory of the Wehrmacht a metaphysical dimension that is far from being self-evident. It is in this sense that I have spoken of a kind of Heideggerian *praise* of the motorization of the German army and more generally of the relationship of the National Socialists to technology. Moreover, this is confirmed by the remarks from the interview posthumously published in *Spiegel*. The letter of May 18, 1940, to his wife Elfride, in which Heidegger speaks in positive terms of the “unconditional commitment to the inner lawfulness of the unconditional mechanization of warfare,” in which “the single person disappears as an individual,” also confirms the correctness of this reading.¹³ Polt quotes neither that letter nor the study in English in which I mention it; Kellerer, it seems, had to remind him of the existence of that letter.

Let me add that if the conclusion of the lecture course, delivered publicly in May 1940, did not constitute a *satisfecit* granted to the military victory of the Third Reich, it is hard to see why Heidegger decided it was prudent, in his *Nietzsche II* of 1961, to omit these pages from the publication of that course. Yet it cannot be that this was a way of thinking he had personally renounced, since he was not opposed to the passage being restored in the posthumous edition of the same lecture course.

Let us turn to the omitted passage in order to analyze the textual context in which Heidegger passes his judgment on the motorized Wehrmacht. In the 1940 course, after having evoked the present determination of the world by reference to “ideas” and “values” that define the beginning and the end of Western metaphysics with Plato and Nietzsche, respectively, Heidegger writes that “neither ‘ideas’ nor ‘values’ are thought any longer in their essence or in their essential right” (GA 48: 331). Then, in 1960, Heidegger published a modified version: “Neither ‘ideas’ nor ‘values’ are thought any longer in their essence or in their essential provenance” (GA 6.2: 255/N4,

195).¹⁴ A key concept has disappeared: Heidegger has replaced "essential right" (*Wesensrecht*) with "essential provenance" (*Wesensherrkunft*). This legerdemain with words obscures the juridical meaning of the statement, perhaps too provocative in the context of 1961.

A little further along, the last six paragraphs of the course are omitted (GA 48: 332–34) and replaced with a short, one-sentence paragraph about the unchaining of being in machination (*Machenschaft*, GA 6.2: 256/N4, 196). This term, *Machenschaft*, is in reality *absent* from the 1940 course, a circumstance that Thomä does not consider in his interpretation of the text.¹⁵ Now, the change of meaning is considerable between the original text of 1940, published in the *Gesamtausgabe* with the mention of *Wesensrecht* and the motorized Wehrmacht, and that of 1961, which does not include these passages and which ends with *Machenschaft*. More generally, neither Polt nor Thomä pay enough attention to these textual modifications, manipulations, and omissions that Heidegger engineered in the publication of his works after the war, without any editorial note to alert the reader. But today, no serious discussion is possible without practicing philological precision as a key methodological principle in reading Heidegger.

Now let us get to the paragraph under discussion:

From the perspective of bourgeois education and "spirituality," one might, for example, want to consider the complete—that is, here, from the ground up and fundamental—"motorization" of the Wehrmacht as a manifestation of a boundless "technicity" and "materialism." In truth, this is a metaphysical act, which surely surpasses in depth anything like the abolition of "philosophy." The latter would serve as a measure only in the context of the ordinary business of school and academic instruction. (GA 48: 333)

In the following paragraph, he says:

Only the naive are surprised that this staggering, devoid of character and thought, between "ideas" and "values" and "existence" and the production of "anthropologies" is no longer taken seriously by anyone in today's philosophy-industry who takes part in shaping history. (GA 48: 333)

Heidegger thus mentions the complete motorization of the German army, elevated to the level of a "philosophical act," before a paragraph in which he polemicizes, as is his habit, against National Socialist "philosophies" of his contemporaries in competition with him to represent the spirit of the movement. The reference to "values" is aimed primarily at the philosophy of values of Bruno Bauch, already his target in 1935, while the reference to "ideas" and "existence" is certainly an allusion to Hans Heyse, the author, in 1935, of *Idea and Existence*. Heidegger did not forgive Heyse for having

replaced him on the German delegation for the 1937 Descartes Congress in Paris. Moreover, it is likely that the criticism of “anthropologies” is aimed at the *Anthropologie politique-völkisch*, published by Ernst Krieck in three volumes from 1936 to 1938, and perhaps also *Man: His Nature and Place in the World*, published by Arnold Gehlen in 1940.

We have seen that in a sentence spoken in 1940, Heidegger wanted to show that the philosophy of the day could not take “ideas” and “values” in account “in their essence and essential right (*Wesensrecht*).” Thus, bourgeois erudition and “intellectuality” could only reduce the complete “motorization” of the Wehrmacht to the manifestation of an endless “technicity.” No one, except the great thinker of being, could see that it is a question of a metaphysical act, deeper than something like the abolition of “philosophy.” It is not philosophical erudition that occupies the domain of fundamental decisions, but rather the military—namely, the German army as formed under the Third Reich. In June 1940, that army had just defeated the French military, thanks to its armored divisions and domination of the skies. This timing is essential to understanding this passage. With that understanding in mind, we can see why Heidegger judged it prudent after the war to suppress the original conclusion of his course. But while he suppressed it in the version published in his lifetime, he did not oppose its posthumous publication in his *Collected Works*, when he would have no explaining to do to his readers.

Now, Polt does not bring up the self-censorship of 1961. Moreover, he does not seem to understand exactly the meaning of Heidegger’s reference to the possible elimination of philosophy in German university teaching, since Polt asserts, without considering Heidegger’s insistent polemic against the competing philosophies of his day, that he probably would not have entertained a favorable view of that elimination. The reality appears to be that for Heidegger, such a suppression of philosophy would not have been of much importance. The essential historical decisions, those in which the “essential right” of peoples was at stake, would be taken at the level of motorized military action. One could only understand this if, instead of reducing that realization to a simple “technicity,” one traces it back to a metaphysical necessity.

A central concept stands out from Heidegger’s discussion in the original version: “essential right” (*Wesensrecht*). This term, though not a neologism, is rare in German. Heidegger’s introduction of the concept of *Wesensrecht* into his teaching has so far gone unnoticed, but a reading of the *Black Notebooks* invites us to take an interest in it: we find two mentions of *Wesensrecht* in a later passage, also involving Germany’s then current military situation (GA 96: 258–59).¹⁶ This one dates from 1941. It is therefore contemporary with the first months of the German-Soviet war, shortly before the turning point of the conflict in which the Russians will gain the upper hand over the Germans.

In *Reflection XV* of the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger mentions an "absolute motorization of humanity" (GA 96: 256) that is worth putting in relation with what he asserted, a year earlier, about the motorization of the Wehrmacht. But now he does not first mention in this connection the German army but "Soviet socialism," that is, according to Lenin's formula, "socialism + electrification." According to Heidegger, it is Lenin who took "the first decisive step toward the absolute motorization of humanity."

Richard Polt is right to point out this passage, but he does so without paying enough attention to what comes before and after it, and to the context to which Heidegger is referring. Amalgamating this sentence with another short passage, drawn from the preceding volume of the *Black Notebooks* (GA 95: 402), Polt asserts that, according to Heidegger, "the 'motorization of humanity,' most clearly implemented in the Soviet system, fulfills the brutalization of modern man." Further on, he again speaks of "the passage in the *Black Notebooks* that claims that the Soviet 'motorization of humanity' is the acme of brutalization." While it is true that Heidegger brings up "brutality" here in connection with the Russians, it is false to assert that he credits them with fulfilling the brutalization of modern man. On the contrary, he maintains that the Russians do not have the ability to carry out the devastation specific to modern times (see GA 96: 257).

Moreover, as in the case of the reference to the motorized Wehrmacht, it is vital to take the military context into account. In December 1941, the Russians launched a counteroffensive around Moscow. Thanks especially to the formidable Soviet T34 armored tanks, this offensive was successful, and the German army never reached Moscow. On December 11, the war becomes worldwide, with declarations of war by Germany and Italy against the United States, following the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese air force.

It is in this context of the autumn of 1941 that Heidegger devotes a paragraph of his *Reflections* to delineate the task (*Aufgabe*) incumbent upon the Germans.

We have a task. It only remains for us to ask ourselves if we ourselves are capable of *being* that task: the death every German on the front will have been in vain, if we do not act at every hour to save a beginning of the German essence, beyond the final and henceforth unstoppable self-devastation of all modern humanity. (GA 96: 256)

The evocation of a war that has become worldwide and that henceforth involves "all modern humanity" is explicit, since he mentions the German soldiers who have died on the front. In the ensuing paragraphs, Heidegger comments on what he considers to be the possible role and respective abilities of the Russians, the Italians, the Americans, and the English. As for the French, who were beaten the preceding year, there is no longer any mention.

The conflict, now worldwide, is a conflict for *being*, one for which the “Germanic essence” alone appears to be fully capable. The whole question comes down to knowing whether “we,” that is, the people, or, still more concretely, the German army, will prove to be equal to the task by defeating the double Russian and American adversary. In 1934, Heidegger asserted that metaphysics was destined to be replaced by the metapolitics of the historical people. In 1940–1941, it seems clear that what Heidegger means by the term “metaphysics” is first and foremost military effectiveness and the course of the war. Philosophical thought no longer decides about “ideas” and “values”; rather, the battlefield decides. If metapolitics defined metaphysics for Heidegger in 1934, now, in 1941, it is an essentialized and warlike geopolitics that comes to give meaning to the word “metaphysical,” or even to replace it. If we do not grasp this decisive point, we cannot help falling back into the “erudition” and “intellectualism” that Heidegger mocks in the spring of 1940.

He begins by weighing the main adversary of National Socialist Germany, namely “Soviet socialism,” against one of its two main allies, Italy. It is Soviet socialism, in Heidegger’s view, that has “taken the first decisive step toward the absolute motorization of humanity,” so that it appears to be the “system of the taking of absolute power in which technology has been assigned its final metaphysical locus” (GA 96: 256–57). Soviet power dares “the machine qua counter-God” and tends to realize “a-theism” in an absolute way. On the contrary, “the metaphysical mediocrity of the Italians compared to the Russian becomes obvious,” because “only unconditional forms of humanity, which do not recoil in terror in face of the ultimate subjectivity, are strong enough to submit themselves unconditionally to the metaphysical essence of technology.” What does this mean?

Heidegger undertakes an extensive comparison between Americanism and what is Russian (*Russentum*). Only Americanism, by its “rootlessness,” is capable of “the absolute extinction [*Verendung*] of modernity in devastation.” The Russian, despite its “brutality,” retains the resources of its land and “a possibility of the beginning.” This is why it “does not descend as far as to that metaphysical zone of the devastation.” Russia remains “too enrooted and hostile to reason to be capable of taking on to itself the historical decree of the devastation” (GA 96: 257–58). As if reason in itself were responsible for the devastation of the earth! For that, according to Heidegger, what is needed is “a *rationality* accomplished to the highest degree, one that calculates everything.” That is what Americanism is, to all appearances, in that it is manipulated by a *Weltjudentum* that Heidegger will discuss later (GA 96: 262) and by this world-Jewry’s presumed calculative rationality. For Heidegger, even the English, who pretend to be a “master race,” now only play “the role of servant within this devastation” (GA 96: 258).

Does there exist an ultimate recourse against the rootless devastation of Americanism? Can one resort to the "Western history of Europe," "against Americanism and its absence of roots"? For that, what is needed is that "the Western recourse to the East" be able to attain "its essential right [*Wesensrecht*]." Heidegger also speaks of the "right to resort to the historical essence itself." That presupposes experiencing "the West as history," instead of "mimicking Americanism."

The term *Wesensrecht* appears as a key concept. Heidegger replaces the universality of *Naturrecht* with a *Wesensrecht*, which is valid in fact only for the "Germanic essence." Just like Carl Schmitt and the Nazi jurists of his time, Heidegger here contributes to the implementation of the nineteenth point of the National Social political program, which provided for replacing Roman law with a German common law (*Gemeinrecht*). Under "metaphysics," he describes, through the vicissitudes of the Second World War and the uncertainty of the outcome, a battle of the Titans between the Germanic "essential right" and the devastating "machinations" of Americanism, as it proceeds from "Jewry," understood as being the "principle of the Christian West" (GA 97: 20). The terminology of the *Black Notebooks* is more explicit than his other works of the same period, probably because many of those works have been manipulated by Heidegger's own self-censorship or the censorship of the publishers, as we know to be the case in *The History of Being*. That terminology clarifies and confirms the meaning and conclusion of the 1940 course on Nietzsche. The struggle that takes place is that of the *Wesensrecht*, incumbent on the German, against the *Machenschaft*, manipulated by a *Judenschaft* as fantasized after the manner of the Nazis. That is the crucial connection between the German people's essence (*Wesen*), the Nazi conception of right (*Recht*), and the realization of the two in the motorization of the German military, its blitzkrieg across Europe, and the destruction of European Jews. This is why *Wesensrecht*, essential right, is the pivot for Heidegger's thinking at that time.

It is therefore inaccurate to say that in this essentialized geopolitics all factors are equivalent. It is true that Heidegger can equally dismiss bolshevism, fascism, and Americanism. He can even be worried that National Socialism is degenerating into "*Rational Socialism*" (GA 96: 195), which in turn is probably "Jewified," too. Fundamentally, beyond these *-ism* words, he continues to assign to each people a determinate "metaphysical" situation. Thus, by contrast with Americanism, in which the calculating rationality of "Jewry" can spread without limits, Russianism (to coin a term) does not go to the end of Americanism's planetary devastation, because it remains too rooted in its soil to completely undergo the uprooting of "world Jewry." Here we recognize the trace of Heidegger's readings of Dostoyevsky's *Political Writings* in the Arthur Moeller van den Bruck edition, which influenced him

deeply, especially with regard to his conception of *Heimat* and probably his anti-Semitism as well.¹⁷ As for the German essence, it alone was able to identify the absolute adversary, that *Weltjudentum* or that *Judenschaft*, the most ancient figure of the “gigantic” (*Riesige*), which National Socialism was determined to destroy utterly in that year of 1941. The right to resort to “the historic essence itself” and the imperative “not to retreat before the ultimate subjectivity” do not, at bottom, mean different things. Not to retreat before the ultimate subjectivity—that is historically no longer just to bring into play the motorization common to both the Germans and the Russians but also to undertake and carry out to the end the destruction of the European Jews. The Germans will accomplish what the Russians were unable to complete, despite the pogroms studding their recent history. In this anti-Semitic delirium and a deeply Nazi spirit, destroying *Judenschaft* seems to be the historically and “metaphysically” necessary condition for a “new humanity” to surge forth. That new humanity is bequeathed to the Germanic essence, and to it alone, by its capacity to create a “new beginning.”

Concretely, then, Martin Heidegger, whose son Hermann is mobilized on the Ukrainian front, cannot be unaware of the slaughters that are taking place in the East and that exceed by far what is authorized by the right of war. Although we do not have recourse to the correspondence between Heidegger and his son Hermann, the one with his colleague Kurt Bauch, an officer on the Eastern front, gives us ample information.¹⁸

By juxtaposing relevant texts from the courses given during the Second World War, the published correspondences, and the *Black Notebooks*, it becomes possible to condense in a few words the deep motivation that is at the heart of Heidegger’s thought and his “metaphysical” interpretation of the Second World War and of the annihilation of the Jews. If Heidegger expresses his thought in a rather nebulous and indirect way, key concepts such as *germanisches Wesen* and *Wesensrecht*, *Amerikanismus* and *Verwüstung*, *Judenschaft* and *Machenschaft* are indeed present in the texts, and we have a sufficient number of textual and contextualized elements to put them together and decipher the meaning.

Further research will probably add appropriate refinements to this reading. It was mainly a question of emphasizing the central concept of “essential right” (*Wesensrecht*) that Heidegger introduces, as we have seen as much in the conclusion of his 1940 summer semester course as in his end of 1941 *Reflections*. As another example, it also seems likely that Max Müller, Heidegger’s Catholic disciple, employed as equivalents the equally problematic, not to say oxymoronic, expressions of “historical natural right” (*geschichtliches Naturrecht*) and “existential essential right” (*existenzielles Wesensrecht*) while under Heidegger’s influence.¹⁹ The proposed English translation of *Wesensrecht* as “essential justification” misses the juridical dimension of the

German concept.²⁰ This last allows Heidegger to formulate surreptitiously a juridical principle that can take the place of the more universal concept of *Naturrecht*, when the "essence" (*Wesen*) is no longer understood as being that of all human beings but of a historically and "metaphysically" determined people.

We can draw from the preceding analyses a methodological principle: while research on the *Black Notebooks* is still only in its early stages, we should avoid rashly collecting excerpts, snipped from their context *after* the German surrender in 1945, that discuss National Socialism or Hitler. It would be more instructive to insist on the analysis and meaning of themes in Heidegger that developed over a relatively long period. This promises a better grasp of the movement of the author's thought and the significance of his terminological innovations. Finally, though the fundamental differences of interpretation and method between Richard Polt's contribution and my own are now sufficiently apparent, I do admit that the choice of interrogating Heidegger's use of the term *Unwesen* is not irrelevant, to the extent that "essence" (*Wesen*) is indeed a key concept, in all its permutations. But before examining *Unwesen* as a negative concept, it would have been methodologically desirable to conduct a study of the positive development of the "Germanic essence" in Heidegger's thought.²¹ What animates that positive strand for Heidegger is the call to "struggle for the most hidden essence of the German" (GA 95: 30), which is at the same time the "struggle for the truth of being [*Sein*]" (GA 97: 48).

BEING AND TIME: A PROGRAM OF COMBAT FOR THE COMMUNITY OF THE PEOPLE

It is harder to identify what is central to the more rambling and polemic contribution by Dieter Thomä. His point of departure is not a reflection on the 2011 exchange between Fried and myself. Rather, he takes up a previously published article in German on the use of the imperative in Heidegger's usage and adds numerous critical remarks—polemics even—aimed at me. Now, Theodor Adorno, in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, has already stressed precisely the existence of imperative discourse in Heidegger.²² So how can one present this theme as a new discovery and not mention Adorno in this connection? Furthermore, while Thomä classically distinguishes between the imperative and the assertive mood, Adorno more judiciously observes that Heidegger imitates the military style, "which dresses an imperative in the guise of a predicative sentence." That makes it possible for him to "place emphasis on what is wanted" and to present, as if it were a reality in the process of coming to be, something that is in fact a task to be carried out. As Adorno explains, "the grammatical translation of the imperative into a predication makes the

imperative categorical.” The very form of discourse therefore precludes opposition: “Possible resistance is then eliminated simply in terms of logical form.” The author of *The Jargon of Authenticity* offers us an incomparable instrument of analysis to recognize the imperative dimension of the assertoric style, so prevalent in Heidegger’s courses on Nietzsche, for example. Moreover, while Thomä and I concur in thinking that the “question of being” is in a way a decoy, the diametric opposition Thomä draws between the question of being and the imperative “to be” hardly seems cogent. In *Dasein* there is *Sein*, and Thomä himself goes on to quote a sentence from *Being and Time* on “the being” that *Dasein* “has to be,” which is clearly a form of Heidegger’s imperative discourse.

The first point in Thomä’s contribution revisits the hackneyed question of the relation between *Being and Time* and Heidegger’s public commitment to National Socialism in 1933. Thomä believes that Heidegger had two options: one decisionist, the other totalitarian. And yet, the second part of the first section of *Being and Time* does not confirm Thomä’s thesis about these two options. In fact, Heidegger’s *Dasein* does not, strictly speaking, have a choice, or at least not in the classical sense of free choice. The “freedom” of *Dasein* is always already predetermined by the common destiny that can only be fulfilled in the community of the people. As Heidegger writes, “If *Dasein*, in its fate, essentially [*wesenhaft*] exists as being-in-the-world in being-with others, then [*Dasein*’s] happening is a happening-with and is determined as *destiny*” (SZ, 384). If *Being and Time* is an unfinished book, inscribed as a midpoint in a long evolution of fifteen years, from 1919 to 1934, the fact of that incompleteness does not indicate indecision in the mind of the author, but rather a well-defined program, one ready to be enacted progressively over the coming years.²³

I have presented my prior research on Heidegger without pretending to have the last word on his significance, especially not on my own. The way Thomä wants to put me in one “camp” or the other is therefore as forced as it is caricatural. Research cannot be reduced to trench warfare, nor is it a question of checking off the right boxes of a preconceived questionnaire. The way that Thomä, in the *Handbuch* he edited, puts Adorno alongside the conservative historian Ernst Nolte in the same category demonstrates the limitations of such an exercise.²⁴ Scholars seeking the truth do not, to tell the truth, defend any “camp.” While Thomä has his right to proclaim his “difference” of opinion with respect to my interpretations, what he remembers about them is so inaccurate and abridged as to make it impossible to conduct an in-depth discussion with him on that basis. For example, with respect to the study to which he refers on “Categories and Existentials,” he says nothing about the proposed analysis of the Heideggerian distinction between categories and existentials nor about the development of the *Werfrage* that follows it, from *Being and Time* to the first *Black Notebooks*.

I will add that we can hardly understand the meaning of *Being and Time* if we do not see its programmatic dimension, which is manifest in the statements on the pursuit of struggle and the choice of the hero. On the much-debated issue of whether Heidegger defends an individualistic conception of existence in *Being and Time*, Thomä makes me responsible for a negative response to that question, without seeing that it is in fact Heidegger's own. Thomä is free, of course, to interpret Heidegger, against the author's most explicit intentions, if he so desires, but it is Thomä who must assume that responsibility. Now, he only quotes in a very incomplete way the key passage on which I base my view. Indeed, Heidegger asserts, in the first pages of his *Black Notebooks*, that in *Being and Time*, "the accent placed on the individual and the individuality of existence is only a backlash opposing the misconception of *Dasein* understood as 'consciousness,' 'subject,' 'soul,' or 'life.'" "[It] is not," he adds "the problem of individuality of the existing individual," but "only an accidental passage toward the solitude [*Allein-heit*] of *Dasein*, by which the one-in-all [*All-einheit*] of being" (GA 94: 21). It could not be clearer: in *Being and Time*, what is essential does not lie in the individuality of the individual. The important thing is "the secret consecration of the individual for his people," as Heidegger specifies in the same volume of the *Black Notebooks* (GA 94: 59). Such is the ownmost and most intimate possibility of *Dasein*. This is confirmed by Heidegger's choice of having the two chapters on death and historicity from *Being and Time* translated into French for Henry Corbin's anthology, published in 1938 by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, by then one of the most important literary and philosophical publishing houses in France.²⁵ This tipping point within the structure of *Being and Time* corresponds to the abandonment of the self (*Selbstaufgabe*) in the outstripping of death (SZ, 264), soon understood in that text as the resolute openness to the destiny of the community, the people, in the pursuit of struggle and the choice of one's hero (SZ, 384–85).

In the last chapter of his 1938 book, *The Political Religions*, Eric Voegelin, an informed reader of Heidegger, was able to express in a precise and concise way how individual existence in both National Socialism and *Being and Time* renounces the pettiness of its "self" to merge into the greatness of its people. Relying on quotes from *Songs of the Reich* (1935) by the National-Socialist Gerhard Schumann, Voegelin describes, without critical distance,²⁶ the mythology that contributes to the ecstatic constitution of the *völkisch* community.

The current carries the soul along, breaks through any walls, and lets the soul flow into the whole of the people. The soul becomes depersonalized in the course of finding and unification, it frees itself completely of the cold ring of its own self, and it grows beyond its own chilling smallness to become "good

and great.” By losing its own self it ascends to the grander reality of the people: “I lost myself and found the people, the *Reich*.”²⁷

We must note that Gerhard Schumann had taken part in the Nazi book burnings in Tübingen. In 1943, during the centenary of Hölderlin’s death celebrated by the National Socialist political and cultural authorities, including Heidegger, he had become the first president of the Hölderlin Gesellschaft and had ended the war with the rank of Obersturmführer in the SS. He pursued a literary career unhindered after 1945. Voegelin comments on his poems in Heideggerian terms: “The will to lose oneself and break away ecstatically is driven by a deeply agitating existential fear.”²⁸

In his course of Winter 1934–1935 on *Hölderlin’s Hymns*, Heidegger himself made explicit the relationship between death, sacrifice, and the formation of the community. What he called, in *Being and Time*, “abandonment of self” is henceforth formulated as a “sacrifice” (*Opfer*):

It is precisely death, which each individual human being must die for himself, which individuates each according to what is most extreme—it is precisely death and the readiness for its sacrifice that first and foremost creates the space of community from which comradeship emerges. (GA 39: 72)

To return to Dieter Thomä’s contribution, his conceptual distinctions are sometimes imprecise. He poses the question of the “fascism” of *Being and Time*, but without respecting the historical and political distinction between fascism and National Socialism that Heidegger asserts in the *Black Notebooks* (see GA 95: 408–09). Moreover, he constantly speaks of “collective” and “collectivism,” whereas Heidegger speaks only of “community” (*Gemeinschaft*). Now, these are different ideas. A collectivity is a numerical whole whose different elements, though grouped together, remain distinct. This would apply, for example, to a contractual conception of the social organization, but there is nothing resembling this in the Heideggerian notion of the “community” (*Gemeinschaft*). The essential unity of community, insofar as it derives from a “people” (*Volk*), cannot be assimilated to the gathering of isolated subjects. Heidegger is careful to specify this: “Destiny is not composed from individual fates, just as little as being-with-one-another can be conceived of as a coming-together of some number of subjects” (SZ, 384). The people, in Heidegger’s view, does not make up a collectivity, but rather the unity of a community. Thomä therefore has no justification at all to think he can assert that “Faye ascribes to Heidegger a collectivist approach from the outset” (154).

Lastly, Thomä’s references to the “early writings” of Heidegger lack precision. If Heidegger has the habit, in his letters to Löwith of the early 1920s and in his writings of those same years, to use the language of “I” (*Ich*), from which

you and Matthew Sharpe have drawn the reference to your "I am," things are quite otherwise in *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger emphasizes the "unbridgeable gap" separating the "self" (*Selbst*) from the "I" (*Ich*) (SZ, 130).

A fruitful discussion presupposes a minimum of respect for the interlocutor. This is definitely not the case with the remarks of Dieter Thomä. He, being a journalist as well, has from the start accompanied my various publications with his articles. Making use of the commonplace of German seriousness as opposed to French frivolity, he immediately treated my book on Heidegger with mockery.²⁹ With the translation of my book into German, his remarks became more aggressive. I was depicted as "frothing at the mouth," and Thomä had no qualms about using the accusation of reversibility, traditionally deployed by the most orthodox Heideggerians, according to which the severe critics of a Nazi thinker were themselves behaving like Nazis.³⁰ That is the "argument" he is resorting to today, in a style only slightly edulcorated, when he says that "sometimes it seems that Faye suffers from an identification with the aggressor" (161). This way of situating on the same plane the critical analysis of a Nazi concept and the Nazi practice of book-burning deserves no more than a curt dismissal from further consideration.

The discussion of Thomä's remark can thus be closed. On the interpretation of the course on Nietzsche in 1940, I have in any case already responded on the essential points in the discussion led by Richard Polt. And on the anti-Semitic connotations, partially present already in *Being and Time*, of the Heideggerian opposition between *Bodenständigkeit* et *Bodenlosigkeit*, I have recently undertaken to investigate the question elsewhere.³¹ It remains only for me to point out that Thomä is wrong to assert that in my response to your first letter I somehow imagined that I had discovered the word *Bodenständigkeit* in §77 of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger launches an appeal to work "in the spirit of Count Yorck." Given the explicitly anti-Semitic connotations of Yorck's conception of the "physical and psychic soil [*Boden*]" of the Jewish tribe in his correspondence with Wilhelm Dilthey, I have wondered, in this connection, about the Heideggerian conception of *Bodenständigkeit*, but of course without asserting the literal presence of the term in that paragraph. Nor have I claimed that the adjective *bodenlos* is charged in all its uses with an anti-Semitic connotation in all of Heidegger's writings, even in his reading of Descartes in *Being and Time*, for example.³² In all of these cases, it is not my thinking that Thomä discusses, but his caricature and his exaggeration of it.

PHILOSOPHY AND TRUTH

Your contribution to this volume, Professor Fried, makes it possible to better distinguish our respective ways of thinking. You continue to be guided by

the question, in the Heideggerian spirit, that consists in determining “who we are.” To that *Werfrage*, you bring a political response, in opposing liberalism to National Socialism and in wondering about the limits of the ability of the West, and of America, to oppose the groundswell “of authoritarian ethno-nationalism for which Nazism was just one avatar” (213). This political concern has the merit of making you sensitive to certain problems posed by the radical dimensions of Heidegger’s thought, while so many commentators continue to limit themselves to sanitized readings. If you maintain a necessary political vigilance, you nonetheless continue to place Heidegger among the major philosophers, as if his calls for the total annihilation of an internal enemy, his praise of the Hitlerian terror, his invitation to practice a radical eugenics did not concern the basis of his “philosophical” thought. In saying this, you duplicate the efforts of his main German student, Hans-Georg Gadamer, who was also implicated in National Socialism, as we learn chiefly from the works of Teresa Orozko, Richard Wolin, and Robert Norton. The leitmotif of your position is that it is imperative to confront Heidegger as a figure possessing philosophical authority, for otherwise we would be condemned, in analyzing his writings, to remain within the precincts of the history of ideas. We would, moreover, also lose the opportunity of confronting, through him, the deep causes of that “authoritarian ethno-nationalism” that threatens our freedoms today.

Is there not a contradiction in this position? Why would we have to grant some kind of authority in philosophy, and particularly with respect to a notably National Socialist author, if we want to resist, through him, authoritarianism and ethnic nationalism in politics? Fundamentally, the question is to determine precisely the meaning of a *philosophical confrontation* with Heidegger. There is a reason why we agreed upon that word, confrontation, for the title of this book. In your view, having this confrontation comes down to prejudging, to speak like Gadamer, that Heidegger represents a major figure in philosophy, whose authority as philosopher is undeniable, given the wide-ranging extent of his subsequent reception and influence. In my view, “authority,” “prejudging,” and “figure” are ultimately terms that merely present obstacles for the philosopher, to the extent that he genuinely seeks truth in all things. This is how I understand the word attributed to Aristotle and that you are right to quote: *amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*. Taken in its deeper sense, this expression presupposes that a philosopher feel friendship only with authors who are themselves seekers of truth. Now, how can we feel friendship for an author who brutally accosts the students in his courses with the claim that “truth is always truth for us” (GA 36/37: 262)? An author who, in a course titled *On the Essence of Truth*, enjoins his students to prepare for a drawn-out struggle for “the total annihilation” (GA 36/37: 90–91) of

the supposed enemies of the Germanic people, who have grafted themselves onto its roots?

Sharing the conviction that a scholar and lover of philosophy loves the truth above all else, my ambition is not to found a "school of thought" nor to consider my own research as being authoritative. It is rather encouragement, always open to criticism, to pursue further research, and to find one's own way in the search for truth. What there may be in common between Sidonie Kellerer's work and my own, for example, does not mean that we belong to a common "school of thought." If you share a scrupulous relation to the requirement of truth, it is logical that you may arrive at results that partially coincide. In this connection I will mention two rather different examples.

- (1) In 2008, Sidonie Kellerer wrote a thesis on the reception of Descartes in German twentieth-century thought. The last chapter was on Heidegger and Descartes. Now, several of the notes appearing at the end of his 1938 lecture, and particularly those involving Descartes, seemed to me to have been written with different ink and considerably later than the text of the lecture. It was enough for Kellerer that I brought up this point for her to decide to undertake deeper research into the manuscripts kept at Marbach. She brought back discoveries that went beyond my first glimpses.³³ From that point on, she has elaborated her own methodology and her own problematic, focusing primarily on Heidegger's strategy of indirect writing.
- (2) When you told me in 2010 that together with Richard Polt you were going to publish a translation of the pivotal course of Winter 1933–1934, titled *On the Essence of Truth*, I warned you about the fact that the editor, Hartmut Tietjen, was suspected by the Freiburg historian Bernd Martin of having falsified a manuscript. Hence it was important to verify in the Marbach archives the credibility of his editorial work, particularly apropos of the odd *insert* in italics, at the date of January 30, 1934, of a text on the Nazi writer Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer (GA 36/37: 209–13). You told me that you were obliged to conform to the text as published in the *Gesamtausgabe*, and therefore did not make those verifications. But would this not have been the occasion to accomplish a necessary work to establish the truth? The unreliable nature of the text edited by Tietjen in the *Gesamtausgabe* published by Klostermann is in fact confirmed by the fundamental and still unpublished study of Professor Franck Jolles, carried out on the basis of a *reportatio* long preserved by Maria Ihms, a student at Freiburg University in 1933–1934.³⁴ That discovery confirms the radicality, seeking to be "revolutionary," of Heidegger's *völkisch* conception of the "essence of the German people."

You undertake to respond at length to Sidonie Kellerer's contribution, but on hardly any point do you confront her analyses of Heidegger's texts. It is true that she has succeeded in achieving a precision in reading that is difficult to find fault with. You recognize the interest of her research, but you tend to reduce them to terminological questions, perhaps without sufficiently perceiving the philosophical requirement of truth that drives them. Instead of a precise account of her text, you develop general considerations on the relation to reason, to the Enlightenment, and to humanism, in order to involve me as well as Kellerer in it, in the name of our supposed "school of thought." You presuppose on our part some "hierophantic" relation to the ideals of the Enlightenment, considered as "the holy of holies that Heidegger has blasphemed" (212). You also speak of a sanctified conception of reason, manifested in the fact of our "piously insisting on rationality and argument" (212). I must tell you that I do not see what statements authorize your attributing to me or to Kellerer such a caricaturized conception of reason and the Enlightenment.

The word "reason" is a polysemic term. During the age of classicism, for example, one can find no greater gap than that between the Cartesian conception, which relates our reason to the natural light of the human spirit, illuminating all things, and that of Nicolas Malebranche, who identifies Reason with a capital "R" with the Augustinian illumination by the Divine Word, and with immutable relation expressing the Universal Order established by God. Now, in the next century, it is the Malebranchist conception of Reason and Order, but secularized, that took the ascendancy and became infused in the thought of many Enlightenment philosophers. The cult of Reason, which would have had no meaning for philosophers like Montaigne or Descartes, stems from that heritage, and is part and parcel of the most problematic aspects of what is dubbed the Enlightenment period. Moreover, in German thought, as Cassirer has astutely noted, there is just as much opposition between Kant's practical reason, the foundation for the autonomy of the moral person, and the Hegelian conception of Reason as identified in the absolute course of history.

Kellerer maintains that the practice of rational dialogue is found at the beginning, and at the basis, so to speak, of all philosophy—a postulate shared by Socrates, Descartes, Kant, and many other thinkers. Like all premises, this one can probably be subjected to critique, but how could such a critique be developed otherwise than by a form of discussion in which the interlocutors shared that friendship for the truth, which is by rights inscribed within the philosophical ideal? How, then, can rational discussion be relinquished without losing sight of the spirit of philosophy and its requirement of truth? More radically, to reject reason, to adopt as one's specific program its destruction, and to fight in hand-to-hand combat against it, as Heidegger proclaims—is that still a part of philosophy? It is important, in any case, to discern in the

name of what Heidegger rejects all reason. The *Black Notebooks* show us that if Heidegger rejects rationality, it is above all because he sees in it a form of machination and calculation belonging to "Jewry," threatening the salvation of the Germanic essence. The baseness of the argument, and the amount of racist prejudice it presupposes, fully authorize, in my view, refusing to see it as a philosophical position.

Personally, I rarely mention reason, due to the polysemy of the term, as I have just pointed out. In the conclusion of my first book on Heidegger, I wanted to show that the Heideggerian *Lehre* led to destructions of the human being at all levels, including in particular that of human reason, which I have mentioned on this topic.³⁵ Human reason expresses a fragile equilibrium. *To lose one's reason*, in a momentary or a lasting way, in an individual or a collective psychosis, is one of the most difficult trials a human being can endure. Nevertheless, I have never maintained that a critique of reason, of the Enlightenment qua historical period and its presumed ideas, or even of "humanism"—a term I refuse to use because it is so imprecise, and can designate something and its opposite³⁶—should be banned. On the contrary, to take one example among many, I am the co-organizer, for the spring of 2019 of a large colloquium at the University of Rouen, Normandy, the theme of which is *Controverses sur les Lumières* (1945–2019) and will accommodate a field of discussion that is both international and without taboos.³⁷ The important thing is to be able to discern all that separates critical research from radical destruction.

I will address more briefly, Professor Fried, a few other subjects that you touch on. You mention the question of the choice to be made between a hermeneutics of confidence and one of suspicion. I do not think that that question arises a priori. Moreover, the term "suspicion" is not the most felicitous. It would be preferable to speak of prudence, which becomes indispensable when we are confronted with an author whose lies and manipulations are verified. This is the case with Heidegger. For example, if there is a legitimate question to raise about his intentional use of indirect or veiled language when making anti-Semitic observations and claims, that is because he expresses himself in that way in his letter to Schwoerer, as previously mentioned. Similarly, if we speak today of a "code word" or *Deckname* in connection with Heidegger's discourse about being, it is because he himself does so in a letter to Kurt Bauch,³⁸ as well as in his *Black Notebooks* (GA 97: 218). And in these cases, we still need to have recourse to documents later discovered and published: letters to Schwoerer, those to Bauch, and the *Black Notebooks* themselves. What is implicit in some of his statements only takes on its full meaning when we confront them with explicit passages in other texts. This takes a patient labor of interpretation, still awaiting completion, but without which discussion is vacuous. The prospect of that labor is part of the reason

why so many minds have let themselves be captivated for such a long time by the Heideggerian discourse, in the absence of a sufficient understanding of elements both textual and contextual to grasp what is implicit in it.

The situation has evolved over the last two decades. We can hardly reprove Derrida for having asserted in *Politics of Friendship* that the Heideggerian *Kampf* never meant war, because he did not have at his disposal a text as explicit as the course on *The Essence of Truth*, which was not published until 2001. By contrast, we today have the opportunity of taking into account the passages of the recently published *Black Notebooks* on the “task” of the Germans and the “essential right.” These passages enable us to grasp the meaning of Heidegger’s self-censored conclusion to the 1940 course, in which he weighs the “metaphysical necessity” of the motorization of the Wehrmacht against the disappearance of philosophy and finds in favor of the former. Today, we can understand how much the style of Heidegger’s thought is fashioned by military tropes, as Adorno understood. But the style of this thought is also its meaning. Only in this progressive integration of more and more texts into our expanding analyses and critical syntheses, will we succeed in seeing more clearly past the play of veiling and unveiling that Heidegger exploits with his different writing strategies.

To return to the question of reason, we agree, Professor Fried, on the issue of the dimension of the intuition of thought, or of the *nous*, which you find in Plato and Aristotle. In his own way, René Descartes rediscovers this fundamental point when he recognizes in the intuition of the human mind the first act of the pure and attentive intelligence—whose discernment always comes before deduction (see the third of the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*). This is the ground for Descartes’s criticism of the excessive and exclusive importance that Scholasticism had ascribed to the syllogism. For Descartes, human reason is first intuition before it can become deduction or discursive reasoning. Deduction itself is no more than a succession of simple intuitions linked together and forming a sequence. It is possible, on this basis, to develop a philosophy of critical discernment, capable of distinguishing for human beings the difference between enlightening and blinding, between emancipating and dominating, and between allowing to evolve freely and destroying.

By contrast, I find it harder to follow you when you sketch out a rapprochement between the Aristotelian *nous* and the Heideggerian “thinking.” There is no opposition, nor hand-to-hand combat, between the *nous* and the *logos* in Aristotle’s philosophy. Moreover, the Stagirite maintains a categorial conception and a dimension of universality of the *logos*, whereas Heidegger wants to replace the categories of human understanding with the “existentials” of being-there. The first of his existentials is not, moreover, the “understanding” (*Verstehen*) but *Befindlichkeit* tonality and affective situation of being-there

that has nothing of a mental intuition about it; instead, it proceeds from a relation to the world that is always-already-there.³⁹ The path traced out by Heidegger, from the "metaphysics of German Dasein" to the "meta-politics of 'the' historic people" (GA 94: 124), represents something other than a simple temporalization and historicization of the Aristotelian *nous*. In excavating the personal and historical context of Heidegger's statement and terminology, we always come back to his guiding concept of the "essential right," whose sole proprietor is the Germanic people.

The *philosophical confrontation* with Heidegger demands that we analyze his writings with the respect for truth that is our responsibility as philosophers, not that we assume his fundamental position to be itself philosophical. It has long been held that Heidegger's thought consists in philosophical views and approaches, and that his National Socialism and anti-Semitism are merely exaggerations, misapplications, and distortions of his otherwise legitimate philosophizing.⁴⁰ On this view, the reader could sort out the philosophical from the political and correct, so to speak, Heidegger by Heidegger. This is what the young Habermas, so often imitated, proposed in 1953: to think "with Heidegger, against Heidegger," but that was before he realized, rather late, that he had committed the error of reading *Being and Time* "through Kierkegaard's eyes."⁴¹

At this moment in Heidegger scholarship, the examination of the entirety of the texts currently published presents us with a different reality. Contrary to what Habermas maintained in 1988 in his preface to the German edition of Victor Farias's book, it is impossible to separate, in Heidegger, the work from the worldview, the *Werk* from the *Weltanschauung*. A clarification might be needed here. Heidegger's interpreters generally believe that he had always rejected the notion of "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*). In reality, this is not the case. We must recognize the fact that although Heidegger does indeed distance himself from scientific and religious worldviews, which he refers to as equally problematic, nevertheless at a deeper level he presents his own thought, according to the very title of his April 1925 lectures in Kassel, as "the present struggle for a historical worldview" (GA 80: 103). Furthermore, when confronting Cassirer at Davos, he considers the "worldview" as the "condition of the act of philosophizing" (GA 3: 284). With this fundamental proposition, Heidegger denies philosophy all of its proper autonomy. The "worldview" is for him a determinate mode of bearing (*Haltung*) as "being-in-the-world" (GA 27: 354), which of course excludes Judaism and its "absence of world" (*Weltlosigkeit*). As for the "National Socialist worldview," by which Heidegger says the *Führer* educates the German people, he proclaims in 1934 that it is "*a world project*" (GA 36/37: 222). We are very far, Professor Fried, from the defense of particularity that you spoke of in your book on the Heideggerian *polemos*. When Heidegger wants to distance

himself from Rosenberg, Baeumler, Heyse, Krieck, and all the representatives of “vulgar National Socialism,” he drops the term *Weltanschauung*, preferring instead, significantly, *Wesen* and *Wesensrecht*. More to the point, he no longer needs the word “*Weltanschauung*,” because just as Heidegger’s doctrine of wordviews had destroyed all autonomy for philosophy in the 1920s, the doctrine of essential right destroys all thought of humanity in the 1940s. Philosophy might now just as well disappear from the universities. That would pale in comparison for Heidegger, if the German people would succeed in *being* its historical past, that is, by defeating militarily both the Russians and the powers of the West, in order to prepare the arrival of the “new beginning.” The Germanic essence alone is capable of this. A beautiful philosophy indeed, this Pan-Germanism of the Nazi spirit!

THE HUMANITY PRINCIPLE AGAINST “ESSENTIAL RIGHT”

In any dispute, as Pascal emphasizes, the most important thing is to determine the precise meaning of the words we use. There are also words that need not be defined, but in that case, we must specify which ones, and why. We do not say what we mean by the Enlightenment and its ideals, although this term may refer to many different realities. If you are a musician considering the first period of the Enlightenment (to which I will limit myself here), you will think above all of Bach’s development of the polyphony and counterpoint, which serves so well as a model for a remarkable equilibrium of individual and collectivity, and of Rameau’s theorization of harmony. We will never fully appreciate what the musical languages of modernity owe to these two great artists. If, as philosophers, we are rightly more attached to intellectual discussions formally argued, like those pitting Leibniz against Locke and Bayle, than to clandestine wars, we will miss the historical significance of the great ideological conflicts of the Enlightenment pitting various factions against each other. These factions later became more radicalized in European and German Freemasonry, particularly during the first decades of the twentieth century. We must take this background into consideration if we wish to understand the historical context in which Heidegger operates.⁴²

The word “liberalism” is just as polysemic as “Enlightenment.” If “liberal” often designates a progressive thought of the left in the political vocabulary of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the same term in French, especially today, refers to sociopolitical doctrines promoting the deregulation of capital and the retreat of the state from a mission of public service and defense of social justice. In that sense, “liberalism” means for us much the same as “neoliberalism” in the English-speaking context. The ever-widening gap between workers

and owners of capital with respect to quality of life and personal wealth that results from the application of these doctrines is common knowledge. When Heidegger questions the idea of a "world security" of work (*Feldweggespräch*, GA 77: 71), that would echo the contemporary neoliberals who do not think the state should protect workers from the "disruptions" of the capitalist global economy; by contrast, philosophical and political liberalism understood as the defense of individual rights would represent the absolute adversary for Heidegger. Given the present ambiguity of the word "liberal" in French, it is a major problem that progressive thought in France no longer has a clear term at its disposal capable of bringing together the forces of the left.

While this is not the place to develop these political reflections at length, I do think it is important to respond to your statement on this subject in the introduction to this volume. You write that "most scholars of [Heidegger's] work, in the English-speaking world, are politically liberal or left" (xii). Is this entirely true? Even if so, what conclusions should we draw from this claim? For example, the followers of Voegelin and Strauss, who were both strongly influenced by Heidegger, are among the most conservative American academics. These Voegelinians and Straussians may not take Heidegger's work as a frequent object of study, but their negative view of modernity clearly bears the very definite mark of his influence, even if indirectly. So, if the majority of Heidegger scholars in the United States are currently, as you claim, left-liberal, this is not an argument for the thesis that Heidegger's politics is separable from his so-called philosophical thinking. Instead, this American school of Heidegger scholarship presents us with a problem of academic sociology: a reality involving an excessively decontextualized reading of his work, such as that long practiced by Hubert Dreyfus and his disciples. This is a way of reading detached from all historical and political context, which contradicts what Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge school correctly identify as the fundamental requirements of responsible intellectual history.

Indeed, it has been well known for over a decade that Heidegger's thought has had considerable international influence among the most radical political movements on the right. In a pioneering study, Victor Farías demonstrated this already in 2008, and François Rastier's more recent essays have decisively confirmed this reality.⁴³ We must not ignore that most American academics only read studies published in English. Given this insularity, the idiosyncrasy that most American Heidegger scholars are left-liberal cannot stand as a serious argument for the separability of Heidegger's thought and his politics. Even in English-language writings outside the academy, there are countless publications on Heidegger by American authors belonging to the most conservative or radical right-wing sectors, from alt-right activist Richard Spencer to the racial-nationalist author Michael O'Meara, to the academic Paul E. Gottfried, who wrote the preface to Alexander Dugin's blatantly

fascistic book on Heideggerian “philosophy” for a white-supremacist publisher.⁴⁴

In political science, English-language scholars are beginning serious study of the close links between Heidegger’s thought and the far right. An example is Julian Göpfarth’s “Rethinking the German Nation as German Dasein: Intellectuals and Heidegger’s Philosophy in Contemporary German New Right Nationalism.”⁴⁵ Göpfarth employs Quentin Skinner’s methodology and concepts to study how theorists and political actors of the German New Right (GNR) intellectual movement and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party make significant reference to Heidegger’s work. In particular, he analyzes the case of Marc Jongen, who wrote a doctoral thesis at the University of Karlsruhe, under the supervision of Peter Sloterdijk, rehabilitating the notion of “tradition” by focusing on Heidegger’s conception of being and of truth as *alêtheia*. Furthermore, Jongen simultaneously drafted the AfD’s philosophical manifesto and, as an elected member of the Bundestag, became the spokesman for the movement in Baden-Württemberg. Göpfarth notes that “Jongen is an interesting case because as a philosopher and leading AfD member he is, as he says, active in two worlds: the academic-philosophical and the political.” What is more, Roger Berkowitz, the director of the Hannah Arendt Center at Bard College, invited Jongen to debate with him before an audience of students, thereby granting him significant, albeit controversial, academic recognition in America.⁴⁶ This example—and we could give many more—demonstrates how porous the boundary is between the academic study of Heidegger’s thought and putting it to political use.⁴⁷ No responsible scholar can ignore this reality today.⁴⁸

Finally, availing myself of your reproach that I provide only a negative argument, I will conclude by formulating a principle of thought whose necessity and urgency stand out more clearly in contrast to the principle that Heidegger’s “essential right” represents. Today, in 2019, exactly one century after the creation of the Nazi party, it is important that we demarcate philosophically a line of defense and a principle of resistance against any return of that barbarism.

In his *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger points out in 1938 that the “principle” of the Germans is the struggle for their ownmost *essence*. “It is for that sole reason,” he adds, “that the struggle for their ‘substance’ is a necessity” (GA 95: 11). That definition of the “principle” of what constitutes the Germans opens the way to a conception promoted by Heidegger’s disciple, the revisionist historian Ernst Nolte. This definition is more defensive, because formulated well after 1945, but ultimately very close to Heidegger’s own. It is one of National Socialism understood as “the phenomenon by which historical existence became conscious of itself as being threatened and conducted a final political struggle.”⁴⁹ Moreover, we should note the irony in

seeing Heidegger use the category of substance to designate the essence of the Germans after his having rejected categories, from paragraph 9 of *Being and Time* to the first *Black Notebooks*, in favor of "existentials" to describe Dasein's modes of being. We should remain mindful of Heidegger's will to specify the "principle" of the German people. For him, to do battle for one's ownmost essence is the uniquely defining principle of the German people alone. From this perspective, there is no more shared humanity, and that confers upon the people claiming this essential right an exclusive and radical right in warfare. To fight, not for a limited and precise political or military goal but for one's essence and one's own substance grants for the people in question the "right" to annihilate whatever might jeopardize this essence and this substance.⁵⁰

Upon what ground can the common kinship of humanity be founded, without being impeded by the characteristics that distinguish us, separate us, and too often set us in opposition to one another both individually and collectively? Proposing a definition of the human being in order to promote a recognition of what unites us is not adequate. With Montaigne, and no less Descartes, modern philosophy has affirmed its refusal to delimit the human being in its specificity too precipitously with some ready-made definition, such as man as the "rational animal."⁵¹ At issue is a heuristic prudence, not an anthropological agnosticism. In this respect, moreover, we can speak of Heidegger's complete misunderstanding when he reproaches the moderns for having defined the human being as the *animal rationale*.

That is why it is important not to require that we first and foremost agree on some specific definition of the human being, but rather on a principle of recognition, or a "humanity principle," which can be formulated in the following terms: "Recognize and respect in each individual her or his humanity before all consideration of nationality and ethnic or religious affiliation." What I have in mind is a requirement of recognition before being an imperative in the Kantian sense. *Humanity* as recognized in each person cannot be imposed as an end for the maxim of our actions except to the extent that it is already discerned in advance, in all its depth and all its dimensions as being *in principio*: at the point of origin of our relation to each and every individual. This *humanity principle*, at once individual and collective, rests on the consciousness, always to be taken up again and deepened, of what constitutes our humanity and which cannot be reduced to any once-and-for-all definition that pretends to be conclusive. It is not, then, just a moral rule but more generally a principle of knowledge and action, one whose discernment is enriched by successive realizations, in both the individual experiences of life and the collective trial and error of human history.

The ancients discerned humanity in *nous*, in *logos*, and in its political dimensions. Descartes, the philosopher of the *humana sapientia*, recognized our humanity in the *mens*, the freedom, and the generosity of those who

acknowledge the presence of that freedom in themselves and in others, but equally—and this is too often forgotten—he recognized our humanity in the understanding of our passions and how best to put them to use in our ethical cultivation.⁵² Kant assigned humanity to the rational autonomy of the moral person; he thought he would also find it, in a collective sense, in the evolution of peoples toward their political maturity, beginning with the experience of the French Revolution and in the feeling, nearing enthusiasm, which that event awoke in the human spirit. Without breaking the thread of these successive contributions, we in our modernity have had to rethink that humanity in the face of the ordeal of dehumanization and destructiveness waged by Hitler and the Nazis that led to the destruction of the Jews of Europe. The decisive contribution of jurists to this challenge is well known. Hersch Lauterpacht, in opposition to the *völkisch Gemein-Recht* or “essential right” asserted by National Socialist authors like Heidegger, was able in 1943 to posit “the human being, the individual,” as “the ultimate source of all rights.”⁵³ At Nuremberg, he introduced into law the idea of “crimes against humanity,” while Raphael Lemkin, concerned with the protection of cultural and ethnic groups, minorities, and every individual human being constituting them, coined the term “genocide.”⁵⁴ The contribution of these two concepts, which complement one another, has made possible decisive progress for international rights, which have taken on the dimension of “human rights.” The challenge facing philosophy concerns what direction humanity’s thought must pursue, after the genocidal ordeal of the Nazi reign, as well as the ones that have continued to afflict us after 1945, in order to prevent further genocides. This means contributing to a philosophy that, beyond the particular language in which it is expressed, we will not designate preponderantly as American, French, German, or the exclusive product of any other nationality, but simply *human* in its principle.⁵⁵

It now remains for me, Professor Fried, to congratulate you for the probity and precision of your editorial work in the preparation of the present volume and the revision of the texts, and to thank you, as well as the other contributors, for this moment of shared reflection.

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Translated by Michael B. Smith

NOTES

1. See Franco Volpi, “Goodbye Heidegger! Mi Introducción censurada a los *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” in *Fenomenologia y Hermeneutica*, ed. S. Eyzaguirre, Acta del I Congreso Internacional de “Fenomenología y Hermenéutica (Santiago de Chile: University Andrés Bello, 2008), 63.

2. See Aurel Kolnai, *The War against the West* (New York: Viking Press, 1938).
3. Ernst Cassirer, *Zu Philosophie und Politik*, in *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, ed. John Michael Krois and Christian Mockel, vol. 9 (Hamburg: Meiner, 2008), 30.
4. Marcel Conche, *Heidegger résistant* (Paris: Éditions de Mégare, 1996).
5. However, it is worth pointing out the development of the "birth of the new politics" that Heidegger considers "necessary," even though it proceeds "from the machinational *Unwesen* of being" (GA 97: 472).
6. Heidegger, *Letters to His Wife, 1915–1970*, trans. R. D. V. Glasgow (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 208.
7. See Ulrich Sieg, "Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes," *Die Zeit* (December 22, 1989), <https://www.zeit.de/1989/52/die-verjudung-des-deutschen-geistes>.
8. Sidonie Kellerer, "Kampf der Besinnung," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 63, no. 5 (January 2015), 941–57.
9. See Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der Jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2015), 53n39.
10. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Banality of Heidegger*, trans. James Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), and see E. Faye, *Arendt et Heidegger: Extermination nazie et destruction de la pensée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2016), 492–506.
11. See Emmanuel Faye, "Arendt, Heidegger et le 'déluge' d'Auschwitz," *Des philosophes face à la Shoah*, ed. Georges Bensoussan, Édith Fuchs, Robert Levy, *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah* 207 (October 2017), 113, and the *Rapport de la mission d'études en France sur la recherche et l'enseignement des génocides et des crimes de masse*, ed. Vincent Duclert (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2018), 132 and 274.
12. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 4, ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. F. A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979–1987), 116.
13. Faye, "Arendt, Heidegger et le 'déluge' d'Auschwitz," 113, and *Rapport de la mission d'études*, 132 and 274.
14. This terminological modification seems to have escaped Katrin Meyer's notice: see "Denkweg ohne Abschweifungen. Heideggers Nietzsche-Vorlesungen und das Nietzsche-Buch von 1961 im Vergleich," *Heidegger und Nietzsche. Heidegger-Jahrbuch 2*, ed. Alfred Denker, Marion Heinz, John Sallis, Bend Vedder and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg-Munich: Verlag Karl Albert 2005), 132–56; here "Terminologisch relevante Wortsetzungen," 156.
15. Thomä, interpreting the motorization of the Wehrmacht (166–67), which made the German victory possible as a manifestation of *Machenschaft*, refers to a 1939 course and a passage from the *Black Notebooks*, without noting that there is no mention of *Machenschaft* in the 1940 course.
16. My thanks to Leonore Bazinek for having drawn my attention to the importance of *Wesensrecht* in this passage from GA 48. My discovery of its reuse in the *Black Notebooks* confirms the correctness of her intuition.
17. See Emmanuel Faye, "Heidegger et la Russie," *Sens Public* (December 11, 2017), <https://www.sens-public.org/article1278.html>.
18. Reference in "Heidegger et la Russie."
19. Quoted by Yongtak Yoon, "Naturrechtsdiskussion der Gegenwart: Zur Orientierung der politischen Wissenschaft im technischen Zeitalter," *사대논총*, vol. 15, 56, <http://s-space.snu.ac.kr/bitstream/10371/72982/1/03.pdf>.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Ponderings XII–XV: Black Notebooks 1939–1941*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 317.

21. Emmanuel Faye, “Heidegger und das Judentum: Vom Aufruf zur ‘völligen Vernichtung’ zur Thematisierung der ‘Selbstvernichtung,’” *Deutsche Zeitschrift zur Philosophie* 63, no. 5 (2015), 882–83.

22. For the quotations that follow, see Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski and F. Will (London: Routledge Classics, 2003), 71–72.

23. See my study that quotes Thomä: “Kategorien oder Existenzialien: Von der Metaphysik zur Metapolitik,” in *Martin Heideggers “Schwarze Hefte”: Eine philosophisch-politische Debatte*, ed. Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016), 100–121; now available in English: “From Categories to Existentialia: The Programmed Destruction of Philosophy,” in “Heidegger and the Political—Counter-voices,” special issue, ed. Matthew Sharpe, *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory* 19, no. 4 (September 30, 2018), 274–91, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14409917.2018.1520507>.

24. Dieter Thomä, ed., *Heidegger Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung* (Stuttgart-Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2003), 160–61.

25. Martin Heidegger, *Qu’est-ce que la métaphysique?* (Paris: Gallimard (NRF), 1938). According to Henry Corbin’s story, repeated to me by his former student Christian Jambet, Heidegger had proposed to Corbin that he publish a French translation of his 1933 Rectoral Address in the same 1938 collection, after these two chapters of *Being and Time*. The NRF refused to publish that Nazi speech.

26. The explicit distance Voegelin took with respect to National Socialism, in the name of an opposition not ethical but religious, appears only in the preface of December 1938, added to the second edition of *The Political Religions*, published in Stockholm.

27. Eric Voegelin, *Die Politischen Religionen*, ed. Peter J. Opitz (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2007), 58. Eric Voegelin *The Political Religions*, in *Modernity without Restraint*, ed. Manfred Henningsen, *The Collected work of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 5 (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1999), 67, translation modified.

28. Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, 69: “The will to lose oneself and break away ecstatically is driven by a deeply agitating existential fear.”

29. Dieter Thomä, “Alle zwanzig Jahre wieder. Eine neue französische Debatte über Heidegger und den Nationalsozialismus,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (June 30, 2005). See my response to Thomä in Emmanuel Faye, “Nachwort zur deutschen Ausgabe,” *Heidegger: Die Einführung des Nationalsozialismus in die Philosophie* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2009), 440–42.

30. Dieter Thomä, “Ausflug in den Abgrund,” *Literaturen* (April 2008), 26–29. On this topic, see Sidonie Kellerer, “Envoûtement: Emmanuel Faye et la réaction allemande,” *Sens Public* (May 24, 2014), <http://sens-public.org/article1069.html>.

31. Emmanuel Faye, “Das Sein als Mythos oder als Begriff,” in “*Sein und Zeit*” *neu verhandelt: Untersuchungen zu Heideggers Hauptwerk*, ed. Tobias Bender and Marion Heinz (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 2019), 49–94.

32. See my response to Dieter Thomä’s criticisms, in “Das Sein als Mythos oder als Begriff,” 80n75, 85–88.

33. Sidonie Kellerer, "Heideggers Maske: 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes'—Metamorphose eines Textes," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 2, no. 5 (2011), 116.

34. See Emmanuel Faye, "'Die Krönung der Gesamtausgabe,' Ein Gespräch mit dem französischen Philosophen Emmanuel Faye über die 'Schwarzen Hefte' und Heideggers düsteres Vermächtnis," von Iris Radisch, *Die Zeit* December 27, 2014): <https://www.zeit.de/2014/01/heidegger-schwarze-hefte-emmanuel-faye>. With the consent of the rights holders of Franck Jolles, deceased in 2014, I intend to publish his study in the near future.

35. Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger, The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 317.

36. See Emmanuel Faye, "Descartes, the Humanists and the Perfection of Human Being," *Early Modern Philosophers and the Renaissance Legacy*, ed. Cecilia Muratori and Gianni Paganini, *International Archives of the History of Ideas*, vol. 220 (New York: Springer, 2016), 159–60.

37. Fabula: La Recherche en Littérature (website), "Controverses sur les Lumières (1945–2019)," (October 3, 2018), http://www.fabula.org/actualites/controverses-sur-les-lumieres-1945-2019-controversies-about-enlightenment-1945-2019_87137.php?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter.

38. See Emmanuel Faye, "Being, History, Technology and Extermination in the Work of Heidegger," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 50, no. 1 (January 2012), 115.

39. On the various meanings of the the word *Befindlichkeit*, see Sidonie Kellerer, "Sein und Zeit: Ein Buch für alle und jeden? Zu Heideggers Begriff des 'Dasein,'" in "*Sein und Zeit*" *neu verhandelt*, 117.

40. This, for example, is the thesis of Peter E. Gordon, "The Critical appropriation of Heidegger's Philosophy: Five Motifs," in *After Heidegger?* ed. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018), 29–40. Gordon's assumption that one can distinguish between "philosophical motifs" and "ideological *distortion[s]*" (29) in Heidegger's work is directly contradicted by Heidegger's own statement in the famous Davos disputation with Ernst Cassirer that "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*) is the "condition of the act of philosophizing" (GA 3: 284). Gordon, who has studied the Davos case closely, would have benefited from considering this Heideggerian principle, which calls into question the adequacy of his assumption.

41. Jürgen Habermas, *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion: Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), 23.

42. See Alain Bernheim, "La franc-maçonnerie allemande au 20e siècle," *Pietre-Stones: Review of Freemasonry* (May 8, 1998), <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/bernheim15.html>, and Emmanuel Faye, "Das Sein als Mythos oder als Begriff," 77–78.

43. See Victor Farías, *L'eredita di Heidegger: nel neonazismo, nel neofascismo, e nel fondamentalismo islamico* [Heidegger's Heritage: In Neo-Nazism, in Neo-Fascism, and in Islamic Fundamentalism], trans. E. Castagna (Milan: Medusa, 2008); for an example of Rastier's work, see *Naufrage d'un prophète: Heidegger aujourd'hui* (Paris: PUF 2015).

44. On Spencer's inspiration from Heidegger, see Ronald Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); a sample from one of O'Meara's books, *Toward a White Republic* (San Francisco: Counter-Currents Publishing, 2010): "Influenced by Julius Evola and Martin Heidegger, I have long believed that the 'malaise' afflicting the white man is profound, traceable in part to the advent of modernity, which introduced certain civilizational and ontological principles inimical to European life" (31). It is also instructive to read the review of my book by O'Meara, published online as "Heidegger 'The Nazi,'" *North American New Right* (July 31, 2010), <https://www.counter-currents.com/2010/07/heidegger-the-nazi/>. Gottfried's preface is in Dugin's *Martin Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning*, trans. Nina Kouprianova (Alexandria, VA: Raddix/Washington Summit Publishers, 2014). Married to Richard Spencer, Kouprianova filed for divorce in 2019 on grounds of spousal abuse.

45. Forthcoming in *Journal of Political Ideologies* 25 (2020).

46. See Francine Prose, "My students heard a far-right politician on campus. Here's what they learned," *The Guardian* (October 31, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/31/far-right-politician-marc-jongen-campus-bard>; a group of scholars published an open letter of protest: "An Open Letter to the Hannah Arendt Center at Bard College," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 23, 2017), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/An-Open-Letter-to-the-Hannah/241526>. These scholars had good reason to protest, but they noticed neither Marc Jongen's Heideggerian education at Karlsruhe nor the fact that Hannah Arendt, whose name they were sorry to see associated with a political theorist and philosopher of the far right, had herself coedited an article for the *Festschrift Voegelin* by Armin Mohler, who was close to Voegelin and a principal inspiration for the European New Right; see Armin Mohler, "Die Rolle der Ideologie in der Fünften Republik," in *Politische Ordnung und menschliche Existenz: Festgabe für Eric Voegelin zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Alois Dempf, Hannah Arendt, Friedrich Engel-Janosi (Munich: Beck, 1962).

47. For example, note Stephen Bannon's declaration, as reported by Christoph Scheuermann: "We sit down at the dining room table and he picks up a book, a biography of the philosopher Martin Heidegger. 'That's my guy,' Bannon says. Heidegger, he says, had some good ideas on the subject of being, which fascinates him"; "Searching in Europe for Glory Days Gone By," *Spiegel Online* (October 29, 2018), <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/stephen-bannon-tries-rightwing-revolution-in-europe-a-1235297.html>. Also noteworthy is Bannon's proximity to Dugin, the extreme-right Right Heideggerian and Eurasian ideologue: Thomas Assheuer, "Steve Bannon lobt Alexander Dugin," *Die Zeit Online* (February 9, 2017), https://www.zeit.de/2017/07/washington-moskau-steve-bannon-alexander-dugin-lob-annaeherung?fbclid=IwAR1zuTZMOslsdaXIcME5nnQu28OW0V7O-O8GAsY7B7m53X_pZa2G-BksNTJ0. Dugin taught in the Sociology Department at the Lomonosov University in Moscow until his *venia legendi* was revoked in 2014 after he publicly called for the extermination of the "Ukrainian bastards."

48. Also worth mentioning is the case of Martin Sellner, neo-Nazi leader of the recently dissolved Identitarian Movement Austria (Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs), far to the right of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), itself already a right-wing

populist party. He is the author of an article on Martin Heidegger's metapolitics, praising his critique of liberalism and modernity and seeing in him a pathway to a new conception of homeland and political unity ("Mein Denkweg zu Heidegger," *Sezession* 64 (February 2015), 8–13, https://sezession.de/uploads/Sez_64_Sellner.pdf). The wider Identitarian movement in Europe and North America has promoted the "Great Replacement" theory that white, Christian Europeans are being replaced by migrants and other aliens, a theme taken up in the "Jews will not replace us!" chant at the violent "Unite the Right" white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Brenton Tarrant, the man responsible for the 2019 Christchurch massacre in New Zealand, was inspired by Identitarian ideology, donated funds to Sellner's party, and carried on a correspondence with him. See Jason Wilson, "Christchurch shooter's links to Austrian far right 'more extensive than thought,'" *The Guardian* (May 15, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/16/christchurch-shooters-links-to-austrian-far-right-more-extensive-than-thought>.

49. Ernst Nolte, *Historische Existenz: Zwischen Anfang und Ende der Geschichte?* (Munich: Piper, 1998), 14.

50. This paragraph restates a page from Faye, *Arendt et Heidegger*, 248–49, a work not yet translated into English, which completes the analyses on the "essential right" of the present response.

51. Descartes is particularly explicit on this point in an unfinished and posthumously published dialogue in which the character Eudoxus states that "if, for example, I asked Epistemon himself what man is, and if he answered me, as is commonly done in schools, that man is a rational animal, and if, in addition, to explain these two terms, which are no less obscure than the first, he led us through all the steps that one calls metaphysics, then we would certainly be drawn into a labyrinth from which we would never emerge." René Descartes, *La Recherche de la Vérité par la lumière naturelle*, trans. E. Faye (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2010), 92.

52. René Descartes, *Les passions de l'âme*, articles 153–55.

53. Hersch Lauterpacht, "The Law of Nation, the Law of Nature, and the Rights of Man" (1943), *Problems of Peace and War, British Institute of International and Comparative Law, Transactions of the Grotius Society*, vol. 29 (New York: Oceana Publications, 1962), 31.

54. See Philippe Sand, *East West Street: On the Origins of "Genocide" and "Crimes against Humanity"* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016).

55. The *humanity principle*, by contrast with the Heideggerian *Wesensrecht*, was presented for the first time, more informally, during a roundtable discussion at the Maison Heinrich Heine of Paris, on January 15, 2019.

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