BEING HERE: HEIDEGGER IN AMERICA

by

MARTIN WOESSNER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

2006

UMI Number: 3232011

Copyright 2006 by
Woessner, Martin

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 3232011
Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2006

Martin Woessner

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____	_____
Date	Chair of Examining Committee Distinguished Professor Richard Wolin, Graduate Center, City University of New York
_____	_____
Date	Executive Officer Professor Mary Gibson, Graduate Center, City University of New York

Distinguished Professor John P. Diggins, Graduate Center, City University of New York

_____

Distinguished Professor David Nasaw, Graduate Center, City University of New York

_____

Bruce Kuklick, Nichols Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

_____

Professor Anson Rabinbach, Princeton University

_____

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

BEING HERE: HEIDEGGER IN AMERICA

by

Martin Woessner

Adviser: Distinguished Professor Richard Wolin

This dissertation is a study in the reception of the work of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in the United States of America. Arguably the most significant philosopher of the twentieth century, Heidegger has had a profound, though hitherto largely unacknowledged, influence on American ideas and culture since the Second World War. Commonly thought of as one of the founders of existentialism, his legacy in fact reaches far beyond the postwar vogue of that intellectual and cultural movement, and far beyond the confines of academic philosophy. Initially introduced to American audiences by Catholic and Protestant theologians, as well as by European émigrés, Heidegger's work has gone on to inform everything from popular culture to postmodern architectural theory. But Heidegger's reception has not been without controversy. At one time Heidegger was an enthusiastic supporter of National Socialism. As a result, his example has continuously raised questions concerning the moral responsibilities of intellectuals, making his influence upon thinkers as diverse as Paul Tillich, Richard Rorty, and even the architect Daniel Libeskind all the more curious.

It's clear that we won't be able to write the intellectual history of this century without reading Heidegger.

—Richard Rorty (1995)

PREFACE

Now Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to my own veracious self; and if any passages of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fiction-monger.

—Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment"

Richard Rorty has a knack for making summary pronouncements. He is equally adept at playfully puncturing intellectual pretensions. He can build up—lumping seemingly irreconcilable philosophers and ideas into a common cause—as fast as he can tear down. So I figured that I had a fifty-fifty chance when I dared to run my interpretation of his confrontation with Heidegger by him at a post-lecture reception at SUNY Stony Brook in April of 2003. A Rortyan demolition ensued. Undeterred (thanks, perhaps, to a second glass of wine), I proffered up the one-minute summary of my larger project for his consideration. The response it received, though polite, was even less enthusiastic.

Rorty could not fathom why anybody would be interested in linking abstract philosophical debates to the dynamic landscape of postwar American history. Philosophy department politicking had nothing to do—should have nothing to do—with real politics. It was fine to talk about ideas, but why try to embed them in a broader historical context? Thankfully, I was kept from the brink of dissertation despair by Louis Menand, whose interdisciplinary seminar in thesis writing, co-taught with Nancy K. Miller, I was then attending. "Don't worry," he reassured me after I had relayed the gist of my exchange with Rorty, "I told Rorty years ago that I was thinking of writing a book on the Metaphysical Club. His was response was that he had already looked into it, and that

there was nothing there." Menand's *The Metaphysical Club*, published in 2001, won the Pulitzer Prize.

Rorty was referring to the twentieth century when he said in an interview over ten years ago that "we won't be able to write the history of this century without reading Heidegger."[1] Only will time will tell, of course, if this assessment will be applicable to the twenty-first, but there can be no doubt that Heidegger's work was an inescapable point of reference in the century past. Proving that this has been the case in the United States—and trying to explain why—has not been an easy task. It would have been downright impossible, however, were it not for the copious amounts of guidance, help, and support that I received from so many wonderful people, organizations, and institutions over the course of the past six or so years. I am honored to thank all those who have supported me and this project—financially, intellectually, and emotionally.

A generous Robert E. Gilleece Fellowship, coupled with a University Fellowship, made my graduate education at CUNY possible; needless to say, without them, this dissertation would not exist. Additional financial assistance came from the Sue Rosenberg Zalk Student Travel and Research Fund. I am also grateful to the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, which awarded me a Library Research Grant in 2003 to research their extensive collection of Daniel Libeskind's early writings and notes. During the 2003-2004 academic year I was lucky enough to be named a Doctoral Student Fellow at the Graduate Center's Center for Place, Culture, and Politics. Neil Smith and Omar Dahbour, who ran the seminar that year, fostered a wonderful intellectual exchange

[1] Rorty interview with Michael O'Shea, "Towards a Post-Metaphysical Culture," *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty*, edited with an introduction by Eduardo Mendieta (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006), 51. The interview originally appeared in the *Harvard Journal of Philosophy* (Spring 1995): 58-66.

across disciplinary divides, one which expanded the horizons of both my research and my writing. A Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship gave me the opportunity to write without distraction; and a Mellon Dissertation Year Fellowship—administered by the Center for the Humanities, another of the Graduate Center's interdisciplinary havens—allowed me to put the finishing touches on the pages that follow.

The origins of this project go back many years—and many miles—to my undergraduate education at the University of San Francisco. It was at USF that I was introduced to the history of ideas—and to Heidegger. Elizabeth Gleason convinced me that, with some hard work, I, too, could be a scholar. Elliot Neaman showed me what intellectual history was all about. And the late Robert Makus guided me through my first encounters with Heidegger. I am sorry I cannot share this manuscript with him. As I slowly made my way east from California, I was lucky enough to have the constant friendship and support of Eduardo Mendieta, without which I and this dissertation never would have survived. From my first days in San Francisco to the final weeks of dissertation writing in Brooklyn, he has been there throughout to challenge and encourage me—two things every thinker needs in varying degrees. Striking the right balance between them is just one of the many things at which Eduardo excels.

I consider myself uncommonly fortunate to have had this manuscript read and approved by such a distinguished committee of scholars, and I would like to thank John P. Diggins, David Nasaw, Bruce Kuklick, and Anson Rabinbach again for agreeing to take part in the process. Richard Wolin, as my adviser, had no choice, but he also deserves thanks, especially for getting me out of Houston. From even before my days at Rice University, he has been an inspiring role model, and his example continues to

remind me that ideas matter beyond the seminar room, something for which I will always be in his debt. For reading various fragments and drafts of this dissertation, or for just listening to me drone on yet again about Heidegger, I would also like to thank the following: Michael Behrent, Martin Burke, George Cotkin, Matt Cotter, Brian Fox, Ron Haas, Scott Marler, Tom Ort, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, Aleksandra Wagner, and the many members of the New York Area Seminar in Intellectual and Cultural History, especially Jerry Seigel.

Although I have frequently leaned on the wisdom and advice of these wonderful people, they should in no way be held responsible for any of the shortcomings that the following pages may contain. In the end, this is my story, and I must be content to bear any stigma it may bring upon me. Stigma or not, however, I know that I will always be embraced by the many friends and family who have walked beside me these past few years. They may have grown sick of hearing about Heidegger, but thankfully they never grew sick of me. For their love and support I am especially grateful to Bill and Stephanie Burns of Ridgefield Connecticut; the Woessner family of Fayetteville, Arkansas (Joe, Beth, Tyler, Beverly, Trent, and Brooke); the Woessner family of Fort Bragg, California (Jon, Gretchen, and Dylan); Marie Ignacio of San Jose, California; Morris Ignacio and Nanci Brewer of Santa Rosa, California; and, in Silverlake, Amarjit Khalsa and Daniel Schmitt.

To Sarah Burns, who held my hand through moments of joy as well as the worst bouts of Heideggerian angst, I am especially grateful (more than I can even convey with these words). Sharing my life with her the past six years has made me come alive as a writer, but also, more importantly, as a person. I hope she knows how special she is.

My first and best teachers, Geraldine and Thomas Woessner, to whom I dedicate this dissertation, deserve recognition for just about everything they do. I am thankful each and every day for the fact that they are my mom and dad.

—Greenpoint, Brooklyn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE vi

INTRODUCTION 1
Heidegger for Dummies

CHAPTER 1 26
Freiburg Bound: The Early Years of American Heidegger Scholarship

CHAPTER 2 58
Exiles and Emissaries: Heidegger's Stepchildren in the United States

CHAPTER 3 128
Nihilism, Nothingness, and God: Heidegger and American Theology

CHAPTER 4 182
An Officer and a Philosopher: J. Glenn Gray and the Postwar Introduction of Heidegger into American Thought

EXCURSUS I 222
***Dasein*, Death, and Dope: Heidegger and the Culture of American Existentialism**

CHAPTER 5 241
The Continental Divide: Heidegger between the Analytic and Continental Traditions in American Philosophy

CHAPTER 6 282
Richard Rorty and the Riddle of the Book that Never Was

CHAPTER 7 305
Ethics, Architecture, and Heidegger: "Building Dwelling Thinking" in an American Context

EXCRUSUS II 346
Daniel Libeskind and Post-Heideggerian Architecture

CONCLUSION 370
Scandals Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Heidegger's Place in the Culture Wars

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 394

INTRODUCTION
Heidegger for Dummies

Things are so because one says so. Idle talk is constituted by just such gossiping and passing the word along—a process by which its initial lack of grounds to stand on becomes aggravated to complete groundlessness. And indeed this idle talk is not confined to vocal gossip, but even spreads to what we write, where it takes the form of 'scribbling'. In this latter case the gossip is not based so much upon hearsay. It feeds upon superficial reading…The groundlessness of idle talk is no obstacle to its becoming public; instead it encourages this.

—Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927)

Whether or not Jerzy Kosinski intended it as such, his comic novel *Being There* (1970) can be read as a classic send-up of all things Heideggerian. The title, of course, is a giveaway, reminiscent as it is of the one term all translations of Heidegger have left in the original German: *Dasein*, which means, literally, being there. And the title is no mere coincidence. In an interview with George Plimpton and Rocco Landesman for *The Paris Review* in 1972, Kosinski admitted that while writing the book his "code name" for it "was *Blank Page*, and sometimes *Dasein*."[1] Kosinski's biographer, James Park Sloan, tells us that "as much as Kosinski liked the idea of being identified with Heidegger," he thought "the term 'Dasein' sounded pretentious and incomprehensibly foreign," so he settled on "its English equivalent."[2] Beyond titular qualms, though, Kosinski was probably even more ambivalent about being associated with Heidegger than Sloan lets on, for in *The Paris Review* interview Kosinski went on to completely deny that *Being*

---

[1] George A. Plimpton and Rocco Landesman, "The Art of Fiction XLVI—Jerzy Kosinski," *The Paris Review* 54 (Summer 1972): 183-207; reprinted in Tom Teicholz, ed., *Conversations with Jerzy Kosinski* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1993), 20-36. The quote is from page 31.

[2] James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1996), 289. It is worth noting here that when Sloan's biography appeared it caused quite a scandal, not because it exposed this Heidegger connection, but because it maintained that Kosinski did not himself write all of his works. With regard to *Being There* specifically, Sloan argues that the novel bears an overwhelming resemblance to a popular Polish novel from 1932 entitled *The Career of Nikodem Dyzma*. For more on this, see page 292.

There was a Heideggerian novel.[3] Still, the Heideggerian residues in the text are hard to ignore, and they suggest that Kosinski may have been having a little fun with philosophy.

Chance, the simpleton protagonist of *Being There* who, true to his name, improbably rises from obscurity to ultimately influence both Wall Street and international political elites with his opaque mix of folk wisdom and utter naiveté, gives Kosinski an opportunity to poke fun not only at the crassness of American media culture and the wealthy who control it, but all those who would champion such peasant pseudo-speak (à la Heidegger?) as the cure for modern society's innumerable ills. And if Chance is a dummy who ends up ruling the United States because the gossip mills say he should, then Heidegger, his hypothetical inspiration (or so I am suggesting), is, well, not a dummy exactly, but an equally misunderstood figure whose influence in this country has been even more substantial. Chance is, as Kosinski tells us, a "blank page," upon which his admirers as well as his detractors have projected any number of fantasies.[4] Heidegger, for his part, may not be an entirely blank page, but his widespread and surprising reception in postwar American cultural and intellectual life—a world as different from

---

[3] "The Art of Fiction XLVI—Jerzy Kosinski," 31: "One has to be careful with titles. If I had kept to that initial code name it would have connected the book, possibly, with the philosophy of Heidegger. As a matter of fact, one of the American critics learned from my publisher that *Dasein* was the code name, and months later wrote a very negative review of *Being There* as a Heideggerian novel—a terribly unfair thing to do. Had the code name been *Kapital*, he probably would have considered the book a Marxist novel." This might be a reference to John Updike's very critical review of the book in the *New Yorker*. Updike noted the Heidegger connection, but did not call the book Heideggerian. See John Updike, "Books: Bombs Made Out of Literary Leftovers," *The New Yorker*, September 25th, 1971.

[4] Jerzy Kosinski, *Being There* (1970; New York: Grove Press, 1999), 127. I find it noteworthy that Kosinski, when referring to his work in progress, went back and forth between the titles *Blank Page* and *Dasein*. For more on Heidegger as a blank page, upon which different national intellectual traditions have foisted their assumptions and prejudices, see Pierre Bourdieu, "On the Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas," in Richard Shusterman, ed., *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999), 220-228. Bourdieu makes the argument that certain thinkers become dominant in translation because the elasticity of their works allows translators and interpreters to use them in any number of ways. Using Heidegger's reception in France as his case study, Bourdieu makes a compelling argument for the importance of social conditions as a determining factor in the "international circulation of ideas."

Heidegger's nostalgic rural Germany as Chance's backyard Baltimore garden is from the United Nations complex on the East River where he eventually ends up—is almost as baffling as the rise to stardom of Kosinski's protagonist. Moreover, in the same way that *Being There* offers greater insight into American culture and politics than it does its own main character, who remains a mystery till the very end, Heidegger's reception tells us as much, if not more, about the course of American intellectual and cultural history over the past half century as it does about Heidegger himself.[5]

That the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's most recognizable philosophical term could grace the cover of a best-selling novel, which was itself transformed into an award-winning film starring Peter Sellers, says something about Heidegger's curious afterlife on this side of the Atlantic.[6] For if there is one thing that cannot be denied with regard to Heidegger's American reception, it is that Heidegger has become a topic of popular interest. Woody Allen has satirized him.[7] *The Sopranos* has referenced him.[8] The architect originally in charge of rebuilding the World Trade Center site, before money and politics pushed him aside, was influenced by him. And, once upon a time, Allan Bloom blamed him for the slipping standards of higher education in

---

[5] Heidegger wanted to use an analysis of human existence (*Dasein*) to gain access to the question of Being. In a similar manner, I am suggesting that an analysis of Heidegger's American reception provides entry to larger questions about the intellectual and cultural history of America in relation to the international circulation of ideas.

[6] Peter Sellers won an Oscar for Best Actor, and Kosinski won more than one award for Best Screenplay.

[7] Woody Allen, "Remembering Needleman," *Side Effects* (New York: Random House, 1985), 3-8. For more on Allen and Heidegger, see mark T. Conard and Aeon J. Skoble, foreword by Tom Morris, *Woody Allen and Philosophy* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court: 2004), especially the essay by David Detmer, "Inauthenticity and Personal Identity in *Zelig*," 186-202. The "*…and Philosophy*" books, I should point out, are part of the very publishing phenomenon that I discuss below; they also represent an attempt to popularize certain philosophical traditions, in this case, by putting them in conversation with recognizable characters in pop culture. In *The Simpsons and Philosophy*, for example, Heidegger is paired up with none other than Bart Simpson. See Kelly Dean Jolley, "What Bart Calls Thinking," in William Irwin, Mark T. Conard, and Aeon J. Skoble, eds., *The Simpsons and Philosophy* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2001), 269-282.

[8] Season two, episode seven, "D-Girl," written by Todd A. Kessler, directed by Allen Coulter.

America.[9] If the fact that Heidegger's affair with his student Hannah Arendt is now the subject of a successful off-Broadway play is not a sure sign of Heidegger's popular presence, there is still more evidence.[10] Look no further than the nearest self-help shelves of your local bookstore. If not there, then nearby you might find examples of a new phenomenon in publishing—the *For Dummies* revolution, which has spared not even the ethereal realm of high ideas. Heidegger's recent inclusion, indeed, his prominence in this kind of literature is proof like no other that there is a widespread interest in figuring out just who this Heidegger was and what his philosophy is all about.[11]

Historians of American intellectual and cultural life have spent time analyzing earlier moments of philosophical popularization with some success. Placing philosophical discourse in the context of the growing media revolution after the First World War, a simultaneous social and technological transformation which expanded the market for ideas, George Cotkin and Joan Shelly Rubin have suggested, for example, that the old divisions between high ideas and crass, lowbrow mass culture—what Horkheimer and Adorno disparagingly called the "culture industry"—need to be reconsidered.[12] In *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* Rubin devotes a whole chapter to the career of Will Durant, whose *The Story of Philosophy* introduced countless numbers of people to the

---

[9] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).
[10] "Hannah and Martin," written by Kate Fodor, who just happens to be the daughter of philosopher Jerry Fodor.
[11] To be sure, not everyone knows or cares about Heidegger in America. I know of a small dog, for example, whose owner in Exeter, California—a small San Joaquin Valley town—is an avid reader of German philosophy when he isn't running the general store, and who bestowed him with the name Heidegger. But most visitors to the store, no doubt to the chagrin of pooch and proprietor both, mistake his name for that of a similar-sounding moniker: Heineken.
[12] See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1972; New York: Continuum, 1994), 120-167. See also Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, edited with an introduction by J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991); and *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, edited with an introduction by Stephen Cook (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

great themes of the western philosophical tradition, while Cotkin, in his essay "Middle-Ground Pragmatists," focuses more specifically on the popularization of pragmatism, which from the very beginning sought to bring down the wall separating the academy from everyday social concerns.[13] And these are but two instances of thoughtful philosophical popularization in recent American history. From the interwar years to the American reception of European existentialism after the Second World War and beyond (including even, the more recent reception of Derridean deconstruction, postmodernism, and so much more), philosophy in America has always come into dialogue with mass culture in some way, shape, or form.[14] This dialogue cannot be ignored or overlooked.

Heidegger has found a comfortable niche among the newest wave of philosophical popularization in America. The *For Dummies* books, from which I get my title, were started by self-professed computer nerds like Andy Rathbone, and were originally conceived as a kind of self-help program for the computer illiterate.[15] By all accounts, the series of books that one of the original dummy titles—*PC's for Dummies* (1992), which Rathbone coauthored with Dan Gookin—launched has been a phenomenal publishing success. To be sure, guide books can be traced at least as far back as to Cliff

---

[13] On the popularization of philosophy in America, see George Cotkin, "Middle-Ground Pragmatists: The Popularization of Philosophy in American Culture," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55 (1994): 283-302; Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1992).

[14] On the reception of "French Theory," see François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003). Cusset is more disparaging of the kind of introductory books I am discussing here, accusing the introductory books of "French Theory" of "miniaturizing thought" and of indulging in the "promiscuity of proper names," that is, of making ideas no more than fashionable references or tag-lines (99).

[15] See Lisa Russell and Jamie Reno, "Geek God," *People Weekly* 13 March 1995: 101-102. Incidentally, Rathbone just happened to be the inspiration for the character of "Rat" in Cameron Crowe's 1982 homage to high school life, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. Before writing the book and screenplay, Crowe spent time undercover as a student at a San Diego area high school, gathering material for the film. For more on the *For Dummies* series, go to http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/ . Incidentally, Rathbone just happened to be the inspiration for the character of "Rat" in Cameron Crowe's 1982 homage to high school life, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

Hillegass**,** the Nebraska native who, in 1958, decided to imitate a Canadian series of study guides for literature. Thus was born the series bearing his moniker. But *Cliff's Notes*, whatever your high school English teacher may have warned, were always supposed to have an air of respectability; they were meant for serious study and not last-minute cramming. Rarely were they funny, and almost never entertaining. Rathbone and his *Dummy* cohorts, however, struck gold because they did everything in their power to avoid the stodgy conventions of such books. Combining one-liners with sarcastic wit and comic illustrations to boot, they reinvented a genre almost overnight. Although they were initially limited to computer-related topics, you can now purchase a *Dummies* guide for just about anything, from wedding planning to taxes to traveling.[16] There is a *Philosophy for Dummies* in the series, but no *Heidegger for Dummies*—at least not yet.[17] But, judging by the number of other introductions to Heidegger that are currently available, it may not be long before the *For Dummies* franchise officially joins the fray.

The "Heidegger for Dummies" phenomenon is worthy of closer scrutiny for a few reasons. First, since the target audience is not composed of professional academics, this must be evidence, as I have been suggesting, of a broader appeal with regard to Heidegger, or at least a broader curiosity, one that breaks through the usual confines of academic discourse. Second, this phenomenon coincides with broader developments in publishing, which of course have great impact on the circulation of ideas, and which challenge us to reconsider the scope and aims of intellectual history today, or, as a well-known discussion put it some years ago, "intellectual history in the age of cultural

[16] Just the other day, in fact, I almost collided with a tourist on the streets of Manhattan. She was paying even less attention to the flow of pedestrian traffic than I was, since she had her nose in a well-flagged and dog-eared copy of *New York City for Dummies*.
[17] Tom Morris, *Philosophy for Dummies* (New York: Wiley, 1999).

studies."[18] Third, and lastly, these texts, which highlight the main themes of Heidegger's philosophical work, represent a point of access to high ideas, a whole conversation even, that we, as historians interested in how and why certain ideas become influential in particular contexts, simply cannot ignore. Instead of dismissing these works as simplistic caricatures (at least two of the books make use of comic illustration, and to good effect I might add) unworthy of our scholarly attention, we should scrutinize them just as we might any other intellectual document. It is in this sense that "Heidegger for Dummies" is anything but a pejorative insinuation. As the old crash-safety commercials used to say: you can learn a lot from a dummy.[19]

In just a couple trips to a few different Manhattan bookstores, I was able to purchase no less than nine pocket paperback introductions to Heidegger, which should not be a surprise since Heidegger is cited more often than just about any other modern philosopher.[20] But the guidebooks offer more than mere citations. They are creative works of interpretation and condensation, constellations of argument and summary. And

---

[18] If Leah Price could rock English departments across the country by suggesting, simply, that scholars should pay attention to the practice of anthologization as a determining factor of literary reception, then surely asking for a broadening of our perspective as intellectual and cultural historians is not out of order. Her combination of book-history with theory and interpretation is a compelling one, and should head off all questions about the relevance of this kind of work. See Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000). That the circulation of ideas begs for a broadening of intellectual and cultural-historical narratives is provocatively demonstrated in Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen's "Conventional Iconoclasm: The Cultural Work of the Nietzsche Image in Twentieth-Century America," article forthcoming in the *Journal of American History*. On intellectual history and cultural studies see the *Intellectual History Newsletter* symposium (1996) "Intellectual History in the Age of Cultural Studies."

[19] This, more or less, is the upshot of Avital Ronell's recent *Stupidity* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). Interestingly, Ronell, a literary critic of Heideggerian and Derridean inspiration, claims that "in many of the texts devoted to the installation of the semantic chain generating stupidity, idiocy, imbecility, puerility, the ridiculous, and so on, there appears at the head of the line of fire the almost requisite figure of a German—the inexorable buffo of the whole dossier. Associated with study and strain, the German gets the lowest grades, earning the highest visibility in the world-historical chronicle of stupidity…After all, the word *Dummkopf* needs no subtitle." This comes from pages 14 and 15 of the introduction, "Slow Learner," which is a reference to Thomas Pynchon's collection of his early short stories of the same name.

[20] For more on Heidegger's omnipresence, see David Kolb, "Heidegger at 100, in America," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Volume LII Number 1 (Jan.-March 1991): 140-151.

it is not only the texts themselves which are of importance—the whole package, as it were, needs to be taken into account. From the covers of these philosophical guidebooks alone you can glimpse the main themes at stake in the reception of Heidegger's work in the United States. Paul Strathern's *Heidegger in 90 Minutes*, for instance, sports a sinister, bobblehead-esque rendition of the philosopher, whose shadow falls behind him in the none-too-subtle shape of a swastika.

Martin Heidegger officially became the first Nazi rector of Freiburg University on May 27th, 1933. The ceremony, which inaugurated Heidegger's tenure as rector while replaying, with noticeable pomp and circumstance, his entry into the party at the beginning of the month (on May 1st, Labor Day), was an orchestrated event that caught the attention of many in Germany and, indeed, around the world. With great fanfare, including a full array of Nazi flags and banners in the main hall of venerable Freiburg University, one of Germany's most recognized philosophers threw his hat into Hitler's ring.[21] Although he resigned from the position of rector only about a year later, this very public embrace Nazism cast a shadow that, to this day, still obscures his philosophical legacy.[22]

The swastika-shadow on the cover of *Heidegger in 90 Minutes* only proves how entwined Heidegger's politics and his philosophy have become in recent years. It also demonstrates the inseparability of text and image in the popular dissemination of high

---

[21] For a description of the ceremony, see Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1993), 1 ff. For more on academic life under Hitler, see Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People* (New York: YIVO, 1946).

[22] See Dominique Janicaud, *The Shadow of that Thought*, trans. Michael Gendre (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1996).

ideas.[23] The cover design of Strathern's book leaves nothing to the imagination: Heidegger is, first and foremost, a Nazi. As it turns out, this central insight—that there is a shadow obscuring Heidegger's philosophy—has a history all its own. Already in 1965, just three years after Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*, was translated into English, a slim volume of Heidegger's writings appeared (in translation) under the somewhat misleading title of *German Existentialism*. Its swastika-bedecked cover said it all, for collected inside were none of Heidegger's philosophical writings, none of his contributions to the literature of existentialism. Instead, drawing from materials collected and first published in German by Guido Schneeberger, the book presented only a selection of Heidegger's political speeches and addresses, many of them with the infamous Hitler *Gruß* included at the end.[24] Philosopher Dagobert Runes, the translator and editor of the volume, made his intentions clear in the book's introduction:

> These documents—and they are only a few from the vast evidence available—are bound to throw the light of simple reasoning and simple ethical awareness upon a widely known philosopher who, by joining the National Socialist Party of Adolf Hitler, brought discredit not only upon his distinguished teacher, Edmund Husserl, but also upon the philosophical profession.[25]

Throwing light upon the shadow of Heidegger's support for Hitler has been the task of Heidegger interpreters, commentators, and critics since even before Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Even popularizers cannot avoid this damning fact about

---

[23] On this point, see Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, "Conventional Iconoclasm: The Cultural Work of the Nietzsche Image in Twentieth-Century America."

[24] Martin Heidegger, *German Existentialism*, translated with an introduction by Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965). The documents came from Guido Schneeberger, ed., *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962). Some of these same texts can be found in slightly different translation in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993).

[25] Ibid., 9. Runes does not stop here, however. He goes on: "Martin Heidegger joined the sinister cabal of Hitler, Himmler, Goering and Streicher, the church busters, the art defilers, the perverters of history, the defamers of jurisprudence, and the grand assassins of millions of women, children, and aged" (10-11).

Heidegger's past, which is precisely why one still finds some sort of swastika reference on the covers of these current introductions, even though their contents bear little resemblance to the texts collected in *German Existentialism*.

With piercing eyes and a furled brow, Heidegger, even in bobblehead form, can be an imposing figure. If the cover of Strathern's *Heidegger in 90 Minutes* is supposed to convey anything, it is that the allotted hour and a half will leave the reader convinced that the shadow of Nazism hangs over Heidegger's work, no matter how profound that work may appear or ultimately be. Indeed, Strathern wastes no time explaining that Heidegger is "the most controversial philosopher of the twentieth century."[26] After quickly, and rather plausibly, dividing the history of twentieth-century philosophy into two separate camps, those of linguistic analysis and existentialism, represented by Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Anglo-analytic tradition on the one hand and Heidegger and so-called Continental thought on the other, Strathern makes his preferences for Wittgenstein plain.[27] Needless to say, it would be impossible to accuse Strathern of any kind of Heideggerian boosterism. Throughout the book he laments Heidegger's anti-urban, anti-modern roots; his "jargon" (33) and "obscurities" (45); even his scandalous affair with his most well-known pupil Hannah Arendt (35 ff.). The affair with Arendt, a topic almost as fascinating as Heidegger's Nazism, primarily because of the fact that Arendt was a German Jew, typically inspires the most overheated prose on the part of critics and commentators. Strathern is by no means immune to this danger. Here is his description

---

[26] Paul Strathern, *Heidegger in 90 Minutes* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 7. All subsequent citations will be parenthetical in the text.

[27] This of course ignores the substantial attempts to connect these two philosophical camps, however. For two of the most notable works in this vein, see Karl-Otto Apel, "Wittgenstein and Heidegger: language games and life forms," in Christopher Macann, ed., *Critical Heidegger* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 241-274; and Richard Rorty, "Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the reification of language," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 50-65.

of the reclusive philosophy professor falling for his student: "The brittle shell cracked open to reveal the gooey yolk of unfulfilled love" (37). On the same page, he goes on to describe Arendt as Heidegger's muse, which probably stretches the truth a little, unless you count Heidegger's penchant for penning trite poetry during this time as evidence of inspired intellectual achievement.[28] In fact, the transference of influence and inspiration most likely flowed in the opposite direction.

It takes less than ninety minutes to determine whether introductions to the life and work of Heidegger like Strathern's are either generally sympathetic or disparaging. Usually, one can tell by about the third page. So, by the time one reads that Heidegger's philosophical approach is, as Strathern later describes it, "defective" (51), that it resonated with "the beliefs of German triumphalism" that found such disastrous implantation with Hitler (60), you are well and ready for it. Saying that you cannot judge a book by its cover is, in this regard, misleading, for the cover of *Heidegger in 90 Minutes* says it all, in less than a minute.

As if proving that the question of Heidegger's support for Nazism, that swastika-shadow hanging over his work, has become a topic as intriguing and recondite as Heidegger's philosophy itself, Jeff Collins's *Heidegger and the Nazis* is devoted to this issue alone.[29] The book may not definitively answer each and every lingering question regarding Heidegger's disastrous foray into the realm of revolutionary politics (the truth will have to wait at least until the archives are fully opened), but it does offer a perceptive overview of the Heidegger controversy itself, from Heidegger's falsifying self-defenses

---

[28] Some of these poems are included in the correspondence. See Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger, *Briefe, 1925-1975: Und Andere Zeugnisse*, edited by Ursula Ludz, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998); translated in English by Andrew Shields and published as Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Letters, 1925-1975* (New York: Harcourt, 2004).

[29] Jeff Collins, *Heidegger and the Nazis* (New York: Totem Books, 2000).

immediately after the war to the Marxist critiques of Heidegger's work from the fifties onward, leading, finally, to the so-called Farías affair in the late 1980s.[30] As an account of the controversy alone, it is a useful guide, especially given the plethora of positions that the debate has engendered in academia and beyond. And if it bears the imprint of the heated exchanges so common to the culture wars of the eighties and nineties, it is only because the issue of Heidegger's Nazism, like that of literary critic Paul de Man's early collaborationist writings during the Second World War, went straight to the heart of the debates about "French Theory" and its supposed debilitating effects on American culture.[31] But despite Collins's cautious conclusion—the case of Heidegger's Nazism "is," as he puts it, "not yet closed" (63)—the cover of the book, a garish montage containing nothing less than side-by-side profiles of Heidegger and Hitler both, swastika flags, and flames, betrays any distanced and sober consideration of Heidegger's philosophical legacy. Indeed, Collins sides perhaps too quickly with Jacques Derrida on the issue of Heidegger's politico-philosophical misdeeds, which hampers his conclusions.[32]

---

[30] The Marxist critiques came mainly from figures associated in some fashion with the Frankfurt School. The most notable example of this kind of literature remains Theodor Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973). In 1987, unable to find a German publisher, the Chilean-born Farías published *Heidegger et le nazisme*, a damning account of Heidegger's political leanings, in France. Given Heidegger's astounding influence in postwar France, the publication of the book initiated a heated and prolonged debate, one which spilled over into the so-called culture wars in the United States, were "French Theory" was already under attack. That "French Theory" was built upon a Heideggerian foundation, now shown to be politically dubious, was of course seen by many as a blatant liability. See Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, edited, with a foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi, German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989). See also Richard Wolin, "French Heidegger Wars," in *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 142-161.

[31] See *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Journalism*, edited by Werner Hamacher, Neil Hertz, and Thomas Keenan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989). See also François Cussett, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003).

[32] The reader may do better to consult Derrida's writings on this topic directly, as well as the works of Emmanuel Levinas, to whom Derrida appeals for moral justification. For more on this, see Samuel Moyn,

Jeff Collins was well prepared, perhaps, to pen an introductory text entitled *Heidegger and the Nazis*, for he had previously authored *Introducing Heidegger* in the same series, and had devoted a good deal of space to the question of Heidegger's politics in the book, far more than some of the other introductions.[33] But the Nazi question does not consume the narrative of *Introducing Heidegger*. Instead, Collins offers brief, snapshot-like descriptions of some of the major concepts in Heidegger's work, notions such as "Fallenness" (71), "Authenticity" (84), "Phenomenology" (34), which are paired with various cartoons, portraits, and illustrations. The book is, in this regard, more of a graphic novel than an academic guide. But it nonetheless succeeds in conveying the breadth and import of Heidegger's work. Early on, in a section entitled "Which Heidegger?" (6), Collins gives a helpful overview of the diversity of Heidegger's philosophical work, alongside an account of the wide-ranging interpretations of Heidegger's legacy. He distinguishes, for example, between the "theological Heidegger" and the "Heidegger of German idealist philosophy." And, at the end of his introduction, Collins also points to the diverse ways in which Heidegger's philosophy has been put to use, mentioning its influence upon the amorphous body of ideas that fall under the label post-structuralism as well as the "deep ecology" coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess.

Heidegger for Beginners, the other graphic introductory book available these days in bookstores, opens with a meditation on Heidegger's relevance for questions both technological and ecological, placing his thought firmly in the context of what authors

---

"Judaism against Paganism: Emmanuel Levinas's Response to Heidegger and Nazism in the 1930s," *History and Memory* 10:1 (Spring/Summer 1998): 25-58.

[33] Jeff Collins and Howard Selina, *Introducing Heidegger* (New York: Totem, 1998)

Eric Lemay and Jennifer A. Pitts call "the crisis of the modern world" (1).[34] Despite such an ominous-sounding opening, *Heidegger for Beginners* actually proves to be the most humorous of the guidebooks. It is certainly funnier, and more comic book-like than *Introducing Heidegger*, its illustrated competitor. Jokes are sprinkled across the pages. On one page, for example, a group of students ask "Mr. Heidegger, would you explain to us the meaning of Being?" To which the cartoon version of Heidegger replies, "It's all Greek to me…" (93). It is a clever way of suggesting Heidegger's indebtedness to the philosophy of Ancient Greece, but such one-liners come at a price. In its pursuit for the witty catchphrase or the clever cartoon, *Heidegger for Beginners* sacrifices, among other things, a sense of chronological clarity. One gets a sense of the ideas, but not much regarding the actual historical contexts and development of Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger's philosophy is abstracted from its intellectual-historical context and subjected to a series of idea-explanations. But, as it usually does in these books, history interrupts the comic play of ideas when, at the end of the work, the authors devote two pages, symbolically set against a black background, to the question of Heidegger's Nazism (102-103). As ahistorical and context-denying as these kinds of books tend to be, they are forever compelled to discuss, sometimes in great detail, the history of Heidegger's Nazism. Because of this fateful political decision, Heidegger's work is destined to exist in a contested space, between the lessons of history and the needs of philosophy.

The authors of these books do not all agree on the import of Heidegger's politics. Michael Inwood, author of *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*, suggests that "the

[34] Eric Lemay and Jennifer A. Pitts, *Heidegger for Beginners*, illustrated by Paul Gordon (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1994).

politics are peripheral" (129).[35] Indeed, Inwood's direct, fact-oriented approach to Heidegger's philosophical corpus shies away from the moral dilemmas that Heidegger's Nazism is supposed to represent. On the whole, his is a very readable account, which is written in a personal style that offers a little more philosophical depth than a playful book like *Heidegger for Beginners*, but without simply regurgitating the author of *Being and Time* either. Inwood, as the author of *A Heidegger Dictionary*, was obviously up to the task of writing such a book, as his judicious selection of quotations and his intriguing examples prove.[36] In terms of content, the book is almost wholly devoted to an analysis of Heidegger's magnum opus of 1927. Like most of the other "dummies" books, this one also ignores, with the exception of a few pages devoted to Heidegger's aesthetics, the vast body of work Heidegger produced after abandoning the philosophical project he had outlined in *Being and Time*. Thus, the book may not be as "transparent a window onto Heidegger" as the blurb on its back cover suggests, but, for what it does treat, it remains an engaging introduction nonetheless.[37] Jonathan Rée's *Heidegger* also fails to consider any of Heidegger's works beyond *Being and Time*. But, then again, if you think that the "greatest adventures of twentieth-century thought…may be little more than an incomplete series of footnotes to Heidegger's *Being and Time*" (51), as Rée does, this is perhaps a wise, or at least logical, decision. His introductory book stops where *Being and Time* does.

Heidegger's path of thought after *Being and Time* gets better treatment in some of the other "dummies" books. Patricia Altenbernd Johnson's *On Heidegger*, for example, spends time discussing Heidegger's later remarks on technology and what he came to call

---

[35] Michael Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (1997: Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).
[36] Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999).
[37] From John Shand, *Philosophical Books*.

the task of thinking, which he hoped would someday replace academic philosophy and in the process do away with all of its metaphysical baggage.[38] This is no small feat on Johnson's part, especially considering that the book comes in at under ninety pages and somehow still manages to integrate some of the more important secondary literature devoted to Heidegger. Michael Watt's *Heidegger: A Beginner's Guide* also takes some of Heidegger's later work into consideration, and considers his influence on everything from ecological thinking to biotechnology.[39] Most of all, though, Watts humbly sets himself the task of "locating the middle ground between the highly varied explanations of [Heidegger's] thought" (xi). But finding any common ground when it comes to Heidegger is a tall order. Only the vaguest praise and the most abstract denunciations serve as unifying trends in Heidegger scholarship. Most interpreters are predisposed to admiration or disgust, or, more commonly, a combination of both, but Heidegger's cause has been taken up by so many camps and advanced in so many different directions that keeping track of these factions would require a guidebook of its own.

In the decades since Heidegger's death in 1976, his work has spread, amoeba-like, into discussions about all kinds of topics, from architecture and biotechnology to literary studies and media theory. The American philosopher Marjorie Grene, author of one of the first introductory books in English—*Martin Heidegger* (1957)—has recently lamented (she is no fan of Heidegger, as will shall see) that "Heidegger is by now

---

[38] Patricia Alternbernd Johnson, *On Heidegger*, Wadsworth Philosophers Series (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 2000).

[39] Michael Watt, *Heidegger: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001). Watt's book is proof that the Heidegger "dummies" literature has spawned its own subculture, where authors praise each others' work, provide blurbs, and challenge each other—just like in academia. Included in the book—as a foreword—is a text from another introductory author, Michael Inwood.

immensely influential in the strangest variety of places."[40] To be sure, Grene must be appalled when she comes across titles such as George Myerson's *Heidegger, Habermas and the Mobile Phone*.[41] Although published in the same series as Jeff Collins's *Heidegger and the Nazis* discussed above, Myerson's polemical essay is only nominally part of the "dummies" literature. Instead of offering an entry into the dense thicket of Heidegger's philosophical prose, it juxtaposes, provocatively, the advertising campaigns of cell phone companies with the philosophies of communication and human discourse to be found in Heidegger and Jürgen Habermas. It is, at heart, an earnest plea against cell phone propaganda, which some might view as the absolute zenith of Heidegger's detested "idle chatter". Worried that communication, the stuff of authenticity for Heidegger and the very substance of democracy for Habermas, is being commodified and exploited, that we are witnessing a "metering" (60) of public and private discourse both, Myerson suggests that slowing down, rather than speeding up and commodifying, conversation might better serve democratic society. Instantaneous and universal communication may not, in other words, provide better understanding, but only bigger profits.

Imagining Heidegger on a cell phone is a bit like picturing the Queen of England on a jet ski. One would be hard-pressed, in other words, to find an odder juxtaposition than the one that Myerson proposes. Nevertheless, he is not alone in such an attempt. In the eyes of some today, Heidegger is more relevant than ever, offering the keys to not only technical philosophical quandaries, but also questions regarding cell phone culture,

---

[40] Marjorie Grene, *Martin Heidegger* (New York, Hilary House, 1957). The quotation comes from Marjorie Grene, *A Philosophical Testament* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1995), 69.
[41] George Myerson, *Heidegger, Habermas and the Mobile Phone* (Cambridge: Totem Books, 2001).

computers, and so much more.[42] That Heidegger himself would have detested such a crass application of his ideas is an irony not lost on the authors of the "dummies" literature. Paul Strathern, author of *Heidegger in 90 Minutes*, admits as much. While explaining Heidegger's notion of idle chatter, which he thought was a hallmark of inauthentic existence, Strathern explains, "Not only would Heidegger have seen *this* book as a disaster, but also the fact that you are reading it" (57-58).

Do superficial books demand superficial readings, or even, dare we say it, superficial readers?[43] Heidegger thought so, but we should not agree with him too quickly. Far from it. Idle chatter may indeed be a danger, but serious thinking can pose a threat as well, as Heidegger himself proved. This, however, is not necessarily why the "dummies" books matter. If anything, the "Heidegger for Dummies" phenomenon is important for a different reason; namely, because it goes to the very heart of the American reception of Heidegger's work. From the very beginning, Heidegger's philosophy has always arrived on these shores mediated by others, and these introductory books are but the latest in a long line of texts that have sought to acquaint American audiences with Heidegger by anthologizing, condensing, compressing, editing, explicating, and of course translating his writings.[44] It is in this sense that they call out

---

[42] One of Heidegger's most influential American interlocutors has been Hubert Dreyfus, professor of philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to being a Heidegger scholar, Dreyfus has also been a vocal critic of artificial intelligence, and has authored books on the topic such as *What Computers Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), or, in its updated version, *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992).

[43] The latest entry into the "Heidegger for Dummies" canon is Mark Wrathall's *How to Read Heidegger* (London: Granta, 2005), soon to be published stateside by W.W. Norton. Wrathall's book attempts to sidestep this question by teaching the actual practice of reading, instead of simply summarizing.

[44] After Harper & Row publishers purchased the rights to the English translation of *Being and Time* from the English religious publisher Student Christian Movement Press in 1961 they were bombarded with anthologization requests (which they usually refused since they wanted customers to buy the book itself) by editors compiling one existentialist reader or another. Some of these letters can still be found in the offices of HarperSanFrancisco. I thank John Loudon for making these files available to me.

for closer scrutiny, and not simply as texts but as events as well. Though early interest in Heidegger may have been largely confined to academic circles, the "dummies" books are proof that Heidegger's name has recently slipped into popular discourse. And rather than seeing this development as a rupture, as the breakthrough of idle chatter into profound philosophical reflection, we should view it in terms of continuity instead. In other words, rather than simply accepting—and applying—Heidegger's distinction between idle chatter and authentic thinking, we should try our best to place these texts, and the kind of discourse(s) they represent, in the larger context of international intellectual exchange.

Near the end of *Being There*, Chance, already moving in the circles of the wealthy and the powerful, is approached by publisher Ronald Stiegler, "of," Konsinski tells us, no doubt tongue in cheek, "Eidolon Books." Stiegler offers Chance a lucrative book deal because, as he says, "it would certainly be to the country's advantage to promote your philosophy more widely." Despite Chance's protestations that he "can't write," and that he "can't even read," Stiegler persists.[45] He knows a best-seller when he sees it, and he's ready to champion Chance's ideas. Heidegger's philosophy may not be the stuff of best-seller lists (at least not in the traditional sense), but his work, in addition to being a point of endless contention, has been the beneficiary of a lengthy and wide-ranging promotion in this country, one that historians have hitherto neglected.[46] Heidegger has had any number of Stieglers of his own—both literally and metaphorically—on this side of the Atlantic. This, in part, is their story.

---

[45] Kosinski, *Being There*, 104.

[46] Since its publication in English 1962, *Being in Time*, which has continuously remained in print (and only ever in hardcover), has sold 97,000 copies. I thank Louise Miller of HarperSanFrancisco for providing me with this information.

* * *

This dissertation, a transnational exploration of twentieth-century American thought and culture, traces the ever-changing reception of Heidegger's work on this side of the Atlantic. In the process, it sheds light on both the international dissemination of Heidegger's thought and the unique aspects of its American appropriation. As a work of intellectual history, the following shows how ideas, far from being immutable objects, are in fact always in play within the contexts of their creation and reception. It demonstrates the ways in which texts interact with contexts, the ways in which ideas reflect, as well as affect, their times. In this sense, this dissertation is more than just a mere history of philosophy. Instead of simply following the bouncing ball that is Heidegger's concept of Being as it makes its way to America, we will proceed by exploring the diversity of the reception of his work—by examining, in other words, the construction and reconstruction of many different Heideggers by many different readers. Variously read as, among other things, an ontologist, an existentialist, an antihumanist, a proto-postmodernist, a phenomenologist, a theologian, a reclusive sage, and also as a cultural critic, Heidegger has been appropriated in any number of ways, some of them even contradictory. Recounting the evolutionary development of these many different readings will give us greater insight not so much into Heidegger—a German philosopher who lived from 1889-1976; taught at the universities of Marburg and Freiburg; published one of the most important books of twentieth-century existentialism, *Being and Time*, in 1927; was affiliated for some time with the Nazi regime; and later went on to question the meaning

of Being in any number of intriguing ways that departed from his own earlier work—but into the afterlives of his thinking and the intellectual culture they have so transformed.

We begin with Heidegger's influence as a teacher of philosophy. Although he is known today primarily for the books he wrote during his lifetime, Heidegger's earliest reception in America was predicated as much upon his persona in the lecture hall as by his texts themselves. Chapter one, "Freiburg Bound: The Early Years of American Heidegger Scholarship," recounts the journeys which took Americans to Europe, young Americans like Marjorie Grene, who learned her philosophy "at the feet of Martin Heidegger." Returning to the United States, these students were among the first to introduce Heidegger's unique philosophical perspective to wider American audiences. They were also, as we shall see, among the first to critique it.

Part of the critique that these early Americans leveled against Heidegger was political. Many of them, like Grene, had seen the rise of Nazism up close, and when Heidegger enthusiastically espoused the principles of the budding National Socialist regime, they were quick to find in his philosophical work evidence of a flawed approach, one which might explain his political error.

The role that politics played in the process of coming to terms with Heidegger's influence as a teacher was especially apparent in the writings of some of Heidegger's German-Jewish students who were forced to flee totalitarian Europe in the thirties. Many of these intellectuals, the more famous of whom Richard Wolin has dubbed "Heidegger's Children," went on to enjoy long and respected careers in the United States; among them Hannah Arendt and Herbert Marcuse most notably.[47] But Arendt and Marcuse were by

[47] Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001).

no means the only students of Heidegger to arrive as refugees on these shores. Chapter two, "Exiles and Emissaries: Heidegger's Stepchildren in the United States," follows the careers of four students Wolin does not discuss. Among these individuals, whom I refer to as, after Wolin, "Heidegger's Stepchildren," are, perhaps most famously, the political philosopher Leo Strauss and the Renaissance scholar Paul Oskar Kristeller. Their intellectual engagement with Heidegger's influence is a window onto the famed emigration of Weimar intellectuals to the United States. It is also a fascinating case study of the way in which intellectual transference, far from being confined to books and journals, takes place on an intensely personal level—in this case, via the relationship between student and teacher.

The next chapter, "Nihilism, Nothingness, and God: Heidegger and American Theology," moves on to the influence of Heidegger's writings themselves. In this case, the theological dimension of Heidegger's work made possible some of the earliest engagements with his thought. Insofar as Heidegger was initially appropriated via theological discourses in the United States, he was introduced in a way that current readers of Heidegger might find curious. It is little remembered, for instance, that some of the earliest translations of his texts into English, including even *Being and Time*, were sponsored by religious publishers.

Getting Heidegger translated into English eventually became the solitary task of American philosopher J. Glenn Gray, who handled this business for Harper & Row publishers until his death in 1977. Largely overlooked by philosophers today, Gray was an original and independent interlocutor when it came to all things Heideggerian, and, as we see in chapter four, "An Officer and a Philosopher: J. Glenn Gray and the Postwar

Introduction of Heidegger into American Thought," some of the twists and turns that defined his ever-evolving assessment of the Heideggerian corpus capture in miniature many of the larger issues in American Heidegger scholarship.

As Glenn Gray realized, Heidegger's work, despite its Teutonic pedigree, spoke directly to the American context. Exploring briefly how Heidegger fit into the larger cultural environment of the middle decades of the last century, "*Dasein*, Death, and Dope: Heidegger and the Culture of American Existentialism," the first of two excurses, expands our focus from the heady realm of philosophical in-fighting to the less confined realm of popular culture, where Heidegger has been far from absent. Indeed, Heidegger has at times seemed irrefutably relevant.

Of course, the popular reception—or recognition—of Heidegger was predicated upon a long-term philosophical discussion. Chapter five, "The Continental Divide: Heidegger between the Analytic and Continental Traditions in American Philosophy," situates Heidegger's legacy within the disciplinary history of twentieth-century American philosophy, which was and still remains fractured and divided between competing intellectual traditions. Far from being an external add-on to academic philosophy in this country, Heidegger was in fact a catalyst behind many of the debates that so divided the discipline. A source of consternation for so-called analytic philosophers as much as a veritable holy writ for their counterparts working in what has come to be known as continental philosophy, Heidegger's work has been a key reference point. From between these two traditions, which stem, in part, from his own radical break from traditional academic philosophy, Heidegger has transformed the discipline from afar.

If Heidegger is one of the chief sources for the continental/analytic split in American academic philosophy, recent developments seem to suggest that his work may also prove, in the end, to be a resource for reconciliation. (As Heidegger was found of saying: "where the danger is, so grows the saving powers.") For some, however, Heidegger is not so much the savior of philosophy as the thinker who saves us *from* philosophy. Nobody has been a bigger proponent of this idea than Richard Rorty. Chapter six, "Richard Rorty and the Riddle of the Book that Never Was," reconstructs Rorty's ever-changing interpretation of Heidegger and shows, in the process, how indispensable Heidegger has been for Rorty's neo-pragmatist project. At the heart of Rorty's reading of Heidegger, however, is a mysterious book project. For years, Rorty advertised a forthcoming book on Heidegger; but it never came. Chapter six tries to explain why.

As interesting as Rorty's work is, Heidegger's influence in the United States has not been limited to the ethereal realm of ideas. As a case study in the way in which Heidegger has had a more concrete reception—literally, in this case with regard to the built environment—chapter seven, "Ethics, Architecture, and Heidegger: 'Building Dwelling Thinking' in an American Context," examines Heidegger's presence in recent architectural theory. It demonstrates the ways in which Heidegger's reception has been bound up within larger debates having to do with technology, aesthetics, and even ethics.

These issues all came to the fore after the attacks of September 11th, 2001, in debates about the reconstruction of the World Trade Center site. The architect Daniel Libeskind, who won the original design competition, both drew upon and departed from a Heidegger-inspired architectural discourse. The second excursus, "Daniel Libeskind and

Post-Heideggerian Architecture," outlines Libeskind's unique theoretical perspective, and demonstrates how problematic Heidegger's legacy continues to be today in realms beyond philosophy.

By way of a conclusion, the final chapter, "Scandals Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Heidegger's Place in the Culture Wars," revisits some of the thorny debates surrounding this problematic legacy. Heidegger's place in the culture wars of the eighties and nineties reveals as much about American culture as it does Heidegger's work itself. Because these debates continue to inform our understanding of Heidegger, they show us not only where we have been with him, but also where we might be headed.

CHAPTER 1
Freiburg Bound: The Early Years of American Heidegger Scholarship

Where there is so much smoke there must be a little fire.
—Sidney Hook[1]

Americans have been traveling to Europe for their schooling for a very long time. In the nineteenth century, before American universities even offered advanced degrees that meant something—"graduate or professional training worthy of the name," writes historian Peter Novick, "hardly existed in the United States until the century was well advanced"—eager students of means caught a ship to Europe in order to continue their studies. For most of these individuals, Germany proved the ideal destination. Not only did German Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have *Wissenschaft*, but they were also, as Novick suggests, the places where, unlike Universities in England and France, you could get the most bang for your buck.[2] A German degree from Heidelberg, Leipzig, or Berlin was both more rigorous and more affordable than anything an American could obtain in Paris or across the channel at Oxford or Cambridge—all this and there was plenty of beer, too.

Professional philosophy, which, like professional history (the subject of Novick's work), did not exist in the United States before the late nineteenth century, often took its cues from across the Atlantic. As the premier historian of American philosophy Bruce Kuklick has explained of so-called "collegiate philosophy," a forerunner of its late-nineteenth-century professional counterpart, "the philosophers depended on European thought." This was in stark contrast to American theologians, who were more content to

---

[1] Sidney Hook, "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* 27:6 (March 13, 1930), 154.
[2] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Association* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 22.

rely on local intellectual resources.[3] Even with the rise of pragmatism—that quintessentially American philosophy, as the common wisdom has it—at Harvard near the end of the century, the European shadow continued to fall over American philosophical discourse.[4] But this was a shadow cast primarily by historical figures: by the more or less familiar names associated with the Scottish Enlightenment; by Kant, by Hegel, and the rest.

As the nineteenth century progressed into the twentieth, those philosophers who looked to Europe for insight or inspiration did not have to limit their studies to the mighty dead, for they could now find living philosophers who would satisfy their needs. And, by the same token, Americans, such as William James, the ambassador of pragmatism until his death in 1910, had something to offer the Europeans.[5] The interwar years especially saw a noticeable increase in transatlantic philosophical exchange, and Heidegger, though he was only a junior faculty member in the twenties, attracted his own fair share of attention. Indeed, by 1927, when he published *Sein und Zeit* (in order, essentially, to have a shot at tenure), Heidegger was lecturing not only to an increasingly large group of German students, but to a coterie of international ones as well. In the years following he taught figures as disparate as the ethicist Emmanuel Levinas and the political philosopher

---

[3] Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720-2000* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 2001), 58.

[4] See Bruce Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860-1930* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977). In realms other than professional philosophy, it is less true that there was a "shadow" cast by Europe. As historians James Kloppenberg and Daniel T. Rodgers have shown, this period was marked by a profound transatlantic dialogue when it came to social-theoretical thinking.

[5] The classic works on this era of transatlantic cross-fertilization are James T. Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) and, more recently, Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Belknap, 1998).

Michael Oakeshott, as students flocked to Freiburg from the far corners of the globe in steady procession.[6]

* * *

Marjorie Glicksman was one of those students. The precocious young student who would later emerge as one of the most important American philosophers of her time (under her married name of Grene), read *Sein und Zeit* in the summer of 1931, as she sailed across the Atlantic. Grene was making her way back to the United States after a semester spent as an exchange student in Freiburg, where, as she recounted it recently, she learned her philosophy "at the feet of Martin Heidegger."[7]

Marjorie Grene has made a name for herself in any number of philosophical subfields. She has written numerous books on topics and figures as diverse as Aristotle, the philosophy of science, Descartes, and phenomenology. She is very much her own philosopher and is held in high esteem by her colleagues, but few of them today are familiar with her early studies. Those who know only of Grene's pioneering work in the philosophy of biology, or her many contributions to the history of philosophy, might find curious her early Heideggerian moment.[8] Indeed, she didn't stay under the Heideggerian spell for long; whatever she gathered from Heidegger's lectures or from reading *Sein und Zeit* was not enough to assure her allegiance. In fact, by the time that she got around to

---

[6] On Levinas's time studying with Heidegger, see Sam Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005), 8-9; on Oakeshott and Heidegger, see Luke O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003).

[7] Marjorie Grene, "An Intellectual Autobiography," in Randall E. Auxier and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds., *The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois, 2002), 4.

[8] See, for example, Marjorie Grene and David Depew, *The Philosophy of Biology: An Episodic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

writing about his philosophy almost two decades later—in books like *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism* (1948), and *Martin Heidegger* (1957)—it was clear that she had serious questions about both him and his philosophy.[9] But it is also clear that she had absorbed from Heidegger more than she perhaps would care to admit. Insofar as she has spent most of her career—at ninety-five she is still Honorary Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Virginia Tech—searching, like Heidegger, "for some alternative to the Cartesian starting point in philosophy," Grene has been to some extent bound by her Freiburg education.[10] Whether trudging through the thicket of existentialism, paving pathways in the philosophy of biology, or delving into evolutionary theory, Grene has been consistently spiraling around one central question, what she describes as her "old puzzle about the *cogito*."[11] How can we talk about consciousness and existence without resorting to Descartes's simplistic, mechanistic terminology, which posits an irreconcilable divide between subject and object? It may indeed be a peculiarly Heideggerian puzzle that Grene has spent the majority of her career trying to solve, but she long ago abandoned the idea that Heidegger had any viable solutions to it. "I do not intend," she wrote to a perhaps too-pushy graduate student not so long ago, "to waste any time in my final years in dealing with Heidegger."[12]

---

[9] Marjorie Grene, *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) [later reprinted as *An Introduction to Existentialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959)]; and *Martin Heidegger* (New York: Hillary House, 1957).
[10] Marjorie Grene, "An Intellectual Biography," *The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene*, 12. On Heidegger's critique of Descartes, see Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).
[11] Ibid., 25.
[12] Email correspondence to author, 6 November 2003.

Western Civilization's Wasteland

It was never clear that Heidegger had any interest in his American students, like Grene, either. Certainly, he had no positive interest in the land from whence they came. Heidegger never visited the United States; actually, aside from a few trips to Greece during his twilight years, he never ventured very far from the region in southwestern Germany where he was born and raised. For a philosopher who once suggested that "thinking itself belongs to dwelling," it is safe to say that Heidegger's rootedness in the lands in and around Freiburg, where he studied and eventually taught for the majority of his life, left an indelible mark upon his thought.[13] One does not have to be a geographical determinist to see that Heidegger's philosophical work has its origins in a very specific context, one not necessarily known for its cosmopolitanism. For this reason, it is all the more surprising that these texts have enjoyed such a wide-ranging, global reception.

No part of the world has remained immune to some kind of Heideggerian reception. Within Europe, distinct Heideggerian lineages can be traced in France, Italy, Scandinavia, and what is today the Czech Republic, lineages which often lead back to a founding figure, or group of figures, who sat in on Heidegger's Freiburg lectures, or even, if they were lucky enough, participated in his more intimate—and more exclusive—seminars. The French have proven the most persistent readers of Heidegger, and scholars are finally recounting his reception across the Rhine in some detail, uncovering the ways by which figures as varied as Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean Beaufret, Michel Foucault, Jan-Luc Marion, and Jacques Derrida, to name only a

[13] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 362. See also the telling and more revealing "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?" from 1934. This text can be found in Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981): 27-30.

few prominent intellectuals (and who represent a much broader cultural current), drew upon Heidegger's work.[14] The Italians, like the French, have put Heidegger's critique of traditional philosophy toward generally leftist political use. From the pioneering works of philosophers such as Luigi Pareyson to the current interventions of philosopher and elected European Union education official Gianni Vattimo, a student of Pareyson's, Heidegger has percolated into many an Italian philosophical and cultural debate.[15] Indeed, Heidegger figures prominently in the work of another politically vocal Italian, Giorgio Agamben, whose philosophically-informed cultural criticism has received so much attention recently.[16] In Scandinavia, as we will see later, the work of the Norwegians Arne Naess, the founder of the "deep ecology" movement, and Christian Norberg-Schulz, a noted architectural theorist, would have been unthinkable without Heidegger. And in the Czech Republic, Heidegger was even read as a critic of Soviet totalitarianism by the philosopher and activist Jan Patočka, whose teachings inspired, among others, a young Vaclav Havel.[17]

Beyond Europe, Heidegger has seeped into intellectual and cultural debate from Tokyo to Buenos Aires, melding with local currents to produce unique intellectual amalgamations. In Japan, where Heidegger's work enjoyed a very early reception, especially via the Kyoto School, Heidegger was read in conjunction with the Buddhist

---

[14] On the French reception of Heidegger, see Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France* 2 Volumes (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001); Ethan Kleinberg, *Generation Existential: Heidegger's Philosophy in France, 1927-1961* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005); and Tom Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy: Humanism, Antihumanism, and Being* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[15] On Heidegger's Italian reception, see Marco M. Olivetti, ed., *La recezione italiana di Heidegger* (Padova: Cedam, 1989).

[16] Agamben in fact studied with Heidegger in France, when, near the end of his life, Heidegger held seminars in the town of Le Thor. See Daniel Morris, "Life, or Something Like It: The Philosophical Chiascuro of Giorgio Agamben," *Bookforum* (Summer 2004): 12-15.

[17] On Heidegger in Prague, see Aviezer Tucker, "Vaclav Havel's Heideggerianism," *Telos* 85 (Fall 1990): 63-78. See also Tucker's *The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence from Patočka to Havel* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

tradition.[18] Across Latin America, Heidegger's historicism, as the philosopher Enrique Dussel has explained, was an important, if odd, way-station in the development of a specifically Latin-Americanist philosophical discourse.[19] Even in Middle Eastern nations such as Iran there is evidence of an influential reception of Heidegger, one that picked up on and exploited, among other things, his anti-modern and decisionistic philosophical worldview.[20]

Amongst these international disseminations of Heideggerian thought, the case of the United States stands out as unique for the simple reason that America—or more specifically, "Americanism"—was itself a recurring theme in Heidegger's own work. No other nation or national culture (aside from Germany) received as much attention, was

---

[18] See James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2001). As Graham Parkes explains in the preface to his translation of Reinhard May's *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work* [trans., with a complementary essay by Graham Parkes (New York: Routledge, 1996)], Heidegger's reception in East Asia has been perhaps the most extensive in the world: "It is a telling and little-known fact that the first substantive commentary on Heidegger's philosophy (aside from a few brief reviews) was published in Japan, in 1924. The first book-length study of Heidegger to appear was written by a Japanese philosopher and published in 1933. It is sometimes claimed—maybe correctly, though verification would be impossibly onerous—that there is more secondary literature on Heidegger published in Japanese than in any other language. At any rate, Japan leads the field in translations of *Sein und Zeit*: the first Japanese version appeared in 1939 (twenty-three years before the translation into English), and was followed by no fewer than five further translations in the subsequent three decades" (ix-x). Parkes goes on to demonstrate the depth of the interest in Heidegger beyond Japan by noting that even China, Korea, and Thailand harbor pockets of Heideggerian scholarship. "Heidegger appears," he concludes, "to be *the* modern philosopher who is most read and discussed throughout Asia" (x). Equally interesting is the fact that this reception was not unidirectional. In fact, as May and Parkes both show, Heidegger adopted insights from Eastern traditions in his own work, setting up, as it were, a kind of mutual intellectual exchange, though each side used the other for their own, not always compatible, agendas. See Graham Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

[19] See Dussel, "Philosophy in Latin America in the Twentieth Century: Problems and Currents," in Eduardo Mendieta, ed., *Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2003), 11-56, especially 16-19. For more on Dussel's own relation to Heidegger's work, see the introduction by Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta to the volume of critical essays they edited entitled *Thinking from the Underside of History: Enrique Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), especially 20 and 22.

[20] See Janet Afary, "Shi'i Narratives of Karbalâ and Christian Rites of Penance: Michel Foucault and the Culture of the Iranian Revolution, 1978-1979," *Radical History Review* 86 (Spring 2003): 7-35, especially 24-25, 29. For more on the Iranian reception of western philosophy in general, and Heidegger in particular, see the works listed on page 34, note 55. See also Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

subjected to as much persistent criticism in his writings as the United States. He even went so far as to denounce one of his colleagues, Eduard Baumgarten, who had spent time teaching at the University of Wisconsin and was an expert on pragmatism, for having been "Americanized"—an inexcusable development that, in the context of the thirties, called into question, or so Heidegger suggested, Baumgarten's political allegiances.[21]

For Heidegger, America and Americanism represented the very nadir of modern life. A constant point of reference throughout his philosophical career, before his Nazi period as much as during, America represented, in Heidegger's philosophical landscape, the wasteland of modernity. As with most of his other grand pronouncements, this appraisal had at least a cursory philosophical basis, but his ultimate conclusions regarding all things American were rarely what we might label as philosophy today.

Heidegger was fond of quoting Nietzsche, who said, enigmatically, that "the wasteland grows". Heidegger spent some time pondering this phrase in a series of lectures delivered in 1951-1952. The lectures were noteworthy not only because they were later collected into a book that was among the first of Heidegger's works to be translated into English, under the title *What is Called Thinking?* (1968), but because they were also Heidegger's first since the end of the Second World War, after which he had been stripped of his right to teach by the ruling of a French-led denazification committee.[22] Addressing an audience with fresh memories of the cataclysm of total war, Heidegger began his gloss of "the wasteland grows" by distinguishing between

---

[21] Heidegger's notorious letter denouncing Baumgarten, which was politically motivated, is discussed in Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, 209-211.

[22] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. and introduction by J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

devastation and destruction. The former, he argued, was more pernicious than the latter, because in addition to destroying it also "blocks all future growth." He went on:

> The African Sahara is only one kind of wasteland. The devastation of the earth can go hand in hand with a guaranteed supreme living standard for man, and just as easily with the establishment of a uniform state of happiness for all men.[23]

In this sense, as Heidegger suggested to his audience, the wasteland is not so much a place as it is a cultural, intellectual, or spiritual condition. But if we read these lines carefully, we can see that Heidegger does in fact have a specific place in mind when, following Nietzsche, he speaks of the wasteland. If the African Sahara is one kind of wasteland—an actual desert—then the land with "a guaranteed supreme living standard" and a "uniform state of happiness" must represent the other, more pernicious kind. But where? Some might suggest that this passage offers a critique of Soviet communism, but echoes of "the pursuit of happiness" seem to point the barb in the other direction, toward the land across the Atlantic.

Before the war, Heidegger was adamant that American capitalism and Russian communism posed the same threat to the German people. In another famous lecture course, also among the first of Heidegger's works to be translated into English, as *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1959), Heidegger even went so far as to say that "from a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same; the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man."[24] Germany

---

[23] Ibid., 29, 30.

[24] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), 37. It is worth commenting on the publication history of this lecture course, for it is a history with important intellectual consequences. A very young Jürgen Habermas took exception Heidegger's decision to publish this 1935 lectures without deleting, or at least clarifying, some remarks made about "the inner truth and greatness" of National Socialism (this was 1953), and his critical review of the book thus inaugurated a career-long fight against the specter of totalitarianism. See Martin Beck Matuštík, *Jürgen Habermas: A Philosophical-Political Profile* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 12-17. A

was a nation "caught in a pincers," facing threats from all sides; but it was also a nation, Heidegger thought, that was called upon to rescue "the West" from "the spiritual decline of the earth."[25] Because passages such as this are scattered throughout it, scholars have begun to read *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, as a kind of geopolitical manifesto, and rightly so.[26] Although always engaged with the great thinkers of the philosophical tradition, Heidegger did not refrain from couching his thinking in the language of military struggle, especially in the years leading up to, and during, the Second World War. Key to this struggle was the defense of the German *Heimat*, which represented rootedness in the very soil and history of Germany.

Heidegger perceived the United States, and American culture in particular, as a grave threat to Germany. The political scientist James Ceaser has explored the central components of this threat, and how they shifted and reconfigured within Heidegger's larger philosophical project over the course of his career. In his book *Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought*, Ceaser devotes a whole chapter to Heidegger's vision(s) of America. Tellingly, the chapter is entitled "*Katastrophenhaft*:

---

translation of Habermas's review can be found in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 186-197. Also, and lastly, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* has recently appeared in a new translation by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000).

[25] Ibid., 38.

[26] See, for example, Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's Philosophical Geopolitics in the Third Reich," in Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, *A Companion to Heidegger's* Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), especially page 247, where he suggests that a good article or two on the subject of Heidegger's critique of America—"Heidegger meets the Ugly Amerikaner"—needs to be written. See also Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003); Domenico Losurdo, "Heidegger and Hitler's War," in Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis, eds., *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992), 141-164, as well as *Heidegger and the Ideology of War*, trans. Marella and Jon Morris (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2001). Other important works on Heidegger and America that look at *An Introduction to Metaphysics* include Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Heideggers Amerika als Ursprungsort der Weltverdüsterung," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 45:4 (1997): 599-617; and Peter Bergmann, "Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Americanization of Defeat," *International Studies in Philosophy* 27:3 (1995): 73-84

Martin Heidegger's America.[27] The chapter fits Ceaser's historical narrative well, for Heidegger, like the other authors he considers (everyone from "Hegel to Heidegger" in Germany and "Buffon to Baudrillard" in France), sees America primarily as a symbol of degeneracy.[28] "Martin Heidegger," he writes, "has sought to provide the modern world with a new language and poetry in which America has become the preeminent symbol of despair."[29] In Ceaser's opinion, Heidegger is most guilty amongst twentieth-century European intellectuals for equating all things American with "desolation, horror, and homelessness."[30] America, in Heidegger's eyes, was the "ultimate symbol of crisis," nothing other than a technological Moloch, without roots in tradition, history, or any other kind of soil.[31] In America, calculation, crass consumerism, science, technology—all these reigned supreme, to the spiritual detriment of the West. In this sense, America represented for Heidegger the final stage of European decline; his was a theory of history as bleak as Spengler's, and just as open to political abuse.

Since Heidegger's understanding of America was not based on any empirical, historical, or specific cultural observations, it proved little more than a rhetorical tool in his writings. The symbol of America served as a kind of metaphysical stand-in, a representation or shorthand example of modernism and technology run amok. And while we can trace the use of this rhetorical ploy back to the period during which Heidegger stood closest to Nazism, it would be wrong to reduce these remarks to simple wartime

---

[27] James Ceaser, "*Katastrophenhaft*: Martin Heidegger's America," in *Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), 187-213. Ceaser, a Straussian, has what might be called a nationalist agenda. For a critique of the book, see Richard Rorty, "Marxists, Straussians, and Pragmatists," *Raritan* XVIII:2 (Fall 1998): 128-136.
[28] Ibid., 1.
[29] Ibid., 213.
[30] Ibid., 187.
[31] Ibid.

propaganda, or, as Ceaser warns, "to a fit of anti-Americanism."[32] Indeed, as intellectual historian Michael Ermarth has demonstrated, Heidegger's preoccupation with American degeneracy "loomed larger and more luridly in the period *after* his avowedly Nazi period," during which he was the Nazi rector of Freiburg.[33] (It must be noted, however, that recently published evidence continues to suggest that Heidegger's private sympathies for the Nazi movement continued long after his resignation from the rectorship of the University in 1934.[34])

From about 1933 to 1945, as intellectual historian Charles Bambach has recently shown, Heidegger thought extensively about roots.[35] In a sense, it was his way of appropriating and altering the national socialist discourse of blood and soil (*Blut und Boden*).[36] And while examples of this kind of roots-talk can be drawn from across the political spectrum during these years (with the French philosopher Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* being just one example from the other end of the political debate), every piece of evidence suggests that Heidegger thought of himself as somebody who might put Nazism on a properly philosophical foundation with such reflections.[37] To do so, Heidegger of course needed a villainous counter-example, which he found in the United

---

[32] Ibid., 187. See also Klaus Schwabe, "Anti-Americanism within the German Right, 1917-1933," *Amerikastudien* 21:1 (1976): 89-107.
[33] Michael Ermarth, "Heidegger and Americanism: *Ruinanz* and the End of Modernity," *Modernism / Modernity* 7:3 (2000): 379-400.
[34] The most pointed argument along these lines has been made by Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie: Autour des seminaries inédits de 1933-1935* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).
[35] Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003).
[36] Although critical of "crass" biological racism, Heidegger did fall back upon explicitly racist tropes when lecturing on the concept of the *Volk* during these years. For more on this topic, see, amongst other works, Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger's alleged challenge to Nazi concepts of race," in James Faulconer and Mark A. Wrathall, eds., *Appropriating Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); and Hugh Eakin, "Out of Freiburg, into the Fire," *Lingua Franca* 11:8 (September 2001): 9-11.
[37] Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind*, trans., Arthur Wills, preface by T.S. Eliot (New York: Putnam, 1952). Revealingly, when the book was first published, posthumously, in 1949, it was entitled "*L'enracinment*."

States. America, as the home of technology, capitalism, and boundless humanism, was surely sandy soil in which to sink any roots; thus its threat to the West. America was too new. Only a historically and philosophically grounded movement such as National Socialism could stand up to the threat that it posed.

Without knowing it, Heidegger was in fact tapping into an age-old discourse of new-world phantasmagoria, the low points of which Ceaser returns to again and again.[38] But to say that the new world is nothing but the projected fantasies of the old is to simplify matters, and it would suggest that Heidegger's vision of America was stagnant and unchanging. In fact, the symbol of America in Heidegger's thought does undergo slight modifications after 1945. As the United States spread its capitalist and technological influence across the globe in these years, and especially as Germany came to be portioned off by the dueling superpowers, Heidegger came to emphasize, for example, how local tradition and culture were in threat of eradication, how history and regionalism were being sacrificed on the altar of progress and accumulation; and how, most of all, nuclear technology threatened humanity and the natural environment both.[39] If before the war America represented only crass consumerism (Hollywood) and soulless individualism, then after the war America was the more dangerous embodiment of the

---

[38] See, for example, C. Vann Woodward, *The Old World's New World* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991); and Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900*, revised and enlarged edition, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 1973).

[39] On American global ambitions during this time, see John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and, for a different perspective, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003). For Heidegger's remarks during this time, see "Only a God Can Save Us," the interview he granted to the German weekly *Der Spiegel* in 1966 on the condition that it would be published posthumously, which it was, in 1976. An English translation of the text can be found in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 91-116.

technological will to power itself. Whatever it was, however, America's rise ensured that the wasteland would grow.

New-World Philosophers, Old-World Philosophies

So when American students began trickling into Freiburg, Heidegger was already quite convinced that the nation from whence they came represented everything that was wrong with the modern world, which may explain why brash American students, such as the fast-talking, Lower-East-Side-born Paul Weiss, who eventually went on to achieve notoriety as Yale's resident metaphysician, were unable to penetrate the outer defenses of Heidegger's student-confidants. American students were suspect from the beginning and had to be more or less screened before they could even glimpse the hallowed inner sanctum of the seminar room.

In fact, only a handful of Americans studied with Heidegger before the Second World War. By and large they, unlike those who would follow in their footsteps after the war, were not impressed. Weiss passed through Freiburg on a post-doctoral Sears Traveling Fellowship during the 1929-1930 academic year, and he failed to pick up much from Heidegger's lectures. Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss, both of whom Weiss had met in Berlin, had urged him to attend Heidegger's courses, but the experience was fruitless: "Heidegger raised suspicions in me of an undefined nature," he later confessed, "but not apparently in the members of his large audience."[40] Weiss was unmoved by the young

[40] Paul Weiss, "Lost in Thought: Alone with Others," *The Philosophy of Paul Weiss*, Library of Living Philosophers Volume XXIII, edited by Lewis E. Hahn (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 13. In 1946 Weiss, who had studied with Morris R. Cohen at City College and then Whitehead at Harvard, became the first Jewish professor to be employed by Yale, a fact that should put the rise of anti-Semitism in

philosopher who was rapidly becoming not just the talk of the town, but all of Germany. "He did not seem to me to be searching for truth," Weiss recalled, "but mainly for approval. I learned more from our visits to cathedrals, museums, by going on trips to the Black Forest with students, reading German novels, poetry, and philosophy, and from conversations with others our age."[41]

Sidney Hook, who heard of Heidegger's lectures secondhand, echoed this sentiment. While studying in Munich and then Berlin, which he described in a postcard to his parents as a "cleaner and more intelligent New York," Hook voraciously consumed as much German philosophy as he could.[42] He had received a Guggenheim Fellowship to conduct research on "post-Hegelian philosophy," a polite cover, perhaps, to further explore the Marxism that so fascinated him at the time, but it did give him the opportunity to confront contemporary German thought in all its various manifestations.[43] In "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," a rollicking report he penned for the *Journal of Philosophy* in 1930, Hook began by offering his American readers an intimate glimpse into the grand old world of German idealism, which he did not hesitate to lampoon. "It does seem to be true," he wrote, "that although a great many things grow old and cold in German thought, nothing really dies."[44] German academic philosophy was by his estimation too tethered to both metaphysics and idealism, to say

---

German universities into troubling perspective. For more, see Bruce Kuklick, "Philosophy at Yale in the Century after Darwin," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21: 3 (July 2004), 323; and David Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), especially 8, 10.

[41] Ibid. It is worth noting that Heidegger is never referenced in Weiss's enormous consideration of ontology, *Modes of Being* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois UP, 1958). I find this omission telling.

[42] Quoted in Christopher Phelps, *Young Sidney Hook: Marxist and Pragmatist* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997), 46.

[43] See Hook's memoir, *Out of Step: A Unique Life in the 20th Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 102.

[44] Sidney Hook, "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," 144.

nothing of theology. The lecturer's podium seemed all too often a modified version of "the pulpit," he thought: "the students are talked at, thundered at, supplicated or entertained, never invited to raise difficulties."[45] Like preachers agonizing over the fate of their congregants' souls, philosophy professors in Germany put on powerful, captivating performances, which were rhetorical masterpieces. Intellectually, however, Hook found all of it horribly backward-looking. Real inquiry was happening not in German philosophy departments, but elsewhere:

> Ought an American student spend at least a year in Germany if he can? By all means. His life will be richer by several dimensions if he does. One thing, however, he may be assured of in advance. For one matured in the analytic tradition of American and English philosophy, there is more genuine philosophy to be learned from Germany's scientists, jurists, psychologists, and sociologists than—with few exceptions—from her philosophers.[46]

Among the "few exceptions" was the phenomenology being developed by Husserl and the groundbreaking work of Husserl's own pupil, Martin Heidegger.

Sein und Zeit may have left the "philosophical world gasping," but Hook was suspicious from the outset.[47] No doubt the mystique of the philosophical outsider, "disdaining the conversation of his brother philosophers" for rural simplicity, where "he wanders out into the fields to talk to peasants about life, death, and God" seemed a little overdone. Was all this just a kind of philosophical play-acting, the latest variant of the philosopher as lecture-hall personality? Reading *Sein und Zeit*, Hook was not sure:

> His book is such a jungle of arbitrarily-invented technical terms, that only the natural belief that where there is so much smoke there must be a little fire, keeps the reader at the grueling task of trying to make sense out of its pages. It is an open question, then, whether Heidegger really is an

---

[45] Ibid., 150.
[46] Ibid., 151.
[47] Ibid., 153.

> exception to the type of philosopher referred to before. But he is too much talked about to be omitted in this account.[48]

Horace Friess, professor of philosophy at Columbia, reached a similar conclusion. He thought that *Sein und Zeit* outdid "all records hitherto made in German philosophy for idiosyncrasies of expression. (And that, of course, is quite a technical achievement.)"[49] Although he bemoaned Heidegger's "torturing verbiage," too, he saw definite potential in his project. It was certainly possible, Friess thought, that Heidegger's work might eventually bring about a fruitful "reconstruction of German philosophy."[50] Only time would tell.

It was Heidegger's reconstruction of philosophy that initially appealed to American readers, for it seemed to echo pragmatist concerns. Like pragmatism, it seemed to offer a clear break from the timeless quandaries of the tradition via an examination of praxis, of facticity. Hook, for one, saw important and revealing parallels between the analysis of existence that Heidegger outlines in the first half of *Sein und Zeit* and Dewey's work; enough of a parallel, anyway, to convince Dewey himself that one existed.[51] When Hook, upon returning to New York in 1929, summarized *Sein und Zeit* for Dewey, Dewey reportedly responded by saying that the book sounded like some of his own work translated into "transcendental German."[52] But Hook did not think that

---

[48] Ibid., 154.
[49] Horace L. Friess, "The Progress of German Philosophy in the Last Hundred Years," *Journal of Philosophy* 27:15 (July, 1930), 412.
[50] Ibid., 413.
[51] On the notion of a reconstruction of philosophy, see Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920). Of course, Heidegger's *Destruktion* of the philosophical tradition and Dewey's reconstruction followed rather different trajectories. Dewey, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, offered what historian Robert Westbrook calls "a social history of ideas," something that, despite all his talk of history, has no direct parallel in Heidegger's work. See Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), 148.
[52] Sidney Hook, "Some Memories of John Dewey," *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 103. On Hook and Heidegger, see also John Patrick Diggins, "The Man Who Knew Too Much," *The New Republic* 203:23 (December 3, 1990).

Heidegger was the "bridge from American to German philosophy" for which some may have been hoping.[53] Like Dewey, Heidegger did offer an existential theory of meaning, one embodied in practical dealings with the world, but it was couched in a language that still smacked of the transcendental and metaphysical—theological even—baggage of traditional German thought. (Marjorie Grene would later say that, far from mirroring the "new-world buoyancy of pragmatism," which believed that it could build "a better world by sheer force of common sense," Heidegger's notion of facticity was rooted in a "deeply European sense of historical dependence, of entanglement."[54]) Heidegger's *Dasein*, to Hook, was less an organism coping with its environment, as pragmatism's resolutely post-Darwinian perspective would have it, than a "lost soul" drowning in "metaphysical guilt."[55] Ultimately, he concluded, Heidegger was "really asking theological questions," not philosophical ones. Despite all his attempts to break free from it, Heidegger simply replicated the sins of German idealism, or, as Dewey put it, German transcendentalism. Heidegger remained trapped in the very tradition he had attempted to overcome. In this he was far from unique. "A disguised metaphysical theology," Hook wrote, "has been the bane of the whole history of German idealism from Kant to Heidegger."[56]

Hook's militant allegiance to Dewey, which later earned him the nickname "Dewey's bulldog," may have worked against any easy appropriation of Heidegger, but

---

[53] Hook, "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," 155. Almost a decade later, the philosopher Walter H. Cerf used precisely this kind of language in a paper delivered to the Philosophical Seminar at Princeton. In attempting "to build a bridge from Anglo-Saxon empiricism to Heidegger's existential analysis," Cerf began by suggesting that Heidegger's work bore a strong resemblance to pragmatism. "James and Heidegger," he said, "are on the same road," even though one relied upon empiricism and the other ontology. The paper, which sought to reconcile these approaches, was published as "An Approach to Heidegger's Ontology," in Farber's *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1:2 (December, 1940):177-190; quotations from 178.

[54] Marjorie Grene, *Heidegger* (New York: Hillary House, 1957), 22.

[55] Hook, "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," 155. For Dewey's analysis of philosophy after Darwin, see his *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910).

[56] Ibid., 156.

hesitation regarding Heidegger was shared by others.[57] John Wild, for example, somebody who would later do so much to introduce continental thought to American philosophical discourse (a topic to which we will return in later chapters), did not seem to take away anything tangible from his initial exposure to Heidegger. He spent the 1930-31 academic year studying in Freiburg and even took part in Heidegger's seminar on Aristotle, but there is no evidence to suggest that this experience affected his thinking at the time in any tangible way. It was only when he returned to Europe some two and a half decades later that he really began to tout the importance of works like *Sein und Zeit*.[58] It took a long time, in other words, for Heidegger's philosophical importance to fully sink in.

Even Americans who were more inclined to find something of value in the venerable traditions of German philosophy than either Hook or, in his younger days, Wild, were unsure of Heidegger's contributions to contemporary philosophy in the beginning. Buffalo, New York-born Marvin Farber, for example, largely steered clear of Heidegger. Farber was perhaps the first American to come into contact with Heidegger's thought, having attended his lectures as early as 1923, but his allegiances remained with Husserl, whose work initially lured him to Germany. Unlike so many other students at the time, he would not be wooed away by Heidegger's charismatic lectures. Heidegger's philosophical charm was, to put it simply, lost on him. And when Heidegger eventually became a Nazi, Farber did not hesitate to place the blame for his political mistake on the mantle of his rhetorically rich philosophy.

---

[57] For more on Hook and the legacy of pragmatism, see Matthew J. Cotter, ed., *Sidney Hook Reconsidered*, afterword by Richard Rorty (Amherst: New York: Prometheus Books, 2004).
[58] James M. Edie, "Phenomenology in the United States," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 5:3 (October 1974), 200.

Farber, who almost single-handedly introduced phenomenology to the United States, often through the pages of his influential journal *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (on whose editorial board Wild for many years served), was never able to see anything positive in Heidegger.[59] No matter that many considered Heidegger to be Husserl's heir apparent; Farber remained suspicious of him throughout his career. When news of Heidegger's support for Hitler circulated through the émigré community, with which Farber naturally had close ties, it only hardened Farber's stance. For Husserl he had always had immense respect, and Heidegger's mistreatment of him during this period was, in Farber's eyes, simply unforgivable.[60] Farber consistently defended Husserl's honor from this point forward. In a 1950 essay that gave an overview of the contemporary American philosophical scene, for example, Farber ridiculed the idea that Heidegger broke any new ground in philosophy. In his opinion, it was Husserl, his mistreated mentor, who remained the truly original thinker. "It is quaint, even amusing," he wrote, "to hear the tall claims made for Heidegger's originality in recognizing 'the problem of existence.'"[61] Husserl, he thought, had said it all before, and

---

[59] For more information on Farber's life and work, see the entry by Peter H. Hare in John A. Garranty and Mark C. Carnes, general editors, *American National Biography*, Volume 7 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 707-710. One could go so far as to suggest that phenomenology is in fact as much American as it is German. After all, the International Phenomenological Society, out of which *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* sprang, was founded at the New School for Social Research in 1939. Farber was a key figure in this appropriation of Husserl's *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phenomenologische Forschung* after the Nazis shut it down in Germany.

[60] As evidence of Faber's devotion to the Husserlian project, see his *The Foundation of Phenomenology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1943), and, before that, the volume he edited in honor of Husserl: *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1940). Detailing just what exactly Farber knew about Heidegger's Nazism, and when he knew it, awaits a full examination of his papers, which are currently housed at the University of Buffalo. Clearly, this was a topic much-discussed by Farber, as his correspondence with philosophers such as Dagobert Runes and Fritz Kaufmann suggests. I thank Peter Hare for summarizing some of this material for me from afar.

[61] Marvin Farber, "Descriptive Philosophy and the Nature of Human Existence," in Farber, ed., *Philosophic Thought in France and the United States: Essays Representing Major Trends in Contemporary French and American Philosophy* (Buffalo, New York: University of Buffalo Publications in Philosophy, 1950), 425.

better. But because Heidegger had proven so influential around the globe, especially in France and Latin America, he had to be confronted.

From the beginning, the pages of *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* were filled with such confrontations. Here philosophers from around the world met Heidegger's supposedly "irrational" philosophy head-on. As émigré philosopher—and former Husserl student—Fritz Kaufmann put it in an essay for the journal in early 1941, "we cannot *escape* the problems of irrationalism by defaming it; we can only try to *master* them by doing justice to it and to its motives." Undeniably, there were "faults of the man that are reflected in faults of his thought," but the philosopher's task was to critique Heidegger, not ignore him. "The pain of the wound that Heidegger inflicted upon us," was great, but it could not be allowed to overwhelm the philosophical task at hand.[62]

Following Kaufmann, Farber's critique of Heidegger was, in this sense, an attempt to stem the tide of his influence—an influence which seemed only "to advance irrationalism." But if Kaufmann was more willing to patiently sift through Heidegger's work itself, Farber was always ready to point out that, no matter how compelling, it had disastrous consequences. Heidegger's irrationalism, he stressed, was by no means harmless: "the evil effects of the undermining of confidence in reason in Nazi Germany" were, from his postwar perspective, all too apparent.[63] Heidegger's philosophy of existence was not a rigorous science but an anti-philosophy which played right into the

---

[62] Fritz Kaufmann, "Concerning Kraft's 'Philosophy of Existence'," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1:3 (March, 1941), 362, 359. Kaufmann's essay was a response to Julius Kraft's "The Philosophy of Existence: Its Structure and Significance," in the same issue, pages 339-358. Compare W.H. Werkmeister's "An Introduction to Heidegger's 'Existential Philosophy'," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 2:1 (September 1941): 79-87.

[63] Farber, "Descriptive Philosophy and the Nature of Human Existence," 426, 427.

hands of the propagandists. Some commentators tried to draw a line between the politics and the philosophy. For example, émigré philosopher, and former Heidegger student Werner Brock, while in exile in England, unbelievably suggested that Heidegger's writings "can and should be considered and appreciated independently of any question of politics in which Professor Heidegger was involved during the early period of the Nazi regime."[64] But this may have been because Heidegger actually helped Brock to secure a position abroad when anti-Semitic legislation prevented him from continuing to serve as Heidegger's assistant.[65] In any case, it was a position with which Farber obviously did not agree.[66] And he was not alone.

Doubts and Betrayals

Whether it was just wishful thinking or something he truly and honestly believed, Farber, in 1950, said that it was unlikely "that an effete subjectivism or an idealism masquerading as a philosophy of human existence will gain much headway in America."[67] Philosophers who, after Heidegger, espoused such positions were destined for irrelevancy. At the time, this was a reasonable prediction. Other early commentators were saying pretty much the same thing. Farber drew upon the work of a number of different figures to shore up his philosophical opposition to what he deemed Heidegger's irrational, idealist, subjectivism. Georg Lukács, who was in the process of completing

---

[64] Werner Brock, "Prefatory Note," in Heidegger, *Existence and Being* ed. Werner Brock (London: Routledge, 1949), 16. See also Brock's influential *An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1935).
[65] On Heidegger's connections to Brock, see Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Harper Collins, 1993), 187, 190, 338.
[66] See Farber's review of the American edition of *Existence and Being* in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12:4 (June 1952): 580-581.
[67] Farber, "Descriptive Philosophy and the Nature of Human Existence," 440.

his massive *The Destruction of Reason*, had argued that philosophical irrationalism resulted in disastrous politics, a sweeping thesis that Farber cited approvingly.[68] Farber also pointed out that philosophers as different as Marjorie Grene, Herbert Marcuse, and Günther Stern/Anders all highlighted the dangers and shortcomings of Heidegger's approach.[69] Marcuse and Anders had published essays on this in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* in 1947. Marjorie Grene explored similar ground in her 1948 book *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism*.[70]

As a woman in a profession still dominated by men, Grene, like Sartre-translator Hazel Barnes, used her knowledge of European existentialism as an entrée into the contemporary philosophical discussion.[71] Barred from a secure academic post because of her gender, Grene's freelance writings on the subject were her only link to professional philosophy from approximately 1944 until 1957, when she took a job working for the post-positivist philosopher of science Michael Polanyi in Manchester, which led to lectureships in Leeds, Belfast, and, finally, a professorship at the University of California at Davis.[72] Out of necessity, she became an expert on existentialism, but she did not like it.

Unlike Barnes, who was by all accounts a booster as well as a translator of Sartre, Grene was largely suspicious of existentialism, and in *Dreadful Freedom* it shows—the

---

[68] Ibid., 427. See Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (London: Merlin Press, 1980).
[69] Farber, "Descriptive Philosophy and the Nature of Human Existence," 426, n9.
[70] Marjorie Grene, *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).
[71] On the opportunities that existentialism offered women philosophers, see Ann Fulton, *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America, 1945-1963* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1999). See also Cotkin, *Existential America*, 139: "Existentialism, ironically, allowed Grene's academic anguish to find an outlet in a profession closed to her gender."
[72] For a more detailed discussion of Grene's very interesting intellectual biography, see my entry on her in John Shook, ed., *Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers* (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005).

subtitle alone signaled her position.[73] The book is an insightful introduction to the philosophy of existentialism as presented in the works of Heidegger and Sartre, but it does not pull its punches. Its presentation of Heidegger offers the obligatory compare and contrast with Dewey, as well as a mention of the attacks launched by Carnap and the logical positivists, but mostly the book is devoted to the questions of authenticity and freedom, which is where Grene was most hesitant.[74] Existentialism turned these categories into resolutely personal affairs, obviously, and Grene worried that in doing so it may have abnegated the time-honored task of philosophy to examine universal categories. "Existentialism provides us, as we have seen, no adequate means of elevating the individual's search for freedom to the status of a universal principle," she wrote. "It is not man as a free being, in general, that existential philosophy can ask us to respect. It can only demand that each of us, solitary and unbefriended, seek his own freedom."[75] This was a bleak scenario, where all values—except for freedom itself—were up for grabs. It also seemed to suggest that there was a fundamental emptiness at the heart of Heidegger's conception of freedom, which is why she believed there was "serious meaning in the joke about Heidegger's student, who declared in all solemnity: 'I am resolved—only I don't know to what!'"[76] Heidegger's concept of authentic freedom was a hollow category.

The problem with existentialism, for Grene, had nothing to do with its description of individual human existence in terms of death and dread and all the rest. With this she generally agreed. In the end, she found existentialism to be a "penetrating statement of

---

[73] For an informative gloss on Grene's book, see Cotkin, *Existential America*, 138-140.
[74] Grene, *Dreadful Freedom*; respectively, 5 and 8, 11 and 52.
[75] Ibid., 145.
[76] Ibid., 144.

our old disheartenment, a new expression of an old despair."[77] Where existentialism ran aground, she thought, was in its elevation of freedom as such to "the source of ultimate value."[78] If each and every existential individual was responsible for the creation of values, then how was it possible to conceive of intersubjectivity and/or community? How can all of these resolutely individual freedoms be reconciled and brought together if there are no presupposed values to which, together, they have recourse?

This was an important question. Heidegger's answer to it Grene had unfortunately witnessed first hand. For Heidegger, in the thirties, individual freedom was realized via only one path: commitment to the national cause—in this case, Nazism. Posing the question of community for her readers, Grene explained:

> Heidegger gave, I suppose, what some people would call an answer to that question in his Heidelberg address, "Die Rolle der Universität im Neuen Reich," in which the freedom of *Sein und Zeit* turns out, in something like Hegelian fashion, to mean subjection to that higher entity—Hitler's Germany. It seemed to me then, and it still does, a disgraceful sellout of whatever core of genuineness underlies the ontological trappings of *Sein und Zeit*; for it *is* the complete isolation of the free man, terribly alone with his own mortality yet splendidly arrogant in face of the common world of the undifferentiated "one," that is real in Heidegger's analysis of human existence. To see in the surrender to the Nazi state the fulfillment of that hard-worn freedom is, despite such affinities, for instance, as the anti-intellectualism of both Heidegger and the Nazis, to give away in advance whatever validity Heidegger's portrayal of human nature has.[79]

Being present for such a lecture as this—a version of Heidegger's notorious *Rektoratsrede*—certainly gave Grene a unique insight into the political implications of Heidegger's philosophy. After all, in his 1933 Heidelberg address Heidegger explicitly argued that the university must "be *integrated again into the Volksgemeinschaft* and *be*

---

[77] Ibid., 149.
[78] Ibid., 143. This was a common early critique of existentialism, one which fed accusations of its nihilism. For another early critique of the existentialists, see also Guido de Ruggiero, *Existentialism: Disintegration of Man's Soul*, introduction by Rayner Heppenstall (New York: Social Science Publishers, 1948).
[79] Ibid., 67-68.

joined together with the State." He exclaimed that "fighting for the state" was, in the end, the most important mission of the university itself.[80]

Heidegger's anti-Americanism did not necessarily make it into any of his first published writings, but the political question, even for the few students who made their way to Freiburg before 1933, was inescapable. Although Hook, who, out of curiosity, crashed at least one meeting of the National Socialist Workers Party meeting in Munich (despite being a Jew), failed to pick up on any proto-Nazi elements in *Sein und Zeit*, other American students could not help but notice the political valence of Heidegger's work, especially those who saw him in action for themselves.[81] Certainly any admiration that Grene had for her teacher evaporated when she endured this pro-Nazi stump speech at Heidelberg, where, during Heidegger's sabbatical from teaching (he was busily performing his duties as the first Nazi rector of Freiburg University), she had gone to continue her studies under Karl Jaspers.[82] Shortly thereafter, as the political climate worsened, she returned to the states.

Despite seeing Heidegger preach on behalf of Hitler, after the war, in *Dreadful Freedom*, she, like Kaufmann before her, tried to keep separate Heidegger-the-philosopher from Heidegger-the-party-propagandist. Although existentialism made it difficult for one to make sharp distinctions between the existential author and the existential actor, Grene nevertheless suggested that "the person behind the existentialism of Heidegger is, I should guess, not so much the Nazi Heidegger—a character as easily sloughed off as on, it seems—as the Heidegger of the Black Forest ski-hut: more

---

[80] Martin Heidegger, "The University and the New Reich (June 30, 1933)," in Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy*, 44, 45.
[81] See Hook, *Out of Step*, 103-104.
[82] See Grene,

dramatically alone in his snow-world than Kierkegaard or Sartre at their café tables of Paris now or Copenhagen then."[83] Heidegger was not to be dismissed simply on the basis of his horrendous politics, but his philosophical shortcomings alone.

Others who were familiar with Heidegger's political misdeeds were not so charitable. City College alumnus and prominent cold warrior Melvin J. Lasky, for example, thought that Heidegger's complicity with the regime ruined him for good. Although his influence was as strong as ever in Germany after the war, his disastrous foray into the realm of politics would forever tarnish his legacy. "I remember an in afternoon in the Black Forest" after the war, Lasky wrote in 1951,

> talking with Heidegger about Santayana and Dewey and Morris Raphael Cohen, and thinking afterwards as I made my way through the log-jams on the road that this brilliant evil philosopher would never come down from the mountain (today his influence, with that of Ernst Jünger, is almost the dominant one in German intellectual life).[84]

In opposition to Lasky, Grene clearly believed that there was something worth exploring in Heidegger. But it was not enough, ultimately, to excuse his excesses. Already in 1938—in one of her first philosophical publications—she had summed up Heidegger thusly:

> These, then, are some of the elements of Heidegger's philosophy: the repudiation of traditional philosophy in any but a radically novel interpretation, the rejection of the scientific attitude, the immersion in phenomena, the consequent baptism of these phenomena with new, tongue-twisting titles, the construction on their base of towers of mystifying dogmata, and the founding of such systems, finally, upon

---

[83] Grene, *Dreadful Freedom*, 68.

[84] Melvin J. Lasky, "Literature and the Arts: Transatlantic Letters—Restoration but not Renaissance," in Lewis Galantière, ed., *America and the Mind of Europe* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), 81-82. A more benign postwar report came from the English journalist Stefan Schimanski, "On Meeting a Philosopher," *Partisan Review* 15:4 (April 1948): 506-511. Schimanski later wrote the foreword for Werner Brock's early edited collection of Heidegger's writings, *Existence and Being* (London: Routlegde, 1949).

> plausible descriptions of psychological and epistemological phenomena and reasonable generalizations about experience.[85]

Mixed in with the original and stimulating work, in other words, was some complete nonsense. On top of this, the disastrous politics were just further proof that, at the end of the day, Heidegger did not have all the answers. In an article from 1958 she asked, "Behind the cheap rhetoric, what is there? The ghost of the Quest for Being fencing with the ghost of Aristotle. Something, but by no means enough."[86] This was an assessment of Heidegger's later, postwar philosophy, which abandoned the existential project of *Sein und Zeit* for the more mystical thinking of Being. Clearly, Grene felt that if there was anything worth saving in Heidegger's work, it was the early *Sein und Zeit*-era project, and not the latter work, which was even more prone to mysticism and obfuscation.

As somebody who was, as she put in *Dreadful Freedom*, "acquainted with the platform personality" of Heidegger, somebody who had seen him up close, Grene probably knew more about Heidegger than any other American alive at the time.[87] She was thus eminently qualified to write a short introductory monograph on his work for the *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought* book series published by Hillary House in New York. *Heidegger*, published in 1957, was one of the first books published in English that dealt exclusively with the work of the Freiburg philosopher.[88] Hailed as "an excellent study" by none other than Reinhold Niebuhr in the *New York Times*, the book is really an extended essay which tracks the evolution of Heidegger's thought from

---

[85] Marjorie Glicksman, "A Note on the Philosophy of Heidegger," *Journal of Philosophy* 35:4 (1938): 93-104; reprinted as "A Note on the Philosophy of Heidegger: Confessions of a Young Positivist," in Grene, *Philosophy In and Out of Europe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 38-48, quotation on 48.
[86] Marjorie Grene, "Heidegger: Philosopher and Prophet," reprinted in *Philosophy In and Out of Europe*, 70.
[87] Grene, *Dreadful Freedom*, 143.
[88] Grene, *Heidegger* (New York: Hillary House, 1957).

Being and Time up through *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, which represented, she argued, a radical departure from Heidegger's previous work.[89]

As in *Dreadful Freedom*, Grene, in *Heidegger*, focused on the notions of individual authenticity and freedom. The importance of these, she thought, was the central theme of *Being and Time*—freedom allowed individuals to choose authenticity.[90] But, as she had previously argued, Heidegger's talk of existential authenticity begged the question of community: how to get beyond so many lonely, existential individuals pursuing their own freedom to be authentic? Unfortunately, when Heidegger began to apply the insights of his existential analytic from *Being and Time* to the broader question of community, he began to abandon the philosophical structure of his earlier philosophy. In Grene's estimation this was, to put it simply, a "betrayal." Grene felt betrayed on a number of accounts. As Heidegger began to abandon the analysis of beings for the explicit meditation on Being, his work became ever more prone to sophistry.[91] But even more lamentable than Heidegger's increasing reliance upon spurious philological renderings of ancient Greek texts was the infusion of an unmistakable political dimension into his work. He went from being the philosopher of historicality (*Geschichtlichkeit*) to the philosopher of destiny (*Geschick*).[92] The problem with the latter concept was that, as we have seen, it was an expressly geopolitical concept for Heidegger. As the people caught "in the pincers," Germans were called upon to fulfill a special historical mission.

---

[89] Reinhold Niebuhr, "Thinkers and Thought," *New York Times* July 13, 1958.
[90] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argued that "Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *Being-free for* (*propensio in…*) the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is" (232).
[91] Grene, *Heidegger*, 82, 86, 100. More recently, Grene has even gone so far as to describe Heidegger as "a worthy successor to Hegel as a master of philosophical fraud." See Grene, "Reply to Charles M. Sherover," in *The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene*, 549.
[92] Ibid., 120.

Although Grene does not make the link directly in the text, it is clear that Heidegger's path of thought, as represented by the publication, in 1953, of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, led, as Niebuhr pointed out in his review, right to Hitler.[93]

As a philosopher herself, Grene once again refused to dismiss Heidegger's thought solely on account of the political uses to which it was put, although clearly this was reason enough to do so in her opinion. In fact, she has since explained that "the first draft" of *Heidegger* "was so vicious that the editor" asked that she prepare a milder version for publication.[94] So, rather than dwelling on the politics, Grene went after the philosophy, which was by no means unassailable. Heidegger's work after *Being and Time* was not faulty simply because it lapsed into a blatant and explicit nationalist jingoism, but also because it rested on suspect philosophical grounds. It was a philosophical betrayal as much as a political one. "The later work," she wrote in the last section of *Heidegger*, a chapter tellingly entitled "Betrayals," "is thin, ill-organized, in part even humdrum and dull." She was the first to admit that "*Sein und Zeit*, with all its weaknesses, has true philosophical power."[95] But the publications that followed on its heels did nothing to enhance it. Just the opposite; if anything, the post-*Sein und Zeit* works undid its achievements. It was as if the later Heidegger were "an artist who has destroyed his own work."[96]

---

[93] Ibid., 94-97.
[94] Grene, "Reply to Charles M. Sherover," in *The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene*, 548.
[95] Grene, *Heidegger*, 117.
[96] Ibid., 125.

Conclusion: Hesitant Heideggerians

The story of Heidegger's early American reception is not a simple and straight-forward success story. On the contrary, it is as story of fits and starts, forays and delays. Most of all, it is a story of hesitancy. Heidegger was not immediately hailed in this country as the philosophical savior that many postwar writers and commentators made him out to be. Far from it. Heidegger's thought was not an instant hit and it was unclear in the beginning if his work would enjoy much of a reception at all.

The influence of Heidegger's thought in the United States developed only gradually, over the course of many years. Its American reception required a broader cast of characters than the few American pioneers who made their way to Germany in the years before Hitler's rise to power. These new characters in the story of the American reception of Heidegger's work had their doubts, too, for like Grene they were people who knew Heidegger's "platform personality" all too well—in fact, they were in most cases even more familiar with it than she was.[97] Unfortunately, they also came to know the platform personality of Hitler.

If early American students who traveled to Freiburg had a complicated relationship with Heidegger's work, then his German-Jewish students who fled Europe because of Nazism were in an even deeper quandary. Like Hook and Grene, they recognized the profound breakthrough that his thought represented, especially insofar as it finally pushed philosophy beyond Descartes's simplistic and reductive notion of the *cogito*.[98] But they were also betrayed—and in a worse way. Still, although they may have been more forgiving of Heidegger's self-styled radical image because, as students

[97] Grene, *Dreadful Freedom*, 143.
[98] See Grene, *Heidegger*, 22. This is something, Grene thinks, which Heidegger, Dewey, and Bergson all accomplished.

burdened by the strictures of the traditional, academic approach to philosophical education in Germany, they yearned for something new; but they, too, were destined to spend their careers coming to terms with his shortcomings. For them, Heidegger's betrayals were more personal and more damaging, and, as a result, less easily dismissed. How they struggled with their mentor's philosophical and political shortcomings is the subject to which we will turn next.

By her own admission, Grene spent a long time, nearly "sixty years," coming to terms with Heidegger. In the end, she concluded that his work was "both intellectually and morally reprehensible." What, then, could she have taken away from it—what could anybody be expected to glean from it? Grene has acknowledged some of "the philosophical lessons of *Being and Time*," but, more important than these, perhaps, was Heidegger's pedagogical approach. Heidegger may not have had the answers to modern philosophy's most persistent problems, but he did present them in a productive manner. Grene shared with Heidegger's German-born students the conviction that Heidegger was, if nothing else, a remarkable—if not always faithful—reader of philosophical texts. Heidegger, in other words, taught his students how to read. This was confirmed by everyone from Grene to Herbert Marcuse. "For all his vices," Grene explains, "Heidegger made one read texts."[99]

[99] Marjorie Grene, *A Philosophical Testament* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 78-79.

CHAPTER 2
Exiles and Emissaries: Heidegger's Stepchildren in the United States

Without the guilty deed of parricide there is no autonomous self.
—Hans Loewald[1]

The rise of political extremism in Europe in the decades leading up to the Second World War precipitated one of the largest intellectual and cultural migrations in history. As refugee scholars, writers, and artists lucky enough to have found a way out of Nazi- and fascist-occupied lands made their way across the Atlantic, they brought with them intellectual traditions and techniques that would go on to enjoy long and often profound afterlives in the new world. It is safe to say that their influence was deeply felt in the United States—enough, at least, to justify any number of colloquia, seminars, lectures, and exhibitions over the past half decade devoted to the topic. "Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler," a stunning program put together by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in 1997 was but one of the most visible installments of—to borrow a metaphor from the world of publishing—a serialized story that has for many years maintained a healthy and sustained readership.[2] Many of the smaller tales which, taken together, comprise this narrative of exile and emigration, especially when they relate to topics within the history of ideas, are well known, having been told with clarity and precision by both the refugees themselves and scholars who have—at least in some instances—devoted entire careers to the topic.[3] We are generally

---

[1] Hans Loewald, "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex," *The Essential Hans Loewald*, introduction by Jonathan Lear (Hagerstown, Maryland: University Publishing Group, 2000), 393.
[2] See *Exiles + Émigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997).
[3] Some of the most often referred-to works, aside from the ones mentioned below, include: Bernard Bailyn and Donald Fleming, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1969); H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Lewis Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences* (New Haven: Yale UP,

familiar with, for example, the story of The New School for Social Research in New York, which was a haven for displaced scholars.[4] We have heard, told and retold, the stories of the Frankfurt School, and how its members adjusted, or failed to adjust, to life in the land of the culture industry.[5] And, most of all, we are regularly invited to picture Europe's most vaunted artists, musicians, and writers baking, in their old-world suits and ties, on the beaches of Southern California—to imagine them on the very fringes of the West itself, in a place as foreign to their cultured sensibilities as could possibly be.[6]

That the philosophy of Martin Heidegger was a point of reference for many of the émigré intellectuals is not surprising. Heidegger's fame had skyrocketed after the publication, in 1927, of his *Sein und Zeit*, a book that sparked a discussion yet to end. Equally discussed by the start of World War II, however, was Heidegger's very public embrace of Nazism, which officially dated from May, 1933, when he became the first Nazi rector of Freiburg University (though, as we now know, his unofficial sympathies extended much farther back in time). Due to this, Heidegger's name became, especially for the refugees, a kind of shorthand for intellectual complicity with the Nazi regime. In the literature of intellectual exile during these decades, references to Heidegger are

---

1984); Martin Jay, *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985); Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-41*, Second Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); and Jean-Michel Palmier's two-volume *Weimar en Exil: Le Destin de L'Émigration Intellectuelle Allemande Antinazie en Europe et aux États-Unis* (Paris: Payot, 1988). See also—literally—the informative documentary, directed by Richard Kaplan, *The Exiles* (1989).

[4] See Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, trans. Rita and Robert Kimber, foreword by Arthur J. Vidich (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

[5] See, for example, Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950* (1973; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994).

[6] See Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present* (1983; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

frequent and very often polemical as a result.[7] Heidegger was an endless point of contention, both for the refugees themselves as well as their new-found hosts and colleagues in the United States. For a certain number of the émigrés, though, discussions concerning Heidegger, and especially his support of Hitler, were especially problematic. For those émigrés who had studied with him, who had sometimes spent years under his philosophical spell, for them Heidegger was more than a metaphor, more than a morality tale about the dangers of politicizing the seminar room and the lecture hall. For them, the influence of Heidegger was something to be struggled with, debated, overcome, or even, in some instances, deliberately ignored, but it was always a very personal affair. Whatever their final conclusions regarding Heidegger, the anxiety of influence, to use Harold Bloom's phrase, certainly marked the work these émigrés undertook in their adopted land—work that, whatever the opinions of Heidegger held by its authors, represents a crucial moment in the American reception of Heidegger's philosophical thought.[8]

* * *

[7] See, for example, Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People* (New York: YIVO, 1946). Weinreich's important book, long out of print and very hard to find, has recently by reissued by Yale University Press. Its original publication was much-discussed. Hannah Arendt, for example, reviewed it for *Commentary* in 1946. Her review, "The Image of Hell," has been reprinted in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994), 197-205. In this review she puts forth the following disparaging but also exculpatory description of Heidegger: "The scholars put to one side by the Nazis as of relatively little use to them were old-fashioned nationalists like Heidegger, whose enthusiasm for the Third Reich was matched only by his glaring ignorance of what he was talking about;" as if Heidegger were a political dupe with his head in the clouds, whose Nazism was mere folly, instead of the sustained and thoughtful engagement we now know it to be. The quote can be found on page 202 in *Essays in Understanding*.

[8] See Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford, 1973).

Some of Heidegger's "children"—as Richard Wolin has referred to them—are far better known than others. The roles that they played in the dissemination of their teacher's philosophical thought, like their own notoriety, range from the obvious to the obscure. It would be all but impossible, for example, to tell the story of Heidegger's reception in the United States without mentioning Hannah Arendt, who, upon resuming a cordial friendship with her former teacher and lover after many years of icy silence, almost single-handedly arranged and oversaw the translation of Heidegger's work into English (as we will see in a later chapter).[9] Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse, the rest of Heidegger's children whom Wolin discusses, all played smaller and more indirect roles in the introduction of Heidegger's thought to new American audiences.[10] Their efforts in this regard were limited to penning an occasional journal article or presenting, here and there, an infrequent lecture that touched upon Heidegger (though, as Wolin shows, they labored under the shadow of their teacher's thinking most of their careers). But these four thinkers, who all went on to enjoy a noticeable degree of intellectual influence in this country, were by no means the only students of Heidegger to have ended up on this side of the Atlantic.

Among the other émigrés who studied with Heidegger, and whom we might call, after Wolin, Heidegger's "stepchildren," are the Renaissance scholar Paul Oskar Kristeller; Günther Stern (also known as Günther Anders), the noted antiwar activist and

---

[9] Evidence of this is now easily accessible via the digitized archive of Arendt's papers at the Library of Congress. Two folders that are devoted to correspondence regarding Heidegger contain countless letters to publishers, translators, and commentators of Heidegger's work. See Hannah Arendt Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., available online at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/arednthtml/about.html. And there is of course the ongoing exchange that Arendt had with Heidegger's chief American translator J. Glenn Gray, also available through the Library of Congress website, and discussed here in the following chapters.

[10] Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001).

philosopher, who also happened to be Hannah Arendt's first husband; the political philosopher Leo Strauss, so much in the news today as a supposed forefather of the neoconservative right in Washington; and psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Hans Loewald, who brought a unique blend of Freudian therapy and Heideggerian philosophy with him to the east coast of the United States. From Arendt's well-known efforts to make Heidegger's writings available to American readers to Loewald's relatively unknown brand of Heideggerian psychoanalytic therapy, Heidegger's progeny—legitimate, illegitimate, or adopted—have together introduced into American intellectual life a distinctly Heideggerian discourse. But what does it mean to speak of a Heideggerian discourse? Just what, exactly, did these students of Heidegger bring with them to the United States, and how? Was it a specific set of concepts, or something more abstract than that? As we will see, Heidegger's style of thinking may have been more influential than any of the things he actually wrote. In this regard, what I call methodological Heideggerianism may force us to redefine our understanding of how ideas travel.

Given that Wolin has already introduced us to Heidegger's children, the following is an account of the forgotten ones, the stepchildren, whose Heideggerian pasts have remained hitherto unexamined. To be sure, it is all but impossible to tell the story of Heidegger's reception without constantly referring to Arendt and Marcuse and the rest, but instead of rehashing here already familiar material, These more prominent personages will simply be included as the narrative progresses in following chapters: Arendt, for example, will be examined when we turn to her good friend and colleague J. Glenn Gray; just as Jonas will appear as he addresses a conference of theologians in New Jersey in 1964. For now, however, the stepchildren.

Renaissance Man

Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905-1999), philosopher, bibliographer, philologist, and, with Arthur O. Lovejoy, one of the founding fathers of the discipline of intellectual history in the United States, was born on May 22, 1905, in Berlin. He was born into, as he described it, "a well-to-do Jewish middle-class family," and received a superior education as a result.[11] While attending the Mommsen-Gymnasium in Berlin, Kristeller studied, along with the other usual subjects, Latin, Greek, French, and English. His multilingual education in many ways prefigured the course of his career, for Kristeller would go on to become, after adding Italian to his resume, the most well-recognized and well-respected Renaissance scholar of the twentieth century.

Kristeller's exposure to philosophy came early. Even before he graduated from the Gymnasium in 1923, he was already reading Plato, Aristotle, and Kant on his own. He decided to pursue this course of study further, and in the years following ended up attending lectures at Heidelberg offered by the Neokantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert ("whose interpretation of Kant never convinced me, but who developed a theory of the historical method which has great merit and is not as well known as it deserves"), as well as Jaspers ("who introduced me to Kierkegaard and existentialism") and Ernst Hoffmann, who lectured on Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. Kristeller also attended lectures in Freiburg by the Hegelian Richard Kroner and by Heidegger's own mentor, Edmund

---

[11] Paul Oskar Kristeller, "A Life of Learning," The Charles Homer Askins Lecture for 1990, American Council of Learned Societies Occasional Paper No. 12, available online at http://www.acls.org/op12.htm. The following biographical information comes from this source as well as Paul Oskar Kristeller and Margaret L. King, "Iter Krsitelleranium: The European Journey (1905-1939)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 47:4 (Winter, 1994): 907-929. See also the touching obituary notice in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:4 (1999): 758-760.

Husserl ("who was not an interesting lecturer, but whose books I read with great profit"). At the suggestion of a classmate, Kristeller traveled to Marburg in 1926 in order to attend the lectures of a young philosophical upstart by the name of Martin Heidegger. At the time, Kristeller later recalled, Heidegger was "working on *Sein und Zeit*, his masterpiece, and gave impressive lectures, as well as a seminar on historicism." Kristeller became friendly with Heidegger (he played piano for the Heideggers whenever he visited their home), but "resisted the temptation to stay with him because he kept his doctoral students waiting for many years." The young scholar returned to Heidelberg instead, where he wrote a thesis on Plotinus.

After defending his work on Plotinus, Kristeller spent time studying with the classicist Werner Jaeger—who would also eventually immigrate to the United States—but shortly thereafter fell back into Heidegger's gravitational pull. In 1931 he went to Freiburg to write a *Habilitation* under Heidegger on the Renaissance Neo-Platonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino. By 1933, he had most of the groundwork for the book completed and went to Italy to do further research. While working in Italy he learned that there would be no positions in Germany to which he could return. Newly implemented *Gleichschaltung* legislation barred him, like all Jews, from German academia. Ironically, it was with the help of the Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile, a philosopher who, much like Heidegger, had thrown in his hat with the fascist regime, that Kristeller was able to secure a series of positions—as an instructor of German, and as a researcher—that kept him afloat until he finally got an invitation from Yale University.[12]

[12] On Kristeller's relation to Gentile, see also "Paul Oskar Kristeller and His Contribution to Scholarship," in Edward P. Mahoney, ed., *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (New York: Columbia UP, 1976): "Despite his deep involvement with the Fascist regime, Gentile personally aided Kristeller after he lost his position at Pisa because of anti-Semitic laws, and he

In February, 1939, he departed from Genoa aboard the New York-bound steamer *Saturnia*, tragically forced to leave his parents behind in Germany, where shortly thereafter they became victims of the Holocaust.[13] Lucky to have avoided the fate that awaited his parents, Kristeller began a new life in the United States. An appointment at Columbia came shortly after his stint at Yale, and Kristeller quietly settled in, spending the remainder of his life affiliated with the university in Morningside Heights.[14]

A quick glance at Kristeller's published work, much of it related to intricate matters of Renaissance scholarship, reveals that Kristeller was far from preoccupied with matters Heideggerian. Even his private writings contain little trace of a conscious struggle with the anxiety of influence. In his collected papers, now housed at Columbia, one finds the occasional early postcard from Heidegger alongside letters, from a later period, to and from others of Heidegger's children—Loewald, Arendt, Jonas, Löwith, and Marcuse—but very little of this betrays any strong feelings about Heidegger, his Nazism, or his legacy. Heidegger's name comes up every now and again in Kristeller's correspondence, but for the most part such references—a 1950 postcard from Löwith, for example, which mentions that Heidegger's *Holzwege* had been published—were casually brief.

---

also helped him to emigrate to the United States soon after this" (3). See also Kristeller and King, "Iter Kristelleranium," where Kristeller recounts that Gentile felt so badly about Kristeller's fate that he spoke personally to Mussolini and requested that a payment be made to Kristeller as a form of "indemnity for the unjust destruction" of his career. Mussolini paid up (924).

[13] The fate of Kristeller's parents is discussed in his obituary in the *New York Times*, June 10, 1999. A wrenching personal record can also be reconstructed using the many letters now housed in the collection of Kristeller's papers held at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

[14] This brief account hardly does justice to the difficulties that Kristeller, like all of his fellow émigrés, had in securing an academic position in the States. His correspondence with his primary sponsor on this side of the Atlantic, Werner Jaeger, who had emigrated a few years prior, proves as much. See Kristeller's papers at Columbia, Box A23.

It was not until very late in his life when Kristeller resumed any kind of direct contact with Heidegger himself.[15] Indeed, in a pattern befitting the other children, Kristeller only belatedly sought to contact his former teacher. But the decades he had spent away from Heidegger's influence had not weakened Kristeller's admiration apparently. Like an eager young student holding out for his mentor's approval, Kristeller wrote to Heidegger and informed him that he was planning a return visit to Freiburg. He hoped that they might then have a chance to relive old memories.[16] They did, and any outstanding grievances or questions were either resolved or buried; for after this encounter—and after the years of mutual silence that preceded it—Kristeller and Heidegger stayed in touch until Heidegger's last days. Just weeks before his death, in fact, Heidegger had written his former student a brief note, thanking him for sending a copy of his book *Humanism and Renaissance*. Heidegger regretted that, at his advanced age, he could not really do any more serious studying, but in glancing at the chapter titles he saw what Kristeller was up to and wished him the best with it.[17]

That Heidegger saw where Kristeller was going in his work is an understatement, for it must have been obvious to Heidegger that Kristeller had remained within the sphere of his influence. Such influence was noticeable very early on in Kristeller's career. *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, for example, which Kristeller began to compose under

---

[15] Löwith to Kristeller (postcard), 2 February 1950, Kristeller Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Box A31, Folder Locke—Löwith. Amongst Kristeller's papers at Columbia there are also letters from the likes of Marcuse, Arendt, and Jonas as well.

[16] See Kristeller to Heidegger, 9 April 1973, Kristeller Papers, Box A19, Folder Healy—Heitmann. Wolin tells the story of how Marcuse dreamed of returning to Freiburg and presenting a lecture there with Heidegger in the audience. See *Heidegger's Children*, xiii.

[17] Heidegger to Kristeller, 4 Mai 1976, Kristeller Papers, Box A19, Folder Healy—Heitmann. See Kristeller, *Humanismus und Renaissance*, hrsg. von Eckhard Kesler, übersetzung aus dem Englischen von Renate Schweyen-Ott (München: W. Fink, 1974-76).

Heidegger's tutelage, is, in its fashion, a Heideggerian book.[18] Although on the surface it is simply a monograph in Renaissance intellectual history, a second glance, an x-ray as it were, reveals a Heideggerian support structure beneath. Far from being an exercise in historical compilation, the book is—in true Heideggerian fashion—a philosophical confrontation. Kristeller is not interested in fitting his subject into any grand, historical narrative. He is not interested in "merely restating" Ficino's "various positions." To the contrary, he attempts a "more thoroughgoing philosophical analysis."[19] Though hardly as radical an interpretation as the ones Heidegger routinely offered in the lecture courses his students found so captivating, wherein he consistently read everyone from Aristotle to Husserl against the grain of received wisdom, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* is nonetheless a direct engagement with only the texts themselves. The result is a rescuing of Ficino as a philosopher, but only at the expense of a more nuanced historical account.

Kristeller does not sever Ficino from the traditions to which he belonged, namely Platonism, Aristotelianism, and medieval Christianity, but he does limit his discussion of these influences in order to present the Renaissance thinker as, above all else, a coherent philosopher in his own right. In this regard, he discusses only those ideas found in

---

[18] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia UP, 1943). The book was reprinted by Peter Smith in 1964. An early portion of Kristeller's manuscript—"The Theory of Immortality in Marsilio Ficino"—was also published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1:3 (1940): 299-319. The book went through—as a reviewer in the *New York Times* noted—quite an "odyssey." Before finally appearing in 1943, it was composed in German between 1933 and 1937, then translated into Italian in 1938, from which derived the English version. A decade and three languages later, the book finally saw the light of publication. Indeed, given the circumstances surrounding the research, writing, and publication of the book, its sheer appearance is remarkable. In fact, the book may very well have saved his life, or at least his sanity. As he explains in the preface, in his characteristically humble way: "The time and effort spent on the work might seem out of proportion to its size and importance, especially in a time like this. Yet in a period of great change and uncertainty, concentration on a definite task is a source of strength" (vii). See Boris Erich Nelson, "Renaissance Prodigy," *New York Times*, November 21, 1943.

[19] Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, 7.

Ficino's writings that are of "philosophical importance."[20] It just so happens that these philosophically important ideas revolve around two important questions: the relation of the Soul to God (the subject of the second half of Kristeller's book); and the question of Being (the subject of the first half). I am not in a position to evaluate Kristeller's presentation of Ficino in any detail, but, in addition to certain passages of the book that make Ficino out to be somewhat of a proto-existentialist, this ontological focus seems to point right back to Heidegger.[21] Given that, as Kristeller himself admits, previous interpreters of Ficino, such as Ernst Cassirer and Gentile, spent far less time on Ficino's doctrine of Being, it seems as if Kristeller may in fact be reading Ficino through Heideggerian lenses.

Reviewers speculated as much when Kristeller's book first appeared, amidst a world in chaos, in 1943. Commenting on the book in the *Journal of Philosophy* a year after its publication, Helmut Kuhn, a professor at the University of North Carolina, described the book as "a late-comer in that covey of philosophical monographs which, in the period between the two World Wars, testified to the fruitfulness of Heidegger's teaching."[22] Mentioning also the work of such notable Heidegger protégés as Löwith and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Kuhn described this body of work as a "rich harvest," which,

---

[20] Ibid., x.

[21] Ibid. See in particular Kristeller's discussion of the concept of "internal experience" in Ficino, pages 206-208. Although Kristeller refuses to use the term "existence," since he finds that is associated with too many philosophical "disputes," his presentation of Ficino's account of internal experience bears a striking resemblance to the existential analytic found in *Being and Time*, especially insofar as it charts a path from a state of fallenness or inauthenticity to authentic existence, or, as Kristeller describes it, "from mere vulgar existence to a higher and truer degree of life" (208). Passages like this one demonstrate, I think, both Heidegger's indebtedness to a certain Christian discourse as well as Kristeller's indebtedness to Heidegger.

[22] Helmut Kuhn, "Review of Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*," *Journal of Philosophy* 41:20 (Sept. 28, 1944): 553-560, quote on 557.

despite its "scholarship and integrity of philosophical intent," has unfortunately received "scant attention" beyond Germany.[23]

Kuhn was uniquely positioned to comment on Kristeller's Ficino book, and, specifically, the Heideggerian residue apparent in its pages. An émigré himself, Kuhn had studied at the Universities of Breslau, Innnsbruck, and Berlin, and had carried out extensive research on topics related not only to philosophy, but theology, aesthetics, and political theory as well. He was as well-versed in the latest currents in German philosophical thought as anybody when he immigrated to the United States in 1937. He subsequently took up positions at North Carolina and then Emory University in Atlanta, before eventually returning to Germany after the war, where he went on to become a prominent faculty member at the University of Munich.[24]

While in the States, Kuhn put his energies toward two tasks: introducing contemporary German thought to English-speaking audiences, but also, and perhaps more importantly at the time, to delineating a theory of "totalitarianism" as was to be found in Nazi Germany. The latter aim found expression in *Freedom Forgotten and Remembered* (1943), which did not hesitate to lay the blame for Nazism upon the hallowed halls of German universities themselves. Singling out in particular the anti-universalism of German historicism and the decisionism of existentialist philosophy, or what he termed, alluding to Kierkegaard, "Either-Or Philosophy," Kuhn forcefully argued that a generation of scholars, influenced by these trends, had effectively paved the way for

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] Biographical information on Kuhn can be found in Rupert Hofmann, Jörg Jantzen, und Hennig Ottmann, hrsg., *Anodos: Festschrift für Helmut Kuhn* (Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humaniora, 1989).

Hitler—an assessment that, as we will see, he shared with other émigrés, including Leo Strauss.[25]

Kuhn's secondary project, that of familiarizing English-speaking audiences with contemporary German thought, led to the publication of one of the first—and best—surveys of European existentialism printed in English. *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism* was first published in 1949, four years after the war had ended, and offered its readers a careful examination of the key ideas that united such disparate thinkers as Jaspers, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus. In the book, Kuhn did not shy away from the judgments he had offered somewhat less philosophically in *Freedom Forgotten and Remembered*. If anything, he even sharpened his language, going so far as to describe Heidegger's *Being and Time*, with its heavy-handed focus on death and dread and anxiety, as "the philosophical monument of the breathing space between the two greatest slaughters of all history. It is perfumed," he suggested, "with the exhalations of death. Like the uniform of the black guard, it is marked all over with the mortuary emblem of skull and bones."[26] A staunch Catholic, Kuhn, though he recognized the philosophical importance of existentialism, could not, in the end, bring himself to endorse a philosophical perspective as imbued as was Heidegger's with the militarism and barbarism of its time.

In his review of Kristeller's monograph, an earlier text than *Encounter with Nothingness*, Kuhn does not offer a summary condemnation of Heidegger's thought.

---

[25] Helmut Kuhn, *Freedom Forgotten and Remembered* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943). See also Kuhn's contribution, "Die deutsche Universität am Vorabend der Machtergreifung," in *Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich* (München: R. Piper & Co., 1966), 13-44. Kuhn's work on totalitarianism, though it differs greatly from it, anticipates Hannah Arendt's work in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951).

[26] Helmut Kuhn, *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism* (1949; London: Metheun & Co., 1951), 35.

Given the neglect of Heidegger's work in the English-speaking world at the time, not to mention that of his students, Kuhn opts instead for an expository approach. In the place of swift and certain judgment, he slowly teases out, and then questions, the Heideggerian thread that runs through Kristeller's text. It is a subtler approach, though it leads, in the end, to a similar conclusion.

What was it exactly that united the works of this "rich harvest" of Heidegger students? In Kuhn's eyes, Kristeller's Ficino book was "typical of a whole group of recent 'phenomenological' contributions to the history of philosophy."[27] By this he meant something more than just the influence of Edmund Husserl's method upon these young writers. What Kuhn was trying to point out was that these students of Heidegger had all, in their respective monographs, taken issue with the grand Hegelian approach to writing the history of ideas.[28] As opposed to presenting a history in "one great constructive sweep," these young authors were turning historical interpretation into an "isolated 'existential venture.'"[29] "In the pre-war era," Kuhn explains,

> The authentically Hegelian conception of the history of philosophy had petered out in *Problemgeschichte*, best typified by Windelband. Thanks to Heidegger, its Kierkegaardian version became productive in a discontinuous series of monographic "revivals," penetrating, animated by genuine philosophical curiosity, and strangely aimless—well-hewn stones with no builder in sight.[30]

As the tone of the last lines reveals, Kuhn had some reservations about this new, phenomenological or even Kierkegaardian approach to the writing of the history of ideas.

---

[27] Kuhn, "Review of Kristeller," 558.
[28] Nowhere was Kuhn's critique of the historical approach of Heidegger's children and stepchildren more apparent than in his review of Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). See Kuhn, "Review of Löwith, *Meaning in History*," *Journal of Philosophy* 46:25 (December 8, 1949): 822-826. For more on this issue, see note 79 below.
[29] Kuhn, "Review of Kristeller," 558.
[30] Ibid.

He admitted that it enlivened and reinvigorated ideas that the Hegelian narrative had integrated all too well into an unrelenting forward march, but such a method, in addition to lacking the overarching and guiding telos of the strictly Hegelian model, also "results in some violence done to history," especially at Heidegger's own hands.[31] This was particularly evident, at least to Kuhn, in Heidegger's interpretations of Kant. The existential approach to writing the history of ideas, which emphasized direct dialogue between text and interpreter more than neat narratives of historical evolution, was more concerned with meaning the accuracy. It was engagement, not detachment, that truly mattered.

Interestingly enough, Kuhn thought the pupils surpassed the master when it came to applying the phenomenological approach to the history of philosophy: "On the whole they set a model of unassuming and sensitive attention to whatever historical object they elect to investigate. Their procedure,"—as opposed to Heidegger's we are to assume—"is phenomenological in the best sense of the term."[32] Despite such praise for Kristeller and his classmates, Kuhn ultimately worried that, especially with regard to *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, the Heideggerian approach perhaps placed too many burdens upon, made too many demands of, its historical subjects. Following Heidegger, Kristeller had adopted a "heroic style" of interpretation, which demanded that Ficino "be viewed as confronted with the problem of Being which is also the problem of human existence; and he must be viewed as grasping this problem with the primeval freshness of the creative mind. Otherwise his individuality would be extinguished just where it is

---

[31] Ibid. Heidegger admits as much repeatedly in his work, but he thinks that this violence is necessary for creative and thoughtful translation and interpretation. See for example, *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1975), 19.
[32] Kuhn, "Review of Kristeller," 558.

supposed to be manifest as a creative principle. Is Ficino enough of a philosopher to stand so searching a test?" Kristeller, in other words, may have asked too much of Ficino. After all, Kuhn suggested, "We might admire him as a great humanist and yet consider his stature too slight for the heavy panoply in which his interpreter expects him too fight."[33] This may have been Kuhn's way of saying that, *pace* Heidegger, not everybody in the history of thought must be read in relation to the *Seinsfrage*.

Kristeller's prolific career cannot be reduced to the Ficino book alone. Accordingly, Kristeller scholars might dismiss this brief portrait as unrepresentative. But whether or not Kristeller eventually shed his Heideggerian skin, origins are important, not because they contain within them all that follows, but because, like starting-lines, they are points of orientation. In this instance it is Heidegger's method of interpretation, which Kuhn highlighted, that set Kristeller on his intellectual path. The lack of any overt oedipal struggle should not obscure the fact that, in his own way, Kristeller carried on his mentor's methodology.[34]

Late in his life, Kristeller reminisced about his student days under Heidegger. He painted a vivid portrait of the "rich harvest" of students in Heidegger's entourage at the time, but it is Heidegger's philosophical approach, as displayed in his lectures, that stuck out most in his mind:

> The semester in Marburg was also very important for other reasons. I had heard from fellow students about a new professor Martin Heidegger, whose reputation as an important and original thinker had been much admired for several years in the German academic world. I attended one of his lecture courses, I believe on Aristotle, and was greatly impressed of

---

[33] Ibid.

[34] Kristeller remained throughout his career more of a philosopher than an historian. He devoted much time to examining the relation between philosophy and history, and he always maintained, as he argued in "The Philosophical Significance of the History of Thought," an early piece for the *Journal of the History of Ideas* [7:3 (June 1946): 360-366], that doing the history of philosophy is tantamount to doing philosophy itself.

> his precise command of the original Greek text, and with the precise, profound, and convincing method of his interpretation.[35]

Like almost everyone else who had studied with Heidegger in the twenties, Kristeller was greatly taken with Heidegger's originality behind the lectern. Certainly philosophers do not usually tend to be mesmerizing lecturers, but the secret magic of Heidegger's courses seemed to have caught most students by surprise. Never before had philosophy seemed so immediately relevant, so important.

When an elderly Kristeller was asked if he could recall, from his student days, any sign of Heidegger's impending enthusiasm for National Socialism, he was not able to offer much. For him, unlike so many of the other children and step-children, Heidegger's politics were not a central concern. Although he later became aware of the pro-Nazi speeches, he could "neither confirm nor deny" reports that Heidegger began classes with the Hitler salute. What he did recall was that Heidegger took an active interest in his plight, and decried the anti-Jewish decrees preventing him from taking work in Germany. Heidegger, Kristeller remembered, even ended up writing him positive letters of recommendation for positions outside Germany.[36]

---

[35] Kristeller and King, "Iter Krisetelleranium," 914-915. With regard to the community of students studying under Heidegger, Kristeller goes on to recall: "Also while in Marburg I contrived to practice the piano. One of Heidegger's early students, Karl Loewith, happened to live in the same building in which I had rented a furnished room and heard me practice the piano. He spoke to me and said that if my philosophy were as good as my music, it would be excellent. He spoke to his friend Hans Georg Gadamer, another early student of Heidegger. They had played chamber music together on the violin and cello, and soon they asked me to join them, and we began to play trios together…They told Heidegger, who was interested in hearing me play for him. He invited me to his home once a week to have dinner and to play piano for him, his wife Elfriede and two sons." Interestingly, Kristeller also says that he originally hoped to work with Jaspers in Heidelberg, but was so disillusioned by the personal and inappropriate grilling that he received at the hands of Jaspers's wife Gertrude that he abandoned the idea.

[36] Ibid., 917-18.

There were other factors besides politics that separated Kristeller from Heidegger. The most notable of these was the question of humanism.[37] Whereas Heidegger became, after the Second World War at least, an outspoken critic of humanism, Kristeller remained a committed humanist throughout his career. The difference between their estimations of the value of humanism has to do with a historico-geographical divide. Throughout his work, especially the work after *Being and Time*, Heidegger adopted an anti-Latin perspective. Arguing persistently for a Greco-Germanic historical mission, Heidegger came to see the legacies of Rome and all that followed it as nothing but an unmitigated (metaphysical) disaster for the West. Lost in the translation of Greek thought into Latin, he suggested, was an original or primordial understanding of Being. For a scholar of the Italian Renaissance like Kristeller, such a perspective was of course highly suspect.[38]

Despite the fact Kristeller continued to avail himself of a distinctly Heideggerian methodology, his ultimate aims were in fact quite distinct from those of his mentor. Curious as such a situation might seem, it was not uncommon for Heidegger's former students to apply his methods toward ends which diverged—greatly in some instances—from his own. In fact, this is probably why Heidegger could have been influential for so

---

[37] It is worth comparing, in this regard, Kristeller's many early essays for the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, not to mention the 1948 book that he co-edited with Ernst Cassirer and John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1948), with Heidegger's classic essay from the same period "The Letter on Humanism," in which he broke decisively with the humanist paradigm and adopted an explicitly post- or anti-humanist stance. A translation of Heidegger's essay can be found in Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, Revised and Expanded Edition, edited by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 213-266.

[38] For more on Heidegger's anti-Latin bias, see Charles Bambach's insightful *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003), 301-325. Heidegger's anti-Latin, anti-Renaissance stance was a problem for students of Heidegger who hoped to apply his insights to the study of these topics. A friend of Kristeller's, the philosopher Ernesto Grassi, was somebody who was forced into tremendous intellectual contortions while attempting to reconcile Heidegger's thought with traditional Italian humanism. See, for example, Grassi, *Heidegger and the Question of Renaissance Humanism* (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1983).

many different intellectual endeavors. Precisely because his methodology could be applied in any number of ways to support any number of ends, Heidegger's teaching reached broad audiences as much for its form as for its content. Heidegger's greatest legacy, in other words, like that of all great teachers, may rest not within the pages of his *Gesamtausgabe*, but in the careers of his students, especially since so many of them went on to become the greatest of thinkers in their respective fields.

It would be tempting to trace, via Kristeller, a distinctly Heideggerian influence in the discipline of intellectual history in the United States. As a long-time editor of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, the premiere journal of the discipline founded by Arthur O. Lovejoy not all that long before Kristeller arrived in America, the former student of Heidegger certainly left an imprint on the historical study of ideas.[39] But to suggest that this imprint was only a Heideggerian one would be stretching the truth. Kristeller had too many other intellectual interests, was exposed to too many other influences, for his great body of work to be subsumed under that single epithet, Heideggerian. And besides, compared to some of the other children and step-children, Kristeller was far less radical of a methodological Heideggerian.

Disciple of Destruktion

What Helmut Kuhn was referring to when, in his review of Kristeller's Ficino book, he spoke of the "rich harvest" of the new Heideggerian writings was a certain

[39] Along these lines, see also Kristeller's "History of Philosophy and History of Ideas," in *Renaissance Concepts of Man: And Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), 156-175. It should be noted that Kristeller was also instrumental in the inauguration of the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* as well. On Lovejoy and intellectual history, see John Patrick Diggins, "Arthur O. Lovejoy and the Challenge of Intellectual History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:1 (January 2006): 181-208.

methodological perspective. Insofar as it dismantled and overturned the grand narratives of Hegelian systematizing, and questioned the abstract transcendentalism of Neokantianism, the Heideggerian method—at least as it was unveiled in the early lecture courses—represented a "destructive" approach to the history of philosophy. Its radicalism lay in its unique re-reading of western thought, a re-reading that did not hesitate to jettison whatever seemed irrelevant or inconsequential for its specific purpose.[40] Had Kuhn written his review a few years later, he might very well have included among the adherents to this new demolition project another of Heidegger's Jewish students, namely the political philosopher Leo Strauss (1899-1973).

If we can call Kristeller a methodological Heideggerian, then the same label must certainly be applied to Strauss. Unlike Kristeller, Strauss, at least late in his life, was forthright about the debt he owed Heidegger, though he was even more adamant about what he did not owe him. Indeed, for Strauss, Heidegger's thinking was perhaps the best example of modern nihilism at work, and his own return to the classics of political philosophy, to Plato especially, was in many ways a rejoinder to figures such as Heidegger, who sought, via radical politics, to bridge the traditions of reason and revelation which Strauss considered to be always and forever in an un-resolvable tension. And yet, although Strauss did not care for Heidegger's philosophical conclusions, he nonetheless approached the history of philosophy in a distinctly Heideggerian way. [41] It is

---

[40] Heidegger's notion of re-reading as a kind of "reciprocative rejoinder" to the past was introduced in section 74 of *Being and Time*. For a detailed discussion of this notion, see Johannes Fritsche, *National Socialism and Historical Destiny in Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 1-28.

[41] See Mark Lilla, "Leo Strauss: The European," *New York Review of Books*, Oct. 21, 2004: "…one does not distort Strauss by considering his entire oeuvre to be a long response to the challenge Heidegger laid down" (60).

in this sense that Strauss, alongside Kristeller, can be considered a methodological Heideggerian.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger publicly announced his project of historical "destruction."[42] It was a project he had been developing for years, in various lecture courses and manuscripts. In order to gain access once again to the question of Being, Heidegger thought it necessary first and foremost to cut through, like an archeologist, the layers of sediment that the philosophical tradition had placed upon the original texts of western thought. Only after reinvigorating the texts so deadened by the history of philosophy could original thinking take place. This methodological approach owed a great deal to the influence upon Heidegger of the protestant theologian Karl Barth, who attempted in his own work to do a similar thing with religious scriptures.[43] To the philosophical establishment, Heidegger's approach was somewhat scandalous; to the young Strauss it was an absolute revelation. Strauss would carry this method forward over the course of a long and fruitful career, even while being at odds with Heidegger in almost every other way. And, due to Strauss, this methodology—a kind of bedazzled New Criticism, which focuses only on the dialogue of the interpreter and the text interpreted, and which always aims to debunk or destabilize the received wisdom of the tradition—has had lasting consequences in the United States, though not always in the ways in which conspiracy theorists, so eager to explain the disasters of contemporary politics, might simple-mindedly believe.[44]

---

[42] See, for starters, *Being and Time*, paragraph six, "The Task of Destroying the History of Ontology".
[43] See Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998), 111-112. Barth will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.
[44] See Mark Lilla, "The Closing of the Straussian Mind," *New York Review of Books*, November 4, 2004. Some of the recent attempts to trace Strauss's influence upon the current neoconservative regime in Washington D.C. include Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2004); "Die LeoKonservativen," *Der Spiegel* 32 (2003); James Atlas, "A Classicist's

Strauss's legacy, like that of, in a different register, the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, has to do with the practice of reading. At least according to the Straussians, it was Strauss who really taught Americans how to read a text.[45] And it was from Heidegger, in turn, that Strauss himself learned how to read. His recollection of his initiation—in Freiburg in 1922—to the Heideggerian practice of reading is a compelling one:

> One of the unknown young men in Husserl's entourage was Heidegger. I attended his lecture course from time to time without understanding a word, but sensed that he dealt with something of the utmost importance to man as man. I understood something on one occasion: when he interpreted the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. I had never heard nor seen such a thing—such a thorough and intensive interpretation of a philosophic text. On my way home I visited [Franz] Rosenzweig and said to him that compared to Heidegger, Max Weber, till then still regarded by me as the incarnation of the spirit of science and scholarship, was an orphan child.[46]

Heidegger won out over Husserl in Strauss's opinion because "he radicalized Husserl's critique of the [Neokantian] School of Marburg and turned it against Husserl: what is primary is not the object of sense perception but the things which we handle and with which we are concerned, *pragmata*."[47] Heidegger, in other words, made existence important. But existence, the *pragmata* of the world around us and our relation to it, could only be approached once the philosophical tradition itself was disassembled, and its

---

Legacy: New Empire Builders," *New York Times* May 4, 2003; Seymour M. Hersh, "Selective Intelligence," *The New Yorker* May 12, 2003; and Danny Postel's interview with Shadia Drury, "Noble Lies and Perpetual War: Leo Strauss, the Neo-Cons, and Iraq," *Chronicle of Higher Education* October 16, 2003.

[45] Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), 2.

[46] Leo Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts: Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss," *The St. John's Review/The College* 22:1 (April 1970): 1-5; reprinted in Leo Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 457-466, quote on page 461. For more on Strauss and Rosenzweig see Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

[47] Ibid.

metaphysical baggage thrown overboard. "Heidegger's work," Strauss recalled late in life,

> required and included what he called *Destruktion* of the tradition. (*Destruktion* is not quite so bad as destruction. It means taking down, the opposite of construction.) He intended to uproot Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, but this presupposed the laying bare of its roots, the laying bare of it as it was in itself and not as it had come to appear in the light of the tradition and of modern philosophy.[48]

Although Strauss and Heidegger differed in their estimations of the value of Plato and Aristotle (Strauss thought them fecund models for political thinking while Heidegger saw them as inaugurating the slow decline of the West into metaphysics), they shared a desire to return to their respective texts themselves in an original and provocative manner.

Strauss heard Heidegger lecture on Aristotle in both Freiburg and Marburg. They were lectures as important to Heidegger's own intellectual development as they were to Strauss's. It was through his interpretations of Aristotle, in fact, that Heidegger was not only debuting his radical new approach to the history of philosophy, but also setting his own philosophical path, which would lead up to the writing and publication of *Being and Time*.[49] The Aristotle lectures marked a crucial turning point in Heidegger's thinking, especially in that they focused his attention on the lived context of philosophical thought. The first step towards an understanding of this, of "factical life" or "life as such" as he called it in the 1921-22 course, is a radical debunking of the history of philosophy. In the very first lectures, Heidegger explicitly rejected the "calmness" and "objectivity" of traditional approaches to the history of philosophy, which claim to "do justice to history."

---

[48] Ibid., 462.

[49] See, for example, some of Heidegger's earliest lectures (1921-22), collected in *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2001). See also the later lectures from 1931, *Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995).

Such a stance results in mere "dilettantism," and stems from "weakness and indolence." True philosophical insight, Heidegger told his students, came from a "confrontation" with historical thinkers. This direct and immediate examination, unencumbered by decades or even centuries of previous interpretation, "has its own radical power of disclosing and illuminating." This, in a nutshell, was Heidegger's manifesto, the justification for the uniqueness of his own thinking.[50]

In a similar manner, the importance of these Aristotle lectures for the development of the Straussian method cannot be overestimated. Strauss's own description of the lectures bears strong resemblance to the ways in which his own students have remembered his teachings: Heidegger, "by uprooting and not simply rejecting the tradition of philosophy…made it possible for the first time after many centuries—one hesitates to say how many—to see the roots of the tradition as they are and thus perhaps to know, what so many believe, that those roots are the only natural and healthy roots."[51] What Heidegger did with Aristotle was "disinter the roots, bring them to light, to look at them with wonder."[52] In his own work, Strauss attempted something similar with the classic works of political philosophy. Whether it was Plato or Spinoza or Hobbes, he "confronted" the classic texts of Western political thought in an immediate fashion. But whereas Heidegger relegated everything to the *Seinsfrage*, Strauss aimed at exploring the "theologico-political problem"—i.e., the relationship between reason and

---

[50] Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, 3, 4.
[51] Strauss, "An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John's College in Honor of Jacob Klein (1959)," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 450.
[52] Ibid. For more on Strauss's debt to Heidegger in this regard, see Hwa Yol Jung, "The Life-World, Historicity, and Truth: Reflections on Leo Strauss's Encounter with Heidegger and Husserl," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 9:1 (January 1978): 11-25.

revelation.[53] More all-consuming than the question of Being was the problem of how political rights were to be founded. His solution to the theologico-political problem pointed him back to the very roots that, decades earlier, he had witnessed Heidegger disinter.

If Strauss adopted the Heideggerian method of destruction in his work and in his teaching, he, like Kristeller, certainly refrained from adopting Heidegger's ultimate aims. "For Strauss," as Shadia Drury has explained, "Heidegger was a great diagnostician of the modern malaise, but he did not have the cure."[54] Indeed, though they may have shared methods, Strauss and Heidegger took *Destruktion* in very different directions. One commentator has suggested that Strauss was more interested in recovering the roots of the tradition than Heidegger, whose *Destruktion* was more far-reaching and more devastating.[55] To some extent this is true. Heidegger's *Destruktion* was more relentless, more total, than Strauss's. But Heidegger was also interested in retrieval, just of a different sort. Strauss sought a return to Socratic rationalism, to the Platonic republic;

---

[53] See Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (1930; Chicago: Chicago UP, 1965); *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis* (1936; Chicago: Chicago UP, 1952); *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1953). On the centrality of the theologico-political problem in Strauss's work, see Daniel Tanguay, *Leo Strauss: Une biographie intellectuelle* (Paris: Grasset, 2003), 15, 21. The most important text on this issue is Strauss's preface to the English translation of his Spinoza book. Heidegger figures prominently in this essay, as Strauss addresses not only his Nazism—with reference to the republication of Heidegger's lecture course *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, which contained the infamous line about the "inner truth and greatness of National Socialism—but also his role, along with Franz Rosenzweig, in reopening the theological-political question. See in particular pages, 4, 9, and 12-13. In the end, Strauss comes down on the side of pre-modern rationalism, suggesting that "the inevitable of modern rationalism" may in fact be "the self-destruction of reason"—something to which Heidegger, in his opinion, contributed greatly (31).

[54] Shadia B. Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 69. Drury tries very hard to tar Strauss with the taint of Heidegger, so much so, in fact, they she later suggests, contradicting this very statement, that "It is not the case that Strauss merely shares Heidegger's diagnosis of the problem. He also shares a great deal of Heidegger's solutions" (75-76). I think the assessment quoted above is more accurate than this one.

[55] Steven Smith, "*Destruktion* or Recovery?: Leo Strauss's Critique of Heidegger," *Review of Metaphysics* 51:2 (December 1997): 345-378. See also Laurence Berns, "Heidegger and Strauss: Temporality, Religion and Political Philosophy," *Interpretation* 27:2 (Winter 1999-2000): 99-104; and James F. Ward, "Political Philosophy & History: The Links Between Strauss & Heidegger," *Polity* 20:2 (Winter 1987): 273-295.

Heidegger, however, looked beyond this to the fragments of pre-Socratic thought, to the enigmatic writings of thinkers such as Heraclitus and Parmenides.

Whatever the difference between student and pupil, Strauss was adamant from the very beginning that one existed. In "German Nihilism," a lecture he delivered on February 26, 1941, at the New School for Social Research in New York, Strauss did not hesitate to hold up Heidegger—along with figures such as Oswald Spengler, Carl Schmitt, Moeller van den Bruck, and Ernst Jünger—as a prime example of Weimar-era nihilism at work.[56] This was an assessment of Heidegger shared by his fellow émigré and Heidegger student Karl Löwith, as well as, as we have seen, Helmut Kuhn, and one he would return to again and again throughout his career.[57]

For Strauss, Heidegger's disregard for classical rationalism had led him to indoctrinate a whole generation of students with the rhetoric of martial revolution. As important as the "destructive" method was for Strauss's own intellectual development, he was convinced that Heidegger took it too far. What Weimar-era students had needed, Strauss exclaimed in "German Nihilism," was an articulation of "the positive, and not merely destructive, meaning of their aspirations."[58] *Destruktion* needed to be complimented with a positive definition of the Good. Insofar as figures like Heidegger, Jünger, and Schmitt failed to do this, they "paved the way for Hitler."[59] This, in short, was nihilism: "the rejection of principles of civilization as such."[60] From the lectern, Heidegger, in what Strauss mistakenly—but revealingly—labels a kind of "progressive

---

[56] Leo Strauss, "German Nihilism," edited by David Janssens and Daniel Tanguay, *Interpretation* 26:3 (Spring 1999), 362.
[57] See Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, edited by Richard Wolin, trans. Gary Steiner (New York: Columbia UP, 1995).
[58] Strauss, "German Nihilism," 362.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 364.

education," had demolished the fundamentals of civilized society.[61] Instead of returning students to the wisdom of the classics, his radicalism effectively cut them off from it.

Taking the historical context of "German Nihilism" into account, Strauss's denunciation of Heidegger's teaching makes a certain amount of sense. But even with the passing of time, Strauss would not revise this initial assessment. In a later text, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism," he attempted to work though the meaning of Heidegger's thinking on its own terms, and not just in relation to the catastrophe of Nazism, but his overall conclusion, which also can be found scattered throughout many of his other well-recognized writings, does not change.[62] For Strauss, as for Löwith, there was a direct link between Heidegger's philosophical nihilism and his support of Hitler. After all, existentialism—especially Heidegger's version—was simply a relativism that belonged "to the decline of Europe."[63]

Although he was quick to confine Heidegger to the historico-political context of Nazism, Strauss generally preferred to think of problems in political philosophy in eternal rather than historical terms, especially because, for him, historicism was synonymous with nihilism. In the preface to the American edition of his Hobbes book, he made plain his preference for the ancients over the moderns in this regard: "the modern mind had lost

---

[61] Ibid., 361. This attempt to mar Dewey's legacy with Nazism is emblematic of Strauss's deep suspicion of all modern thought. In any case, Dewey's relation to the progressive education movement was often contentious. See Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), 500-512.

[62] Strauss, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism," *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, selected and introduced by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 27-46. As Horst Mewes explains, Strauss also took an "explicit" stand against Heidegger in his *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (1983). This opposition owed much to Strauss's divergent opinions regarding the value of classical rationalism, especially when it came to the question of politics. See Mewes's essay, "Leo Strauss and Martin Heidegger: Greek Antiquity and the Meaning of Modernity," in Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt, eds., *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Émigrés and American Political Thought after World War II* (New York: German Historical Institute and Cambridge UP, 1995), 105-120, quotation on 105.

[63] Ibid., 39.

its self-confidence," he had thought at the time, "and was turning into nihilism." "It was high time," Strauss suggested, for "the case of the moderns against the ancients" to be "reopened, without any regard to cherished opinions or convictions."[64] The great texts of Western political thought, in his opinion, should not be confined by contextual interpretations, which would perfunctorily relegate them to a surpassed historical moment. To the contrary, their timelessness had to be rescued and affirmed. This is precisely why Strauss espoused the doctrine of natural law, which held that law could and should be founded on eternal truths. There was revelation or there was natural law; everything else simply slipped into relativistic nihilism. The rejection of natural law, in other words, necessarily leads to nihilism.[65] But how could Strauss be certain that he had unlocked the secrets of natural law in the pre-modern political tradition? What guaranteed that his approach was not simply part of the modern problem?

The most controversial aspect of Strauss's legacy has been his advocacy of a cult-like secrecy surrounding not only his work, but the classic texts of Western political thought as well. One might think that a philosopher who repeatedly and consistently called for a return to political rationalism would be a universalist, but such was not the case with Strauss. (Of course, the ancients were hardly universalists either.) To him, inquiry into the wisdom of the ancients was an esoteric affair, and was best carried out by the initiated, by those who knew how to "read between the lines" when necessary. In this regard, Strauss—like his many followers—was unapologetically elitist. (This, it should be noted, was what Allan Bloom loved about Strauss.[66])

---

[64] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, xv.
[65] See Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, 120.
[66] See Richard Bernstein, "A Very Unlikely Villain (or Hero)," *New York Times*, January 29, 1995.

Strauss made the case for his elitist approach in an essay that has been much talked about since it first appeared in 1941, and was subsequently reissued in book-form about a decade later.[67] "Persecution and the Art of Writing" is ostensibly an essay about interpretation. Taking as his subject the consequences that repression and persecution have on the writing of political philosophy, Strauss suggested that hitherto interpreters of the classical texts of his discipline had overlooked an important fact; namely, that many of these texts were written under political regimes that did not guarantee freedom from expression. Far from it, since free expression was typically granted only by the liberal state, which was, seen from the long perspective of historical development, a rather recent phenomenon. But what did this mean for modern-day interpreters? So Machiavelli and Hobbes and Plato all ran into trouble with the political powers that be, how should that change the meaning of their works?

Strauss suggested that persecution led political thinkers to choose their words carefully. With the threat of reprisal hanging over their heads, pre- and early modern political thinkers learned to bury their true opinions deep within the labyrinths of their texts: "the influence of persecution on literature is precisely that it compels all writers who hold heterodox views to develop a peculiar technique of writing, the technique which we have in mind when speaking of writing between the lines."[68] If persecution placed burdens upon authors, it also made demands of readers as well. Between-the-lines literature "is," Strauss wrote, "addressed not to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only."[69] Careful readers, those who knew how to decipher the author's

---

[67] Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," *Social Research* 8:4 (November 1941): 488-504. Reprinted in Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952; Chicago: Chicago UP, 1988), 22-37.
[68] Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 24.
[69] Ibid., 25.

code, who knew how to make sense of the author's seeming contradictions and omissions, were thus called upon to take part in a secret dialogue. Historical accounts of these texts, because they did not search for these hidden clues, because they did not partake of the secret dialogue, seeking instead merely to situate a text within its historical moment, were thus unable to penetrate the deeper truths of the writings. That writings could, like messages in a bottle, carry their meanings forward to a place and time when they would be more fully appreciated and understood was something that—Strauss thought—historicist readings denied.

Historicism is a malady particular to modernity. Nietzsche was neither the first nor the last to lament its corrosive influence on every sphere of life and learning.[70] Strauss's anti-historicism both partakes of and parts with this hallowed trope of German academic life, as venerable a current of thought in the land of *Dichter und Denker*, in fact, as historicism itself.[71] It is something that he absorbed from Heidegger. Like Heidegger, Strauss thought that historicism buried philosophical texts beneath layers of unnecessary contextual sediment. The "between-the-lines" approach that he adopted was intended, like Heidegger's *Destruktion*, to slice through this fossil record, exposing that which was truly important while simultaneously abandoning that which was not.

It was important to remember, as Strauss explained in "Persecution and the Art of Writing," that the ancients lived in another time, when a much wider and more permanent gulf separated the "wise" from the "vulgar." Indeed, it was a time when philosophy was

---

[70] See Nietzsche, "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life," trans. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980).

[71] On Strauss's anti-historicism, see Tanguay, *Leo Strauss*, 319: "Strauss a mis beacoup d'efforts pour articuler une description non historiciste de la philosophie. Afin de contrer efficacement l'historicisme, ile se devait de penser le différentes possibilities philosophiques, sans les reduire à des épiphénoménes de l'historie, mais en les envisageant sous la forme de possibilities eternelles, ou de problèmes toujours presents à l'esprit humain." See also David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003).

often held in public contempt. Because the ancients—as well as the early moderns—wrote only for small circles of like-minded and trustworthy companions and students, they were, Strauss thought, more apt to adopt a "between the lines" approach in their writings. For the ancients, "philosophy, or science, was essentially a privilege of 'the few.'"[72] And, over time, this belief came to determine the very act of philosophizing itself. Even when philosophers were not under immediate political threat, they continued to write only for those who had ears to hear, for the initiated.[73]

Was this true of Strauss as well? "Persecution and the Art of Writing" cries out for a "between the lines" interpretation of its own. A historical approach would merely highlight the circumstances of the essay's origin, that is, the rise of totalitarianism in Europe. In this context, persecution is a very real and immediate concern, and it is hard not to think of the émigré Strauss contemplating this situation as he writes the essay. But, going beyond this initial reading, we can safely argue, in a "between the lines" manner, that the essay is not only about the rise of Nazism, nor is it concerned simply with the methodological problem it poses itself, which is the question of how ancient pre- and early modern philosophical texts should be read; rather, "Persecution and the Art of Writing" is a summary statement of Strauss's own pedagogical worldview. It is his justification for elitism, secrecy, and cult-like devotion in the spheres of philosophy and

---

[72] Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," 34.

[73] In "What is Liberal Education?," a commencement address delivered in 1959 to the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults at the University of Chicago, Strauss suggested the following: "Liberal education is the necessary endeavor to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society. Liberal education reminds those members of a mass democracy who have ears to hear, of human greatness." Later, in the same address, he even replicates Heidegger's disparagements of idle chatter and the inauthenticity of the masses. "Liberal education," he explained, "is at the same time a training in boldness: it demands from us the complete break with noise, the rush, the thoughtlessness, the cheapness of the Vanity Fair of the intellectuals as well as of their enemies. It demands from us the boldness implied in the resolve to regard the accepted views as mere opinions, or to regard the average opinions as extreme positions which are at least as likely to be wrong as the most strange or the least popular opinions. Liberal education is liberation from vulgarity." The essay is reprinted in Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (New York: Basic, 1968), quotations from 5, 8.

politics. Only those who followed Strauss down this esoteric path would be able to access "the beauty of those hidden treasures" scattered throughout the classic texts of the Western tradition.[74] The classics, after all, were addressed "neither to the unphilosophic majority nor the perfect philosopher as such, but the young men who might become philosophers."[75] This is Strauss as the pied-piper of political philosophy, a persona that bears a striking resemblance to the "hidden king" with whom he had studied during his student days in Marburg.

Heidegger's image was as important to his legacy as any of his philosophical writings. Reflecting on this fact, the Nietzsche translator Walter Kaufmann once offered the following portrait of the lecturer in action:

> Heidegger, a short man vibrant with energy and a demonic touch, may put one in mind of Napoleon. There was something electric about him, and he generated a sense of excitement. Whether in conversation—"under four eyes," as the Germans say—or in a huge auditorium, lecturing to thousands, he created the expectation that something of the first importance was at stake and on the verge of discovery. When he entered the lecture hall, the atmosphere was charged, and though his audience soon got lost and many people went literally to sleep, he always managed to regain their attention before he concluded with some intimation that, although everything was dark now, next time a great revelation was to be expected. And most of the audience always blamed itself for its failure to understand what he had said, and came back. Some professors who were his students before 1933 and felt appalled by his quick embrace of Nazism still felt a quarter century later that he was the greatest teacher they had ever had, especially in seminars.[76]

Strauss may never have been as captivating as this in his seminars at the University of Chicago, but he was greeted by his many students with comparable adulation. By replicating Heidegger's radical approach to the history of philosophy in his own

---

[74] Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," 37.
[75] Ibid., 36.
[76] Walter Kaufmann, "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States," *Salmagundi* 10-11, special double-issue on The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals (Fall 1969—Winter 1970), 82.

"between the lines approach" to reading and to teaching, it seems that Strauss also replicated the cult-like aura that still lingers, like cigarette smoke in an after-hours bar, around Heidegger's legacy today.

Many will bristle at the suggestion that Strauss's methodology is nothing but a blatant attempt to justify esotericism and elitism, and further, as I am suggesting here, that it owes something to Heidegger's example. But tales of secrecy, symbology, and numerology in the scholarship of the Straussian vanguard are too numerous to be casually dismissed. They are gossip-fodder, yes, but they are also emblematic of a closed and guarded method of reading, of an exceedingly narrow kind of interpretation.[77] The critics of this approach have not been limited merely to those who find questionable the clannish aspects of the Straussian movement. There are intellectual reasons, not just interpersonal ones, for resisting these teachings.

It was none other than Kristeller, in fact, who challenged Strauss's "between the lines" approach to reading the history of philosophy. In a 1961 article devoted to problems of historical methodology he argued that "no reliable techniques for discovering and interpreting what is written between the lines of a work" existed.[78] He was particularly worried that the Straussian approach—although he refrained from giving it this name specifically—took too many liberties with its historical texts. "If we abandon the standard that our interpretation of a thinker must rest on the evidence of his written statements," Kristeller continued,

---

[77] See Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, 95-108. For another critique of Straussianism, see Stephen Holmes, *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1993), especially pages 61-87.

[78] Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Some Problems of Historical Knowledge," *The Journal of Philosophy* 58:4 (February 16, 1961), 102. Needless to say, Kristeller has not been the only person to challenge Strauss on this.

> we open the door to much unverifiable speculation that is no better than the allegorical or cabbalistic methods employed by ancient and medieval theologians. I am skeptical about this talk of the secret thought of past philosophers who in the process usually become, against the testimony of their extant writings, the ventriloquists of a completely different philosophy which happens to be that of the interpreter who claims to know the author better than anybody else, including the author himself.[79]

Reading between the lines, in Kristeller's estimation, was a risky venture. Once the texts themselves—often the only source of evidence available for ancient and medieval thought—were made subservient to a supposed hidden meaning, no criteria could differentiate between competing interpretations. All that was left was the performance of the interpretation itself, the way in which the interpreter could coax the buried meaning of the text out from beneath its misleading surface. The more masterful the ventriloquist, in other words, the more convincing the interpretation.

Kristeller's critique of Strauss adds an important qualification to our notion of a methodological Heideggerianism. It demonstrates that what Kuhn tried to highlight in his review of Kristeller's Ficino book (as well as elsewhere), namely the influence of a radical new approach to reading (and writing) the history of philosophy upon a group of gifted and influential students, was by no means uniform.[80] Heidegger's critique of

---

[79] Ibid., 102-103. Generally speaking, Kristeller was much more of a positivist when it came to questions of historical scholarship. He believed that scholarship progressed over time, and that it was capable of distinguishing between probable and improbable assertions. See, for example, his brief contribution, "The Humanities as Scholarship and a Branch of Knowledge," in Sidney Hook, Paul Kurtz, and Miro Todorovich, eds., *The Philosophy of the Curriculum: The Need for General Education* (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1975), 217-220.

[80] One of the elsewheres is a review of Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), a book that also takes up the theologico-political problem in its own fashion. Here Kuhn again highlights Löwith's methodological indebtedness to Heidegger's "critical destruction of metaphysical tradition." But whereas in his review of Kristeller's Ficino book he had worried only over the methodological shortcomings of the Heideggerian approach to historical texts, here he expresses concern over the ultimate aims of such an approach. Such an "analytical demolition," after all, brings one "face to face with Nothingness," and unless one is ready to resort to faith, Nothingness can be a difficult burden to bear for long. See Helmut Kuhn, " Review of Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*," *Journal of Philosophy* 46:25 (December 8, 1949): 822-826, quotes from page 824. An early version of Löwith's main

historicism left its mark on his students in varying degrees, almost like a sunburn. It was not simply that those who spent the most time exposed to the Heideggerian method or style were burnt the worst, for fairer-skinned acolytes—to continue the metaphor—simply may have been more susceptible. Heidegger's students, as Kristeller and Strauss demonstrate, absorbed to varying degrees Heidegger's methodological radicalism—each according to his or her own preexisting intellectual constitution. And Strauss's methodological debt to Heidegger was, in this regard, more profound, but only because it was much more radical.

Pseudo-Philosophy

If anyone were in a position to be burned due to prolonged exposure to the Heideggerian idiom, it would have been Günther Stern, who later adopted the surname Anders (1902-1992). It was not just that Anders, like Kristeller and Strauss and the rest of the children and stepchildren, had studied under Heidegger in the twenties. And it was not just that, in his student days, Anders's devotion to the Heideggerian project—as he himself admitted—bordered on the fanatical.[81] What really sets Anders apart is the fact that, over the course of a long and productive life, during which he made stunning

---

thesis was first published as "The Theological Background of the Philosophy of History," in *Social Research* 13:1 (March 1946): 51-80.

[81] This fact was well-documented in a recent presentation at the 2006 American Historical Association Meeting in Philadelphia by Jason Dawsey, in a presentation entitled "Günther Anders's Confrontation with Heidegger." As Dawsey, who is currently completing a much-needed study of Anders, explained, Heidegger eventually became rather annoyed with the overly persistent Anders. In a letter to Arendt (who was not yet married to Anders) he even complained that Anders was "one of the worst," and that dealing with him made "one wonder sometimes whether it is worth putting so much energy into teaching and whether it would not be much better to concentrate entirely on research." See Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Letters, 1925-1975*, ed. Ursula Ludz, trans. Andrew Shields (New York: Harcourt, 2004), 38. A copy of Dawsey's very informative dissertation proposal can be found online at http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/projects/anders/DawseyDissProposal049.htm.

contributions to philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of technology, and, as if that were not enough, he also spearheaded global anti-nuclear activism—despite all this, he devoted considerable energy toward directly coming to terms with Heidegger's influence. Found amongst the papers of his *Nachlass*, in fact, were overstuffed folders that together formed a file labeled—by Anders himself—"confrontation with Heidegger."[82]

Anders's *Auseinandersetzung* was far more explicit, and far more philosophical, than either Kristeller's or Strauss's, but it has had far less of an influence on American intellectual life. There is a simple reason for this: American readers simply were not exposed to it, which is probably why Wolin did not include a discussion of Anders in *Heidegger's Children*.[83] We now know, however, that Anders, both while living as an émigré in the United States and after returning to Europe, spent many years articulating a philosophical critique of Heidegger's work. Although some of the writings that stemmed from this ongoing labor were later published in German journals, much of it consisted of fragments and drafts that have only recently been discovered, meaning of course that they have only recently seen the light of published existence. *Über Heidegger*, which collects these various pieces, was published almost a decade after Anders's death.[84]

Primarily because he returned to Europe after the war, and because he published almost of all of his work in German, Anders has been almost entirely ignored by American philosophers and historians both, despite the fact that his collected body of

---

[82] Gerhard Oberschlick, "Editorische Notiz," in Günther Anders, *Über Heidegger*, Herausgegeben von Gerhard Oberschlick in Verbindung mit Werner Reinmann als Übersetzer, Mit einem Nachwort von Dieter Thomä (München: C.H. Beck, 2001), 395: "Auseinandersetzung mit Heidegger."

[83] I am not the only one to call attention to this omission. See Ulrich Raulff, "Das frechste und vorlauteste von Heideggers Kindern widerspricht dem Vater: Günther Anders' Aufzeichnungen über den Magier von Meßkirch," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, December 5th, 2001.

[84] These texts are now collected in *Über Heidegger*.

work, beyond its relevance to Heidegger scholarship, marks an original contribution to the field of philosophical anthropology and touches upon some of the most politically and morally troubling issues of the last century, which Eric Hobsbawm rightly called the "age of extremes."[85] If Anders's name appears at all these days in scholarly monographs, it usually stems only from his high-profile anti-nuclear activism in the fifties and sixties, a topic to which Anders was undoubtedly committed, but which was by no means his only concern.

Sadly, to the majority of American Heidegger scholars today, Anders is remembered for either of two rather superficial reasons: first, that he, in addition to being a distant cousin of Walter Benjamin, was married to Hannah Arendt for a time; and second; that he was on the receiving end of a remark made infamous by the recurring debates about Heidegger's Nazism.[86] During his student days, Anders was invited up to the cabin at Todtnauberg, were, indulging in both the spirit of the times and his own self-made rustic image, Heidegger would hold forth around evening bonfires after a day of healthy physical activity—hiking, chopping wood—outdoors. At one of these events, Heidegger's wife, Elfride, noting Anders's sturdy physical makeup, asked if he had considered joining the local Nazi youth group. She was shocked to discover that Anders—at the time, still named Stern—was a Jew.[87] It is safe to say that, after this incident, Anders had no illusions about the reactionary ends to which Heidegger's thinking could be put.

---

[85] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1995).
[86] On Anders's relationship with Arendt, see Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For the Love of the World* (1982; New Haven: Yale UP, 2004).
[87] See Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 140. See also Dieter Thomä's *Nachwort*, "Gegen Selbsterhitzung und Naturvergessenheit," in *Über Heidegger*, page 398.

Addressing the counterrevolutionary tendencies of Heidegger's main work, *Being and Time*, was in fact the main theme of Anders's only significant English-language publication devoted to Heidegger. "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," appeared, like so much émigré philosophy, in the pages of Marvin Farber's *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* in March, 1948.[88] Even though the recent publication of Anders's many notes and drafts allows us to reconstruct in rather intricate detail his life-long struggle with Heidegger's philosophical work, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy" actually synthesizes most of the ideas scattered throughout his Heideggeriania; it presents his case against Heidegger in more or less succinct fashion and anticipates more widely read postwar critiques of Heidegger, such as Theodor W. Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity*, which was first published in Germany in 1964.[89]

Anders begins by acknowledging that Heidegger's thought cannot be summarily dismissed, that it must "be taken most seriously." He suggests that Heidegger's originality lay in his claim to offer neither a naturalistic nor a supra-naturalistic account of life.[90] The key to understanding Heidegger's groundbreaking approach was his radical extension—we might even say sublimation, though Anders does not—of Husserl's account of consciousness. Because Husserl failed to progress from the realm of the theoretical to that of the concrete, because he remained trapped at the level of theoretical

---

[88] Günther Stern (Anders), "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 8:3 (March, 1948): 337-371. Anders, even after returning to Europe, was for many years a consulting foreign editor of the journal (and for some reason used the name Stern throughout).

[89] Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Kurt Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973). In his presentation at the AHA (mentioned in note 80 above), Dawsey explained that Anders's essay greatly influenced Adorno's argument. Adorno's reliance upon Anders's essay is not without irony in that Adorno, many years earlier, had been behind the rejection of his *Habilitation* proposal at Frankfurt. See Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 80.

[90] Anders, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," 338.

consciousness, he was unable to grasp life as such. Heidegger, in abandoning the Cartesian premises of Husserl's phenomenology, sought to dig deeper into concrete existence. As Karl Löwith pointed out in a 1948 essay in *Social Research*, Husserl wanted to bracket the world; Heidegger, by contrast, wanted to delve right into it.[91] But did he actually do so, or was this just empty talk? As the title of his essay suggests, Anders felt that Heidegger did not take his critique of Husserl's concept of consciousness far enough. Heidegger, Anders suggests, flinched; just when he was about to clear the way for a path toward the philosophical understanding of existence as it is lived concretely, he resorted instead to the very theoretical language he had tried to overcome.[92]

"On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy" proceeds by way of a terminological critique. The root of the problem, for Anders, has to do with the ambiguity of Heidegger's key concepts. In a marathon-like footnote that runs across three pages of the essay, Anders takes aim at *Dasein* itself, and shows how it both subsumes and evades such categories as man, ego, individual, and even consciousness. Anders thinks that Heidegger is intentionally ambiguous about the meaning of *Dasein* because it allows him "an extraordinary chance for making obscure statements," of which "Heidegger never fails to take advantage."[93] But this ambiguity prevents Heidegger from addressing materialism directly; he can speak only in vague metaphysical terms about concepts, like alienation, that are really rooted in concrete existence—for example, machine-labor. When Heidegger talks about hammers and tools and "equipment," as he

---

[91] Karl Löwith, "Heidegger: Problem and Background of Existentialism," *Social Research* 15:3 (September 1948), 365.
[92] Anders, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," 340.
[93] Ibid., 344, bottom of note 9.

does, for example, in paragraph fifteen of *Being and Time*, in which he describes the ways that their use helps to disclose the world around us, he sounds like a luddite, or, at the very least, anachronistic. Heidegger cannot offer an examination of concrete existence because has no sense for modern life in general and modern labor in particular. As Anders puts it:

> at the point where Heidegger seems to become "concrete" or "pragmatic," he is most obsolete, shows, so to speak, a machine-smashing attitude, for all his examples are taken from the provincial shoemaker workshop. The alienation produced precisely by those tools that are supposed to be revealing, is alien to him. All the more puzzling is the fact that in a way "alienation" plays a fundamental role in his experiences; but wherever it appears, it does so in a harmless disguise, as "metaphysical alienation."[94]

Heidegger's ambiguity in effect masks his inability to address factical life. He turns problems of everyday existence into metaphysical quandaries, timeless and inescapable except for the powers of philosophical reflection. This, for Anders, is the real danger inherent in Heidegger's early thought: the ambiguity of his terms fails to highlight the real concrete issues to which they allude. One by one then, Anders works through these concepts, beginning with *Dasein* and continuing through *Sorge* (which Anders renders as "interest") all the way through to—following the path of *Being and Time* itself—the concepts of temporality and history. In each case, Anders attempts to show how the indeterminacy of each concept hides the fact that Heidegger, far from laying everyday existence bare, in fact flees from it. Even Heidegger's hallowed concept of "Being toward death," for example, the awareness of mortality and finitude that serves as the cornerstone of his existential analytic, is really just a way of avoiding life itself. As Anders describes it, the ability of facing one's own death is "despite the macabre ring of the formula, a new pseudo-radicalism, ultimately even a sort of escapism […] What a

[94] Ibid., 344.

miserable, what a desperate form of freedom, to live toward death instead of liking to live or instead of living for a cause."[95]

That Heidegger, flying high above the world of hunger and fear and machine-labor (the world, in other words, of the concrete), cannot offer more than an empty resoluteness in the face of death is something Anders stresses again and again in "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy." "The province of Heidegger's concreteness begins behind hunger," he explains, "and ends before economy and machine."[96] This avoidance of the concrete problems of life, according to Anders, is deliberate. By his assessment, Heidegger's is a call to inaction rather than action. It is a hollow shell, an existential account with the existence left out. Heidegger "is like an anarchist who has made it a rule not to leave his studio, who, in his philosophical acts resolves—no, not to do this or that, but to *be*, to be resolved. The allegedly bold jump out of the 'generality' of theory into the concreteness of existence ends as a purely theoretical existence, as the pure '*mood*' of 'resoluteness überhaupt'."[97] Heidegger liked to portray himself as a revolutionary, and more often than not he may have convinced his students that his was a radical philosophy in the making. But, like the peasant attire that he donned for his lectures, his radicalism may not have been anything more than just a style, a kind of philosophical fashion statement. Resoluteness remained unexplained. As even his own students used to joke: "I am resolved, only towards what I don't know."[98]

---

[95] Ibid., 355.
[96] Ibid., 347. This line of critique would come to define the kind of social-ethical critique that Anders continually brought to bear on Heidegger. As Thomä explains in his *Nachwort* to *Über Heidegger*, this was especially true of Anders's description of Heidegger's a-political trajectory: Heidegger went directly from the "pre-political" (*Being and Time*) to the post-political (*The Letter on Humanism*), completely bypassing the political, which is also the world of the concrete. See Thomä, "Nachwort," 423.
[97] Ibid., 356.
[98] This comes from Karl Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, trans. Elizabeth King (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 30

Still, Heideggerian resoluteness was no laughing matter. Its core may have been empty of normative content, but it nevertheless cast a powerful spell. Karl Löwith, from whom we get the joke above, was the first to admit, decades later, that the concept held legions of students captive:

> The fascination that Heidegger has exerted over us as a result of his Resolve devoid of content and his ruthless critique has endured. It is now twenty years since I first went to Freiburg, but even today he manages to captivate the listener by the enigmatic nature of his intensive lecturing, and the influence of his teaching can still be felt everywhere.[99]

For Anders, the consequences of this "resoluteness überhaupt" were obvious, and, seen from a postwar perspective, disturbing. He, like his fellow émigrés, only knew the details of Heidegger's dalliance with Nazism from afar, but it was enough to prove that "resoluteness überhaupt" was no match for—was in fact conducive of—totalitarian faith. As Anders puts in "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy":

> The activistic vehemence of his philosophizing is nothing but the reverse of the fact that he neither postulates nor claims the slightest moral or political action in this world, the reverse of the fact that he (like the majority of the German *petit bourgeoisie*) carried through a moral and political sit-down-strike. Little wonder that he had no principle whatsoever, no social idea, in short: *nothing*, when the trumpet of National Socialism started blaring into his moral vacuum: he became a Nazi.[100]

Heidegger's susceptibility to Nazism, in Anders's opinion, went hand in hand with both his provincial, religious background as well as the general mood that defined the decade following the German defeat in 1918.[101] Anders suggests that Heidegger's retreat from the world (notwithstanding his repeated claims to have returned philosophy to the concreteness of existence) had a lot to do with, in fact actually mirrors, the general

---

[99] Ibid., 44.
[100] Anders, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," 356.
[101] For Anders's discussion of the religious and provincial aspects of Heidegger's thought, see ibid., 375-363.

turn inward of a defeated nation. Having lost her fleet and her colonies, Germany entered a prolonged period of wound-licking that would only fuel the fires of xenophobia and hatred that Hitler later set burning.[102] In the development of Heidegger's philosophy, this situation resulted in the articulation of a "philosophy of life hostile to life," as one of the last sections of Anders's essay is entitled.[103] It resulted, in other words, in a philosophy of life centered upon, paradoxically, the burden of death. It was not a philosophy of life at all, certainly not a reflection of or meditation on concrete existence, but instead, a denial of it.

In the end, Anders, in "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," ends up describing Heidegger's work not only as a "Philosophy of life hostile to life," but as an example of "Stuffed Nihilism" as well.[104] Like Kuhn, Löwith, and Strauss, Anders concluded that Heidegger ultimately fell into nihilism.[105] Heidegger, he admits, "has digested a larger part of the philosophy of the European mind than any philosophy since Hegel," but none of this historical knowledge, with which his thought is stuffed, has helped him to articulate a positive and concrete objective for the task of philosophy. There is a gaping whole at the heart of Heidegger's existentialism, one that carriers over into the work of all who, like Sartre, would take up his cause-less cause: "The desperate motto of all active desperados, 'all or nothing,' changed under the hands of the existential

---

[102] Ibid., 359, 366. It might be worth comparing Anders's remarks to the main arguments of Wolfgang Schivelbusch's *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).
[103] Ibid., 361-365.
[104] Ibid., 370.
[105] Heidegger, as he liked to claim, had worked through the problem of nihilism in his Nietzsche lectures during the late thirties and early forties, the original versions of which, when he later published them, he thoroughly suppressed. See Gregory Fried, "On the Editing of Heidegger's Nietzsche Lectures," in his *Heidegger's* Polemos: *From Being to Politics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), 257-261.

one into an "all and nothing," which makes it well understandable that the book that continues his work is not entitled *To be or not to be*, but *Être et Néant*."[106]

In its own way, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy" is, like its subject, also stuffed. It is simultaneously a Marxist critique, a socio-historical interpretation, an explication, and a polemic, strung together—not always elegantly—with a fair share of jokes, witticisms, and rhetorical flourishes. It is an essay bursting at the seams, and, reading it, one gets the sense that Anders could have turned any of its nine roman-numeraled sections into an essay of its own. Indeed, the essay reads like many different essays condensed into one because it in fact is. It is a compilation of Anders's critical writings on Heidegger during his exile years: it brings together arguments that until 1948 existed only in fragments—in book reviews, lectures, or personal notebooks, not to mention his own head. Now, thanks to the publication of *Über Heidegger*, we can examine some of these fragments—the written ones at least—and begin to chart the course that took Anders from eager acolyte to trenchant critic.

From the various texts collected in *Über Heidegger* it is clear that Anders considered Heidegger's terminological ambiguity, which he made the centerpiece of the "Pseudo-Concreteness" essay, an almost entirely insurmountable problem from the start. A 1936 manuscript composed in the United States and devoted to Heidegger's use of the concepts "essence" and "authenticity" finds such notions, in Heidegger's hands at least, fundamentally "empty".[107] The hollow core of Heidegger's existential analytic allowed him to appear radical without really being radical. Pseudo-revolutionary jargon, Anders

---

[106] Anders, "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," 370.
[107] Anders, "Wesen und Eigentlichkeit, namentlich bei Heidegger," in *Über Heidegger*, 32-38. Referring to Heidegger's concept of authenticity, he writes: "Aber 'er selbst' und seine 'Eigentlichkeit' bleiben vollkommen leer" (38).

suggests, relies upon this emptiness: in order to appear radical, it must disembowel philosophical concepts at the same time that it appropriates them.[108] Nowhere was this more apparent than in Heidegger's allusions to the world of concrete, factical existence.

While toiling away at various odd jobs in New York and in Southern California, including work at a Hollywood costume factory, Anders contemplated Heidegger's inability to address the alienating realities of modern industrial life.[109] In an essay composed around the same time as "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy," an essay that was eventually published as "Nihilismus und Existenz" in the *Neue Rundschau* in October, 1946, Anders argues that what is missing from *Sein und Zeit* is as important—perhaps more important—than what is included in it. Nowhere in the book is there any mention of industrialization, democracy, or the worker's movement. There is no recognition, Anders laments, of the wider world beyond Heidegger's provincial surroundings. As in his *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* essay, Anders portrays Heidegger's existential philosophy again as a post-war retreat into the anti-modern provincialism that defined his Catholic, petite-bourgeois background.[110]

Fleeing the wider world, Heidegger, in Anders's opinion, also fled from concrete existence. "*Dasein*," as Anders explains "Nihilismus und Existenz," "has no hunger. It has no body. Its morality has no social frame. Its origin is without ancestors."[111] (Indeed, elsewhere in the essay Anders even refers to the notion of *Dasein* as a kind of "homunculus."[112]) All that *Dasein* has instead is "meaning," the question of which, as

---

[108] Ibid. Anders's reference to pseudo-revolution comes in the very first line of the text, on page 32.
[109] On Anders's time in exile, see his *Tagebücher und Gedichte* (München: C.H. Beck, 1985).
[110] Anders, "Nihilismus und Existenz," in *Über Heidegger*, 39-71. See pages 42-43.
[111] Ibid., 64: "Das Dasein hat keinen Hunger. Es hat keinen Leib. Siene Moral hat keinen Gesellschaftsrahmen. Sein Ursprung ist ahnenlos. Aber es hat 'Sinn'."
[112] Ibid. See the section of the essay entitled "Der Homunkulus-Komplex," 50-54.

Anders admits, fascinated a whole generation of students in the twenties, but which remained, in Heidegger's hands, a fundamentally hollow concept.[113] Unable to think through human existence and all that it entails—such as birth and development and actual work—concretely, Heidegger can only offer an abstract account of life. *Geworfenheit*, or throwness, for example, was Heidegger's way of avoiding the starting point of life, namely birth. It suggests that *Dasein*, far from being an actual living, breathing human entity, was always and everywhere created *ex nihilo*. This, as Anders puts it, was the origin of Heidegger's nihilism: "the nihilism of origins" led directly to "Heideggerian nihilism."[114] Heidegger all but denied the social world beyond *Dasein*, so focused was he on the authenticity and resoluteness of an individual existence wrestling heroically with the meaning of Being.

Seen from the other side of the Second World War, the adoption of Heidegger's conception of *Dasein* could only have disastrous political consequences. As if to prove this point, Anders concludes "Nihilismus und Existenz" with a brief and polemical, yet revealing, comparison of Heidegger and Hitler. Though Heidegger's allegiance to National Socialism has been a source of debate almost as along as it has been known, Anders was among the first and only thinkers to offer a philosophical examination of what Heidegger's thought may have had in common with Nazism.[115] Anders outlines four fundamental similarities. First, both Hitler and Heidegger struck an "anti-democratic" tone. Second, both offered "doctrines of occupation" (*Okkupations-*

---

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid., 51: "Mit dem Nihilismus des Ursprungs beginnt also der Heideggersche Nihilismus."
[115] It was not until the end of the century that a philosopher undertook such a comparison. The result remains one of the best books on the topic of Heidegger's Nazism. See Johannes Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Doktrinen), which reduced the world to a mere "attribute" of one's existence; Hitler may have occupied the world "with tanks and bombs" and Heidegger by "speculative means," but both viewed the world as the sphere of self-realization and little else. Third, both were fascinated by the idea that death was the final fulfillment and realization of an authentic life. And fourth, both Hitler and Heidegger promulgated theories against civilization (*Anti-Zivilationstheorien*) that opposed every kind of universalism.[116] It was a summary and somewhat brash critique, but it was onto something.

By all accounts, Anders was obsessed with Heidegger's early existential philosophy. He was determined, it seems, to sort out its moral, political, and social effects. The numerous notes and drafts devoted to Heidegger that he composed during his exile years in America—roughly, from 1936-1950—have been collected in *Über Heidegger* under the all-too-appropriate title of "Obstinate Philosophy: 'Being and Time'."[117] These fragments are like pieces of stained glass, full of color and occasionally brilliant in their own right, in need of no larger perspective or structure. They refract Heidegger's thought into a myriad of dazzling constellations. They are also amazingly prescient, anticipating as they do topics that in some instances Heidegger scholars have taken decades to address, such as the comparison with Hitler, the ambiguity of *Dasein* and other key terms, and even Heidegger's complicated relationship to the racist ideologies of the early twentieth century.[118]

---

[116] Anders, "Nihilismus und Existenz," 69-71. In other drafts, Anders makes a direct link between Heidegger's and Hitler's solipsism and the rise of national chauvinism: see *Über Heidegger*, 275.
[117] Anders, *Über Heidegger*, 116-277.
[118] Anders describes Heidegger's understanding of history, which is singular and unique to only homogenous peoples, as "an attitude whose vulgar sister is race-theory" (156). The topic of Heidegger's racism has reemerged with the ongoing publication of previously unpublished manuscripts and lecture notes from the thirties. Although critical of crass biological racism, Heidegger, it seems, did fall back upon explicitly racist tropes when lecturing on the *Volk* during these years. For more on this, see, amongst other recent works on this topic, Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger's alleged challenge to Nazi concepts of race," in

Despite the diversity of his critical reflections, Anders returns again and again to a few key insights regarding his former teacher's political and philosophical failings. Chief among these failings—as he pointed out in both the pseudo-concreteness and nihilism essays—was Heidegger's backward-looking anti-modernism. Heidegger's motto, he quips, could have been "'forward-back!'" (*Vorwärts-zurück*), because it was only in looking backwards that Heidegger offered a vision for the future.[119] Heidegger's world was not the modern world of industry, but the small-town world of hand-tools and handicrafts—a romantic world shot through with nostalgia.[120] Emanating from Heidegger's religious roots (a topic which we will examine in greater detail in the next chapter), this anti-modernism resulted in an anti-democratic individualism that bordered on solipsism: Heidegger's work amounted to what Anders calls "a philosophical justification for a-sociality."[121] *Dasein* has more in common with the self-denial of the monastery than the dynamic give and take of modern democracy.[122]

What Anders's critique really boiled down to, of course, was the charge that Heidegger's was only a pseudo-concreteness. *Dasein* was "thrown" into the world instead of being born into it; it had no material needs; and, most of all, it never had to come to terms with political power.[123] Marcuse began to wrestle with the same questions in a 1929 essay he wrote under Heidegger's influence entitled, simply, "On Concrete Philosophy," but it was not until much later that he articulated a critique as unsparing as

---

James Faulconer and Mark A. Wrathall, eds., *Appropriating Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); and Hugh Eakin, "Out of Freiburg, into the Fire," *Lingua Franca* 11.8 (September, 2001): 9-11. See also, most recently, Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie: Autour des seminaries inédits de 1933-1935* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).

[119] Anders, *Über Heidegger*, 175.

[120] Ibid., 212.

[121] Ibid., 192.

[122] Ibid., see 176-177, "Der Selbst als Kloster". For more on the critique of Heidegger as solipsistic, see 187, 202

[123] Ibid. See, respectively, 206 and 237, 248, and 256.

Anders's.[124] In the end, the two émigrés arrived at pretty much the same conclusion. Heidegger, even when making overtures toward the world of factical life, remained on the level of abstract thought. Unlike Marx, Heidegger could not approach materialism in any meaningful way, which is precisely why Anders held up his teacher's philosophy as an example of pseudo-concreteness.[125] In an interview first published in 1977, Marcuse spoke repeatedly of Heidegger's "false concreteness." All of his teacher's major concepts—*Dasein*, *das Man*, *Sein*, *Existenz*—were, as Marcuse described them, "'bad' abstracts in the sense that they are not conceptual vehicles to comprehend the real concreteness in the apparent one. They lead away."[126]

Like Marcuse, then, it was perhaps more as a Marxist than as a Heideggerian that Anders went on to address what he saw as the most pressing moral and political issues of his day: namely the threat of nuclear Armageddon and the technological single-mindedness from which it arose.[127] Although Anders continued to write about Heidegger after he returned to Europe in 1950, compiling a collection of notes as extensive as those collected in "Obstinate Philosophy," Anders by and large turned his back on professional philosophy.[128] He turned instead toward activism and became, in the process, a noted public intellectual.[129] Even his most 'philosophical' treatise from this period, *The*

---

[124] This text has been collected in Marcuse, *Heideggerian Marxism*, edited by Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 34-52.
[125] Anders, *Über Heidegger*, 245.
[126] Marcuse's interview with the philosopher Frederick Olafson has been reprinted in Wolin and Abromeit, *Heideggerian Marxism* as "Heidegger's Politics: An Interview," 165-175, quotation on 167.
[127] On Marcuse's intellectual connection to Heidegger, see Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 134-172; and Wolin, "Introduction: What is Heideggerian Marxism?," in Marcuse, *Heideggerian Marxism*, xi-xxx.
[128] These later drafts have been collected under the title of "Frömmigkeitsphilosophie" in *Über Heidegger*, 278-366.
[129] Among Anders's many interventions on behalf of peace and anti-nuclear movements was his participation in the Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation's War Crimes Tribunal in 1967, which symbolically condemned American atrocities in Southeast Asia. See John Duffet, ed., *Against the Crime of Silence: Proceedings of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal* (London: O'Hare Books, 1968). See also,

Antiquatedness of Humanity (*Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*), the first volume of which was published in 1956, was devoted first and foremost to an analysis of the nuclear question.[130]

Among Anders's many interventions as an activist and moralist was a public dialogue that he initiated with U.S. Air Force Captain Claude Eatherly, who piloted the last reconnaissance flight over Hiroshima, and who essentially okayed the dropping of the atomic bomb on that city.[131] Anders was obviously no friend of the Axis powers, but the dropping of the bomb by American forces was a watershed event; for the first time in human history technology had outstripped human attempts to control it. The question now, in the nuclear age, was how humanity might adequately come to grips with the technology that now threatened its very existence. Humanity lived constantly under the threat of annihilation, and only a consistent and concerted attempt to address this fact, to address the spread of unfettered technology, could prevent the threat from becoming a reality. In looking for the causes of the atomic threat in a metanarrative of inexorable technological development, though, Anders may have begun to slip out of the realm of the concrete. Politics—even the politics of deterrence—is not, after all, reducible to technology. But Anders made technology the real issue. In his first letter to Eatherly, for example (indeed, in the very first paragraph), he suggested that the use of atomic weapons is only an extreme symptom of a more expansive "technization of existence"

---

among his many other writings on the subject of Vietnam, Anders's *Visit Beautiful Vietnam: ABC der Aggressionen heute* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1968).

[130] Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution* (1956; München: C.H. Beck, 1961); see especially the section "Über die Bombe und die Wurzeln unserer Apokalypse-Blindheit." The second volume of this work, subtitled "Über die Zerstörung des Lebens im Zeitalter der dritten industriellen Revolution," was not published until 1980.

[131] Eatherly's subsequent psychological breakdown was much debated and became a point of contention between pro- and anti-war activists during the Cold War. Anders's full correspondence with Eatherly, which publicized his plight, was collected in *Burning Conscience: The Case of the Hiroshima Pilot* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1962).

(*die Technisiertheit des Daseins*).[132] This is a peculiarly Heideggerian way of approaching the issue, and it suggests that, despite his incessant attempt to extricate himself from it, Anders may have succumbed to the Heideggerian idiom more often then he would care to admit.

Paul van Dijk, a Dutch scholar who has authored the only English-language study of Anders's many works, describes him as "the philosopher of the atomic age."[133] He documents well the originality and diversity of Anders's work, but van Dijk also argues that Anders's writings on technology and the nuclear arms race replicate some of the very concepts and categories that he had criticized with regard to Heidegger:

> Despite the sharp and solid criticism that Anders exercised against Heidegger in an early phase, when Existentialism was still in vogue […] his philosophy of the bomb possesses the same logical structure as Heidegger's *Dasein* philosophy. Anders's apocalypticism is Heidegger's philosophy of finiteness, transferred onto humanity as a species.[134]

It is not until humanity is threatened with its own death, in other words, that it chooses to confront the meaning of its existence. "Anders's philosophy of the bomb," van Dijk goes on to explain, "is structurally homologous to Heidegger's thanatology, his philosophy of death, and explains the fervent 'resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) that both demonstrate."[135]

Resoluteness, a notion criticized and ridiculed by some of Heidegger's earliest students—including Anders—as an empty category, was transformed by Heidegger himself into a literal call to arms during the Nazi period. Recent commentators have even described some of Heidegger's writings from the thirties as exercises in the articulation

---

[132] Günther Anders, *Der Mann Auf Der Brücke: Tagebuch aus Hiroshima und Nagasaki* (München: C.H. Beck, 1959), 235.
[133] Paul van Dijk, *Anthropology in the Age of Technology: The Philosophical Contribution of Günther Anders* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 2.
[134] Ibid., 160.
[135] Ibid., 161.

of an "ideology of war."[136] In his lectures during this period Heidegger began to outline a kind of philosophical geopolitics that pitted a resolved and determined, authentically German *Volk* against the dual threats of American capitalism and Soviet communism—twin "pincers," as he described them in 1935, that posed a single threat to the *Heimat*.[137] It is no small irony, then, that the term would be all but rehabilitated by Anders as part of a philosophical stance against militarism—a war on war, we might say. Pacifism, especially when it came to the nuclear arms race, required resolve; it demanded a determination equal to that of authentic *Dasein*. "The only difference" between the two uses of the concept, van Dijk suggests, is that Anders's *Entschlossenheit* "is a fight for life."[138] Nevertheless, it, too, is "drenched with the threat of death, because it saddles the individual with a responsibility for all, a responsibility that probably no one can shoulder and under which anyone would succumb."[139] Anders, as a recovering Heideggerian perhaps, bore it until his death in 1992, not long after the fall of the Soviet Union.

"The Waning of the Oedipus Complex"

Hans Loewald's (1906-1993) confrontation with Heidegger's political resoluteness was prompted by Nazism, and resulted in the abandonment of a career in

---

[136] Domenico Losurdo, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War: Community, Death, and the West*, trans. Marella and Jon Morris (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2001). See also Losurdo's essay "Heidegger and Hitler's War," in Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis, eds., *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992), 141-164.
[137] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), 37. On this topic see also Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's Philosophical Geopolitics in the Third Reich," in Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger's* Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), 226-249.
[138] van Dijk, *Anthropology in the Age of Technology*, 161.
[139] Ibid.

philosophy.[140] His turn away from philosophy and toward psychoanalytic and psychiatric practice, of which he eventually became an influential theorist, is unlike the work of any of the other émigrés. But, rather than being anti-philosophical, Loewald's work offers instead, like Anders's, an internal critique. From a small office on Trumble Street in New Haven, Connecticut, where he practiced his trade day in and day out, Loewald put forth a unique brand of Heideggerian Freudianism, one that spoke to his abiding interest in philosophy as much as his commitment to therapy.[141]

Loewald's Heideggerian psychoanalysis represents an important but hitherto overlooked part of the reception history of psychoanalysis in the United States, and should be viewed in light of the work of scholars such as Nathan Hale, who has outlined for us the peculiar twists and turns of the transatlantic transferal of Freudian ideas.[142] More recent work has even started to historicize the reception of Lacanian thought as well.[143] Loewald's story has fallen through the cracks of the historical scholarship for a number of reasons, but it is undeniably part of this historical narrative. Loewald was an émigré, and his work reflects the peculiarly trans-Atlantic fusion of ideas that arose from the exigencies of this historical moment. Furthermore, along these lines, and in reference to the genealogies of Freudianism, Loewald's work might just represent an overlooked alternative to the other two Heidegger-inspired and massively influential psychoanalytic

---

[140] Dieter Thomä, in his *Nachwort* in *Über Heidegger*, suggests that this was true for Anders. See page 416.

[141] I would like to thank Beverly Schneider for allowing me to sit in on her winter, 2005, course—"Internalizing Hans Loewald"—at the NPAP in Manhattan. My understanding of Loewald's place in the history and practice of psychoanalysis was greatly improved by the discussions this course enabled. I am also indebted to Aleksandra Wagner and Joel Whitebook for sharing with me their knowledge of Loewald's life and work.

[142] See Nathan G. Hale, Jr., "From Berggasse XIX to Central Park West: The Americanization of Psychoanalysis, 1919-1940," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* (1978): 299-315; and of course his two-volume *Freud in America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971, and 1995).

[143] See Jean-Michel Rabaté, ed., *Lacan in America* (New York: Other Press, 2000).

thinkers: namely Marcuse and Lacan.[144] Attempts, in other words, have been made to marry Heidegger and Freud, but Loewald's may be the only one which still holds any promise.

Born in the Alsatian town of Colmar on January 19th, 1906, but raised primarily in Berlin, Loewald studied philosophy, under Heidegger, at the Universities of Marburg and Freiburg until 1926.[145] He then pursued medical training at several universities in Germany. (Loewald, it should be noted, completed his psychoanalytic training in 1946, that is, after immigrating to the United States) He spent time in Paris, but he eventually settled into a position at a psychiatric hospital in the Italian city of Padua. Like Kristeller, who had also decamped to Italy following the rise of Hitler, Loewald eventually made his way to the east coast of the United States.[146] He found various positions in medical centers and research institutions in Rhode Island and Baltimore before finally landing steady and secure employment at Yale. Like so many of the other stories of emigration during this time, Loewald's is a harrowing one. Even after he had reached the United States, the trials continued as he sought safe passage for his mother through Europe and across the Atlantic. Some of his letters to his friend and fellow Heidegger-pupil Kristeller, letters which describe in detail his anxieties and fears and struggles during this

---

[144] See Lear, "Introduction," *The Essential Loewald*, xxii, where he says, of Loewald and Lacan, as "two psychoanalysts influenced by Heidegger," that they have a lot in common." But, despite this similarity, "what they *value* is entirely different. Lacan valorizes disintegration—overcoming the false unity of the ego. Loewald, by contrast, values integration, and he believes true and creative integration is possible." It is also worth pointing out here that Loewald has by no means been the only Heideggerian to turn to therapy. In one of the more intriguing intellectual twists of the reception of Heidegger in America, the Jesuit priest William J. Richardson, whose mammoth *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (1963)—now in its fourth edition—was the first major introduction to Heidegger in English, also became a therapist. His allegiances are, however, to Lacan—after the Church, that is.

[145] Biographical information comes from CV's collected in the Hans W. Loewald Papers, which are housed at Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Here, box 1 folder 1. See also the obituary essay by T. Wayne Downey in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 75 (1994): 839-842.

[146] Löwith knew Loewald in Italy, and mentions him in *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, 96.

time, are preserved, in the collection of Kristeller's papers now housed at Columbia.[147] They suggest that Loewald's keen interest in child development and, more specifically, in what he described as the originary and synthetic unity of the "mother-child field," a recurring theme in his work, was rooted in some very personal life-circumstances.[148]

Jonathan Lear, for whom Loewald was a kind of mentor, and who has recently emerged as Loewald's chief champion in the United States, has suggested that Loewald was on track to become a philosopher until Heidegger's Nazism shattered, in his—that is, Loewald's—eyes, the illusory nobility of the philosophical profession. In the introduction to the definitive collection of Loewald's writings, a wonderful sourcebook only recently published, Lear suggests that

> As a young man, Loewald was *en route* to becoming a philosopher. He had fallen in love with philosophy and, given what we know about transference, there is reason to suspect that the erotic attachment had spread itself out onto his teacher. Heidegger's embrace of Nazism was not simply a personal betrayal—however awful that is—it was the upending of a way of life. For Loewald, there has to be something wrong with philosophy itself if the greatest practitioner of the age could succumb to such hateful distortions. Loewald's response was to go to medical school. He sought a form of knowing that was more grounded in the details of human living, and more committed to alleviating suffering.[149]

This summation is somewhat of an exaggeration. In 1926, when Loewald began his medical training, Heidegger's politics had yet to come to the fore. Looking back, we can

---

[147] Paul Oskar Kristeller Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Box A 31, Folder Loewald.

[148] As his obituary in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* explains, Loewald's father died shortly after he was born. As a result, Loewald was raised primarily by his mother and one of his aunts. Loewald's analysis of the mother-child field as representing a original unity out of which the differentiated ego develops, a stage of development that predates any subject-object split between ego and outside world, can be found in such influential essays as "Ego and Reality" (1951) and "Primary Process, Secondary Process, and Reality" (1978). Both can be found in *The Essential Loewald*, 3-20, and 178-206, respectively. The quote is from page 185.

[149] Jonathan Lear, "Introduction," in *The Essential Loewald*, ix-x. Lear's writings on Loewald also include *Therapeutic Action: An Earnest Plea for Irony* (New York: Other Press, 2003) [reviewed in *TLS* June 4, 2004], which is largely a commentary on his former mentor. See also his "The Introduction of Eros: (Reflections on the Work of Hans Loewald)," *The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 44:3 (1996).

of course see threads in Heidegger's work from this time—his Marburg years—that would come together in Heidegger's public support of Hitler.[150] But in 1926, Heidegger was not yet an official Nazi. Loewald, in other words, embarked on the path of psychiatry and psychoanalysis before Heidegger's betrayal of philosophy.

Nevertheless, whatever the specific causal chain of events that led him from philosophy to psychoanalysis, Loewald would describe Heidegger's support of the Nazi revolution with precisely this word, "betrayal." In the preface to his *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, which appeared in 1980 and collected works written over three decades, Loewald admitted the following: "Philosophy has been my first love. I gladly affirm its influence on my way of thinking while being wary of the peculiar excesses a philosophical bent tends to entail. My teacher in this field was Martin Heidegger, and I am deeply grateful for what I learned from him, despite his most hurtful betrayal in the Nazi era, which alienated me from him permanently."[151] Philosophy, Loewald's "first love," would be the wellspring from which his writings on psychoanalysis arose, but his decision to pursue the path of therapy is also a distinct turn away from philosophy, at least the kind of philosophy Heidegger would pursue in the thirties. In short, as a response to Heidegger's Nazism, Loewald made a therapeutic turn.

In order to follow this turn away from philosophy and toward therapy, a turn that has so much to do with politics, it is first necessary to expose Loewald's Heideggerian roots. These roots are visible in a number of places, but his 1962 essay "Superego and

---

[150] See Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) and Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, edited with a foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi, German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989).

[151] Hans W. Loewald, "Preface," *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (1980), reprinted in *The Essential Loewald*, xlii-xliii.

Time" offers perhaps the most patently Heideggerian specimen.[152] The title of the essay, in this regard, is a giveaway, reminiscent as it is of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's masterwork from 1927; fragments of which Loewald no doubt heard him deliver in Marburg. And since there is evidence that Loewald saw "Superego and Time" as representing the very crux of his own work as a thinker and analyst, it is safe to say that the essay is representative of not just his debt to Heidegger, but his own path of thought as well.[153] That Heidegger remained a constant source of inspiration for Loewald is evident in Lear's claim that Loewald always had a copy of *Sein und Zeit*—if you'll pardon the expression—ready-to-hand, even when he was on vacation. Apparently, Loewald never tired of rereading the work.[154]

Taking as his subject "the problem of psychic structure," Loewald, in "Superego and Time," suggests that Freud's distinctions between id, ego, and superego should not be thought of in terms of "spatial relations," but rather, temporality.[155] What Loewald proceeds to do is transpose Heidegger's discussion of temporality in *Being and Time* onto Freud's elementary terminological distinctions. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger had argued that human existence (*Dasein*) was fundamentally temporal, but also, that this temporality was comprised of an existential interrelatedness of past, present, and

---

[152] Incidentally, Loewald's essay appeared the very same year that the English translation of *Being and Time* did.

[153] Before it was collected in *The Essential Loewald*, "Superego and Time," was included in the introductory volume edited by Gerald I. Fogel, M.D., entitled *The Work of Hans Loewald: An Introduction and Commentary* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1999). Fogel notes (page 5) that Loewald specifically requested that this essay be included in the volume as a philosophical representation of his path of thought.

[154] Lear recalled this in a lecture to the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health in New York on May 9, 1997. A video of the lecture is archived at the Library of Baruch College, CUNY. In the same lecture, Lear also claims that Loewald's "great influence was Heidegger. Period. And then Freud."

[155] Loewald, "Superego and Time," in *The Essential Loewald*, 43. See also Stanley A. Leavy, "Time and World in the Thought of Hans W. Loewald," *Psychoanalytic Study Child* 44 (1989): 231-240.

future.[156] That is, past, present, and future, were not, for Heidegger, objective demarcations of what he sometimes referred to as "clock time," but ecstatic moments held in relation to each other by existence itself.[157] *Dasein*, in other words, is defined in its present existence not only by its historicity, its past-ness, but by its goals and aspirations, that is, by its futurity. We are what we were as much as what we hope to become. Authenticity, that keyword which recurs throughout *Being and Time*, can only arise from an originary understanding of human temporality. And rather than seeing human existence as taking place in time, Heidegger posits, more radically, that human temporality, defined as it is by the ecstatic and relational structures of past, present, and future, is the primordial grounding of objective time—i.e., clock time. What Loewald does in "Superego and Time," is argue, following Heidegger, that psychic time, as opposed to supposedly objective, clock time, works in the same way. The id, in this parlance, is the historicity of our existence that we are forever forced to confront and integrate into our ego, while the superego functions as a "viewpoint of a future ego," as the projected goal we wish to become. The ego, as existential/psychic present, is thus in constant temporal relation with its past and present. It is in this sense that Loewald, following Heidegger, conceives of "the temporal" as "the inner fiber of what we call psychic".[158] It all adds up to this: a Heideggerian philosophy transformed into a non-linear, developmental Freudianism.

This transposition of Heidegger's discussion of temporality in *Being and Time* onto Freudian categories and distinctions is something Loewald repeats in another

---

[156] See, in general, Division Two. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962).
[157] See also Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, trans. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) and *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1985).
[158] "Superego and Time," 52.

setting, namely in his *Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual*, which he originally presented as the Freud lectures at Yale in the late seventies.[159] In many ways, the Freud lectures are a statement of Loewald's core beliefs regarding the psychoanalytic project. It is significant that Heidegger occupies a prominent place in this core. Unlike "Superego and Time," where Heidegger's influence is apparent but not made explicit, in the Freud lectures Loewald freely admits that his discussion of psychological development is indebted to the Heidegger of *Being and Time*.

Temporality, and specifically the notion of historicity, is a topic to which Loewald returns again and again in the Freud lectures.[160] To generalize somewhat, we might say that the burden of historicity in Loewald's account is the burden of the id. That is, ego development, which is synonymous with psychological and moral development, is at heart a process of "appropriation." It is, as he puts it, a process of "owning up, integrating the id into one's life context as an individual self." It is a "developmental task or, in a different framework, an existential task."[161] All this he gets from Freud, but it is clear that he is really thinking of Heidegger's discussion of historicity and the possibility of an authentic relation to the past. For on the very next line, Loewald proceeds to argue "that Heidegger's concepts of *Geworfenheit*—man is thrown into the world, unplanned and unintended by himself—and *Entwerfen*—the taking over and actively developing the potentialities of this fact—have grown in the same soil" as Freud's thinking.[162] And

---

[159] Hans W. Loewald, *Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1978). This has also been reprinted in *The Essential Loewald.* The following citations, however, will be from the original edition.
[160] Ibid., 6.
[161] Ibid., 19.
[162] Ibid. In a fragment collected in *Über Heidegger* Anders makes a similar point. He argues that in the twenties, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and (Heideggerian) existentialism all attempted to address the same fundamental problems. See page 169. See also Jens Hagestedt, *Freud und Heidegger: Zum Begriff der Geschichte im Augang des Subjektzentrischen Denkens* (München: W. Fink, 1993).

Loewald is quick to point out, along the lines of "Superego and Time," that this act of historical appropriation (as Heidegger would call it), this coming to terms with the id (as Freud would call it), has to be seen in relation to future projects and goals. "Taking over one's past, making it one's own," he writes, "is not to return to the past in order to get lost in it. The past is important in view of and in relation to the present and future of one's life."[163]

Loewald conceived of psychoanalysis as a kind of concrete philosophy. As an inquiry into everyday existence, it had much in common with existentialism. "Psychoanalysis," he wrote in a book review from 1977, "shares with modern existentialism the tenet that superpersonal and transcendental aspects of human existence and of unconscious and instinctual life […] can be experienced and integrated convincingly—without escapist embellishments, otherworldly consolations and going off into the clouds—only in the concreteness of one's own personal life, including the ugliness, trivialities, and sham that go with it."[164] This conception of the task of psychoanalysis does not motion towards materialism in the same (largely Marxist) way that the work of Anders and Marcuse—two other proponents of concreteness—did, but it does convey the same interest in abandoning the abstract and rarefied traditions of academic philosophy in favor of something new. Loewald was interested in solving human problems, not just philosophical ones.

According to the Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss, Heidegger himself came to realize that his philosophical investigations into the meaning of existence and Being could be put to practical ends. For almost three decades after World War II, Boss and

---

[163] Ibid., 29.
[164] Hans Loewald, "Book Review Essay on the Freud/Jung Letters," *The Essential Loewald*, 416.

Heidegger engaged in an intellectual dialogue, the product of which was a Heideggerian variant of therapeutic analysis that Boss termed, after Heidegger and along with his compatriot Ludwig Binswanger, *Daseinanalysis.* For many years, Heidegger participated in seminars organized by Boss in the latter's home in Zollikon, Switzerland, seminars that brought scientifically trained doctors and therapists, many of whom had no prior exposure to philosophy, into contact with his thought. The transcripts of some of these seminars, as well as some of the letters exchanged by Boss and Heidegger during this time, have been collected and published, and they represent the most direct confrontation of Heidegger's thought with psychoanalytic thought.[165]

The Zollikon seminars were, by and large, outgrowths of Heidegger's later, post-*Kehre* philosophy. As a result, they came to emphasize not so much the existential analysis of his earlier writings, such as *Being and Time*, which had influenced Binswanger, but the more passive philosophy of *Gelassenheit* that he outlined in later works.[166] Heidegger, by the time of the Zollikon seminars, had abandoned—in the *Letter on Humanism* and elsewhere—his early work as too anthropocentric, and this meant that his engagement with psychoanalytic or psychiatric ideas could only be a peculiar one. Despite his talk of the unconscious and despite the theory of the drives, which both suggested that ego development was beset by irrational urges, Freud remained an Enlightenment figure, committed to such notions as reason and autonomy. The later Heidegger, however, was a critic of reason. He was more interested in dismantling the

---

[165] Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols—Conversations—Letters*, edited by Medard Boss, trans. with notes and afterwords by Franz Mayr and Richard Askay (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2001). The volume was first published in German in 1987. See also Medard Boss, *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology*, trans. Stephen Conway and Anne Cleaves (New York: J. Aronson, 1979).
[166] On the historical origins of *Daseinanalysis* and Binswanger's and Boss's competing versions of it, see Richard Askay's afterword, "Heidegger's Philosophy and Its Implications for Psychology, Freud, and Existential Psychoanalysis," in Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, especially 304-312.

rationalist, Enlightenment notion of the subject than in preserving it, and his inquires into the meaning of Being as the interplay of revealing and concealing forces in fact mystified as much as they demystified human existence.

The later Heidegger proved to be a revelation for the more radical French expositors of Freud, especially Jacques Lacan, who continuously strove to expose the Freudian ego as nothing more than a necessary fiction. Whereas Freud's notion of therapy sought always to restore the autonomy of rational individuals, Lacan, following Heidegger, attempted to dismantle this as no more than a pernicious illusion.[167] Loewald was influenced by the early, more existential writings of Heidegger, and was thus a more traditional Freudian. As Joel Whitebook has rightly described it, Loewald was more interested in integration than disintegration.[168] This might explain why, when Loewald eventually came into contact with Lacan's writings, he reacted so viscerally. Approached by Chicago University Press in 1967 to assess the potential merits of translating *Ecrits* into English, Loewald found Lacan's "voice…shrill and unduly belligerent from beginning to end."[169] Lacan's numerous attacks on America in general and on American psychoanalysis in particular were, he thought, "particularly vicious and prejudiced." Although Loewald thought that Lacan had "some very interesting things to say about the philosophical and moral implications of Freud's discoveries and conceptualizations," he finally concluded, based on his reading of *Ecrits*, that Lacan "interprets Freud in an

---

[167] On Lacan's use of Heidegger, see Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia UP, 1997).
[168] See Joel Whitebook, "Hans Loewald: A radical conservative," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 85 (2004): 85-97. Whitebook also refers to Loewald, tangentially, in his *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).
[169] Loewald to Morris Philipsen, July 3, 1967, Hans W. Loewald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, box 1 folder 2.

extremely onesided and biased way and that he has so may axes to grind that he ends up obscuring whatever contributions he has to offer and defeating his own purpose."[170]

Loewald eventually came to see Lacan's contribution to psychoanalysis in a more positive light (after witnessing his widespread reception in subsequent decades perhaps), but he remained skeptical, especially when it came to the clinical applicability of his writings. Interested as he always was in helping people to cope with their own desires and urges, Loewald found Lacan's prejudice toward "losing oneself as a subject or losing the desiring subject that one is" dangerous. Lacan, in the end, was just too much of an "anarchist" for him.[171] Unlike many of his American counterparts, who condensed Freud's dense and sometimes contradictory writings into the easy programs of ego psychology, Loewald returned again to seemingly old-fashioned ideas such as autonomy, not to mention Freud's theory of the drives and, in one very influential essay, the Oedipus complex.

Although ego psychologists tended to downplay its significance, Loewald was convinced that Freud's notion of oedipal struggle was an important feature of psychoanalysis. "Insofar as human beings strive for emancipation and individuation," he wrote in "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex (1979)," "parricide on the plane of psychic action is a developmental necessity."[172] The moral paradox of psychic parricide was, for Loewald, the condition of possibility for autonomy. As both a theorist and an analyst he knew that this paradox was not something to be undone in a single moment of clarity; to the contrary, it entailed a continual process of "appropriating or owning up to

---

[170] Ibid.
[171] Loewald, "Response to Stanley Leavy," manuscript dated February 7, 1981, Hans W. Loewald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, box 4 folder 80. See, in particular, page 7.
[172] Loewald, "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex," *The Essential Loewald*, 390.

one's needs and impulses as one's own."[173] The oedipal struggle waxes and wanes over the course of a lifetime, but it never ends. In one of his first American essays, "Ego and Reality" (written in 1949 and first published in 1951), Loewald had suggested that the "mature ego is not one that has become fixated at the presumably highest or latest stage of development, having left the others behind it, but is an ego that integrates its reality in such a way that the earlier and deeper levels of ego-reality integration remain alive as dynamic sources of higher organization."[174] Far from being left behind, the past, whether in the form of the unconscious or the drives, returns again and again, to inform the present as much as the future.

Despite his temporalization of Freud's tripartite conception of id-ego-superego, Loewald realized that psychic life had a timeless dimension as well. In the last of the three Freud lectures, Loewald, in a more tentative fashion than the previous two, explores "religious experience" as a necessary, dialectical component of ego development, insofar as it represents a certain timeless experience in the face of the ego's historicity. The id, in other words, forces us to own up continuously to our own historicality, but religious experience offers us intimations of timelessness beyond the pull of history. As we will see in the next chapter, Loewald admitted that questions of religious experience had preoccupied him since his student days in Marburg, where he immersed himself in the work of not only Heidegger but Bultmann, Barth, and Kierkegaard as well.[175] And here it

---

[173] Ibid., 392.
[174] Loewald, "Ego and Reality," *The Essential Loewald*, 20.
[175] Various manuscripts in the Hans W. Loewald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, reveal the extent to which Loewald was deeply interested in religious themes. See, for example, "Psychoanalysis and Modern Views on Human Existence and Religious Experience," a paper he presented in 1952 (box 1 folder 24); "Religious and Moral Dimensions of Psychoanalysis" (box 3 folder 53); and a project proposal entitled "An Investigation of Religious and Moral Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy" (box 3 folder 56).

becomes obvious that Loewald does not want to relinquish the transcendental entirely. In an undated manuscript from his papers now housed at Yale we find the following:

> This child in us is religious, the adult a scientist. This is Freud's credo—an absurdity if taken to mean that these two ways of understanding the world are mutually exclusive. Freud himself showed us that and how the child and the adult in us have the same roots and remain, in adult life, inextricably intertwined, and that childhood experience in re-enactments and recollections continue to shape adult life, in fact give it full meaning. If there is something childlike about religion, it is because that realm of experience more directly derives from and finds renewed access to early contents and forms of experience.[176]

Does this explain the persistence of Loewald the eager philosopher-to-be in the adult, professional therapist? It is tempting to translate Loewald's own theories concerning ego development into an explanation of his unique intellectual trajectory. A picture of Loewald from 1924 that is now among his papers at Yale shows a young man in knickers sitting somewhere in the Black Forest outside of Freiburg, as an inscription on the reverse side reveals. Is this Loewald in his existential outfit, mimicking his Black Forest guru? Given the circumstances of his life and the betrayal of his "first love," philosophy, by his own mentor, was Loewald himself not predisposed toward seeing oedipal struggle as a defining and inescapable feature of ego maturation? Did he ever abandon this early, existential self, or did he return to and continually re-appropriate it?

Loewald's commitment to therapy, to actual therapeutic practice, (he was, as Lear describes him, "a humble man," who "spent his days seeing patients, but evenings and weekends were spent in the company not only of his family but of Freud and Heidegger

---

[176] Loewald, untitled manuscript, Hans W. Loewald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, box 3 folder 53. In this respect, Loewald fits in, albeit not snugly, with what historian Andrew R. Heinze has called "the great American synthesis of religion and science" in the postwar decades—a synthesis largely undertaken in the realm of psychology. Henize emphasizes the Jewish element in this synthesis, though assimilated Jews such as Loewald referred more often than not to Christian theology. See Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004).

and Kierkegaard"), was very unlike Heidegger's arch philosophical approach.[177] If Heidegger, especially in his brief, delusional attempt to "lead the Führer," represents the hubris of philosophy, then Loewald represents the humility of therapy. Loewald was concerned, first and foremost, with healing. And for this process, he emphasized the importance of love, which was, as Lear puts it, "the condition for the possibility of subjectivity," for Loewald.[178] From the loving relationship of mother and child to that of analyst and patient, love is what allows for psychic differentiation and development in Loewald's writings. But there is a subtle hint, in a final note to the Freud lectures, in which he owned up to both his Heideggerian and religious roots, that suggests that Loewald remained, deep down, not a therapist, but a philosopher: "These lectures have turned out to be, in the end—far more than they should have been—tentative philosophical reflections on psychoanalysis." "Some of the things that I have discussed," he concluded, "I have wanted to say for a long time."[179]

Conclusion: The Paternity Test

The historian Wilfred M. McClay has written of the difficulties that the subject of "Weimar in America" poses for its would-be historians.[180] Aside from the usual geographical boundaries of the historical discipline, which carve up transnational subjects such as this one into their constitutive national groupings, there is also the problem of

---

[177] Lear, *Therapeutic Action*, 19.
[178] Ibid., 173.
[179] Loewald, *Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual: The Freud Lectures at Yale University*, reprinted in *The Essential Loewald*, 579.
[180] See McClay, "Weimar in America," Review of Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America*, in *The American Scholar* 55:1 (Winter, 1985-6): 119-128 and "Historical Research on the Refugee Intellectuals: Problems and Prospects," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 7:3 (1994): 513-526.

diversity. Summing up the influence of such an eclectic set of ideas and life-stories is an almost impossible task. Historians of this migration have thus faced, as McClay notes, "the cartographer's essential question: what kind of degree of distortion does one willingly accept in order to render a multidimensional object on a flat surface?"[181] In response to this dilemma, historians have generally taken either of two approaches. The first is the catalogue (typified by the classic works of Lewis Coser and Laura Fermi) and the second is the delimited study (individual, group, institution).[182] The present account of course leans toward the latter approach, and, when combined with *Heidegger's Children*, should help to tell the narrative of a largely overlooked sub-grouping within the intellectual migration—the Heideggerian one.

But what defines this particular lineage? How do we demonstrate that these thinkers—that *any* thinkers were or are Heideggerian? Is there some sort of intellectual paternity test we might employ? Fatherhood, of course, cannot be reduced to a single criterion, not even a biological one.[183] And perhaps in looking for a single gene that is passed from student to teacher we are overlooking other, more lasting aspects of heredity. Intellectual historians are trained to chart the evolution of specific ideas and concepts, to show how, where, when, and why they arise; to demonstrate how they interact with the world in which they are disseminated and discussed. But in this case, a narrow focus on a few distinctly Heideggerian ideas might obscure the larger and more influential aspect of Heidegger's legacy at work in the careers of his children and step-children. What

---

[181] McClay, "Historical Research on the Refugee Intellectuals: Problems and Prospects," 515.
[182] See note three above.
[183] Talk of Heidegger's progeny has recently become charged given the continued revelations of Heidegger's numerous infidelities, not to mention the astonishing announcement from one of his two sons, Hermann, who oversees his literary estate, that Heidegger was not, in fact, his—that is, Hermann's—biological father. For more, see Gertrud Heidegger, hrsg., *"Mein Liebes Seelchen!" Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfride, 1915-1970* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2005).

Heidegger's students absorbed, after all, was not so much a specific doctrine or dogma, but a methodology, a more amorphous attitude or style. What unites thinkers as different as Kristeller, Strauss, Anders, and Loewald, (not to mention Arendt, Löwith, Jonas, and Marcuse), is a style of thinking, a way of looking at the western intellectual tradition critically and, to varying degrees, existentially.

Reception history need not be limited to the study of textual migrations. Ideas travel in various ways, including via the careers of students, and if we are interested in the history of thinking as much as the history of thought, we are obliged to reconstruct as best we can the dynamic and ever-changing life of individual minds "wherever they may be found."[184] This involves a more personal approach to the writing of the history of ideas, one that puts the historical actor back into the picture as somebody actively trying to make sense of his or her world, as somebody who can be swayed or persuaded, bored or interested—as, in other words, a person and not just an intellectual.[185] Admittedly, this approach, though important, is perhaps more difficult to carry out than the usual intellectual-historical genealogy, especially as it grapples with émigrés, persons who lived in, as the émigré sociologist Hans Speier once described it, "a state of suspension."[186] Analyzing the styles, attitudes, or outlooks of thinkers caught between two worlds can be an elusive task. How does one document not what, but how a person thinks? For this we must turn to what they wrote, which never does justice to the full extent of their mind in action, but it nonetheless gives provisional clues.

---

[184] See Daniel T. Rodgers, "Thinking in Verbs," *Intellectual History Newsletter* 18 (1996), 22.
[185] An example of this approach can be found in Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, "Conventional Iconoclasm: The Cultural Work of the Nietzsche Image in Twentieth-Century America," manuscript forthcoming in the *Journal of American History*.
[186] Hans Speier, "The Social Conditions of the Intellectual Exile," in his *Social Order and the Risks of War: Papers in Political Sociology* (New York: George W. Stewart, 1952), 92. The essay was originally published in a 1937 issue of *Social Research*.

For his early students, Heidegger was not so much the author of *Being and Time* as a mesmerizing presence behind the lectern, somebody who turned German academic culture on its head and opened up new pathways for philosophy. In this respect, Heidegger was a product of the performative academic culture described in Sidney Hook's report on the German philosophical scene back in 1930.[187] Heidegger, in mesmerizing lectures, did not teach his students what, but how to think. This, after all, is what we learn from our teachers. It is rarely a tidy body of knowledge that instructors pass on to their pupils, but a way of thinking—a way of being even. Teachers teach us to be generous or suspicious, critical or effusive, eager or withdrawn, careful or carefree. Heidegger, as a teacher first and a philosophical author only second, taught his students how to think by teaching them how to read. Even though they went on to think and read (about) different things, his children and step-children carried on an intellectual outlook that was peculiar to him. The diversity of Heidegger's reception was made possible by the fact that his methodology (which could be put toward any number of intellectual and or political ends) was as captivating as his conclusions.

The intellectual-historical portraits drawn in this chapter—especially Kristeller's and Strauss's—are points of entry into the social history of higher education in the United States. As much as the émigrés were transformed by America, they transformed its intellectual culture. To some extent, we might even be justified in talking about a Heideggerian higher-education transfer, insofar as so many of Heidegger's early students ended up, or at least passed through, Manhattan. Löwith, Strauss, Arendt, and Jonas all spent time at the New School for Social Research. Kristeller spent his career up at

[187] On the whole, as Hook described it, "the *dramatic* quality of the 'performance'" was what set German philosophy lectures apart. See Hook, "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* 27:6 (March 13, 1930), 150.

Columbia. Loewald, at Yale, was only a short train-ride away. And Anders lived and worked in New York, too. Some two decades after they completed their studies in Marburg or Freiburg, these pupils of Heidegger all at one time or another became bona fide New Yorkers.[188] But since "intellectual history ought to be more than professional shoptalk; it should dramatize how a thinker wrestles with reality, not merely how he commingles with his colleagues," as McClay puts it, I have focused, not on this geographical synchronicity, but on a few Heideggerian themes, and how the children and stepchildren wrestled with them. Strauss and Anders were not shy about announcing their struggles with Heidegger. Kristeller and Loewald, on the other hand, were subtler. Perhaps the anxiety of influence alone does not do justice to the variety of responses that Heidegger engendered amongst his students. Perhaps there is a spectrum, one that stretches from the anxiety of influence to outright philosophical parricide. No doubt the more indebted the students were to their mentor the more thoroughly they later tried to distance themselves from him.

What does all this say about Heidegger's reception, and the role his own exiled students—his children and stepchildren—played in the process? Most of all, it points to the fact that Heidegger made his way to America on many different levels. Indeed, Heidegger's greatest legacy may rest not within the pages of the *Gesamtausgabe*, but in the careers of his students. These émigrés ensured—sometimes against their will—that Heidegger's legacy would live on, that it would be continuously discussed and debated in the United States, for years to come.

---

[188] One gets a sense a good sense of this milieu in Hans Jonas's posthumously published memoir *Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 2003).

CHAPTER 3
Nihilism, Nothingness, and God: Heidegger and American Theology

Without this theological background I should never have come upon the path of thinking.
—Martin Heidegger (1953-1954)[1]

"Good Country People," is a classic Flannery O'Connor story. In it, all the ingredients of her peculiarly gothic style are present, from the regional locale and curious characters to the comic shock of the grotesque, coiled and ever-ready to spring upon the unsuspecting reader. At the beginning of the story, we are introduced to Mrs. Hopewell and her daughter Joy, who own some rural farmland upon which one Mrs. Freeman and her family also live as renters. Mrs. Hopewell is happy to have found in the Freemans a solid family of "good country people" upon whom she can depend. They may not be the smartest folks around, but they "are the salt of the earth," and she stands by them. Her daughter, Joy, however, does not share this opinion.

Joy Hopewell is a happy-sounding name, of course, but for a thirty-two year old woman with a fatal health condition, someone who, in addition, has to wear a prosthetic leg because, when she was ten, her leg "had been shot off in a hunting accident," such a name may just as well be the proverbial insult upon the injury. But Joy, in an act of existential self-creation, had deliberately overcome the burden of such an obscenely optimistic name: she had renamed herself Hulga, "the ugliest name in any language."[2] This act of self-naming was not the only source of her strength. Hulga had also, we are

---

[1] Martin Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 10.
[2] Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People," in *Collected Works* (New York: Library of America, 1988), 268-269. The story first appeared in the June, 1955 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* and was collected in *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), quote on 266. All subsequent references will be parenthetical within the text.

told, "taken the Ph.D. in philosophy," which of course left her mother "at a complete loss" (268).[3] Hulga's knowledge of existentialism may have allowed her to live without or beyond the simple pieties of the "good country people" all around her, but her mother was bewildered, to say the least, by her daughter's reading:

> One day Mrs. Hopewell had picked up one of the books the girl had just put down and opening it at random, she read, "Science, on the other hand, has to assert its soberness and seriousness afresh and declare that it is concerned solely with what-is. Nothing—how can it be for science anything but a horror and a phantasm? If science is right, then one thing stands firm: science wishes to know nothing of nothing. Such is after all the strictly scientific approach to Nothing. We know it by wishing to know nothing of Nothing." These words had been underlined with a blue pencil and they worked on Mrs. Hopewell like some evil incantation in gibberish. She shut the book quickly and went out of the room as if she were having a chill (268-269).

The key to Hulga's stoic strength in the face of the meaningless of the world, it seems, was the philosophy of Heidegger. Passages like this one, from Heidegger's classic essay "What is Metaphysics?," which was available in English translation in a volume edited by Werner Brock called *Existence and Being* (1949), reveal that Hulga knew—if you will pardon the pun—a lot about nothing: at one point she describes herself as "one of those people who see *through* to nothing" (280).[4] That is, she could stare down the specter of nothingness, or, to put it still another way, a world without meaning. She is the classic existential nihilist: she did not need faith in God, and, thanks to her

---

[3] Here's the full and very memorable quote: "The girl had taken the Ph.D. in philosophy and this left Mrs. Hopewell at a complete loss. You could say, 'My daughter is a nurse,' or 'My daughter is a school teacher,' or even, 'My daughter is a chemical engineer.' You could not say, 'My daughter is a philosopher.' That was something that ended with the Greeks and the Romans" (268).

[4] Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?," in *Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock (London: Routledge, 1949). Heidegger originally delivered this lecture as his inaugural address to the University of Freiburg in 1927, when he formally took over his mentor Edmund Husserl's chair in philosophy. Werner Brock was one of Heidegger's Jewish students who was forced to flee to Germany after the rise of Hitler. He ended up in England for a time and in the process brought Heidegger's philosophy with him to the English-speaking world For more on Brock, see chapter one.

philosophical wisdom, she did not need the consolation of the simple faith and folk wisdom of the "good country people" all around her, people like the Freemans or the nineteen-year-old bible salesman who knocks on the door of her mother's home one afternoon.

As it turns out, this bible salesman will prove to be the greatest test to Hulga's Heideggerian existentialism, her steely stare-down of the Nothing. For it is he who eventually seduces her (beating her to the punch in this regard, since she thought she would be the one doing the seducing) and, after revealing himself as no salesman at all but a sly young con-artist instead, steals her wooden leg. Despite her pleas—"Give me my leg!"—and perhaps even out of spite, the phony bible salesman heads off with her prosthesis, leaving her with these parting words: "And I'll tell you another thing, Hulga […]you ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born!" (283) This is the moment when, as O'Connor commentator Ralph C. Wood has put it, Hulga came face to face with real nihilism.[5] For all her reading of Heidegger, it seems, Hulga would not have recognized nihilism until it, well, ran off with her leg. This is the reason, perhaps, why Mrs. Hopewell laments that her daughter was "brilliant but she didn't have a grain of sense" (268).

Mary Flannery O'Connor had a wicked sense of humor, the kind that only blossoms after many long years of maturation in the soil of a proper Catholic education (in her case, at the hands of an Irish order of nuns).[6] Her inclusion of Heidegger in

---

[5] See Ralph C. Wood's very suggestive "Demonic Nihilism: The Chief Moral Temptation of Modernity," in his *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 179-216.

[6] Wood, a Christian himself, though not a Catholic, puts is this way: O'Connor combined "uproarious comedy and profound Christianity" (ix).

"Good Country People" should be read in light of this sense of humor; as, that is, satire.[7] O'Connor, as a keen reader of contemporary theology, exhibited a real interest in the work of people like Heidegger, and his contemporaries such as the German theologian Rudolf Bultmann, the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, and the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, who all enjoyed a rather wide readership in mid-century America. But the few references she made to Heidegger in personal letters were almost always satirical. Aside from a couple lines of praise in one letter—"Heidegger writes a great deal about the poet's business being to name what is holy. His essays on Holderlin are very rich"—from 1954, she mostly poked gentle fun at the pious image of Heidegger in his *Schwarzwald* hut.[8] To her friend William Sessions, who was off to Europe on an academic fellowship, she asked: "Are you going to see Heidegger on his mountain top?"[9] She clearly took her Heidegger with a grain of salt, which may very well be why she ends up siding with "the salt of the earth" in "Good Country People."

O'Connor was a devout, orthodox Catholic. It is no stretch to say that her Catholicism informed her view of twentieth-century America. For one, it fostered her

---

[7] In this regard, it has a lot in common with the references to Heidegger in Saul Bellow's *Herzog* (New York: Penguin, 1964). As Herzog's personal life crumbles all around him, his excessive learning proves to be no help. Like Nietzsche, he pens letters to authors both dead and living, seeking insight. The letters, some of them addressed to Heidegger, are of course never sent. For more on this, see the first excursus below. Too little has been written on the subject of Heidegger and satire, but there is a good section on this topic in Dieter Thomä, ed., *Heidegger Handbuch* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2003).

[8] O'Connor to Beverly Brunson, 13 September 1954, in *Collected Writings*, 925.

[9] O'Connor to William Sessions, 27 September 1957, in ibid., 1044. She closes another letter to Sessions a few months later with "Regards to Heidegger." This letter can be found in O'Connor, *The Habit of Being: Letters Edited and with an Introduction by Sally Fitzgerald* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1979), 251. O'Connor later met up with Sessions, who later became a professor of English at Georgia State University, in Europe while on a vacation and pilgrimage to Lourdes. For more on this see also Paul Elie, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2003), 283-286, especially page 286, where Elie—rightly I think—draws a parallel between O'Connor herself and the character of Hulga in "Good Country People." Both, after all, suffered a terminal illness, both relied on the aid of canes and prosthetics to walk, and both were perhaps too educated for their own good; clearly it seems that in placing some of herself in Hulga O'Connor was practicing a kind of self-criticism. (Elie, by the way, takes the title of his book from a short story of O'Connor's.)

suspicions of the mid-century materialism that was so pervasive in the United States. As Wood has explained, "O'Connor was openly allied with other critics of this consumer-centered call for conformity and homogeneity: C. Wright Mills, and Marshall McLuhan, David Riesman and Vance Packard, William H. Whyte and Reinhold Neibuhr. They all saw that the rampant new commercialism and commodification of American life obliterated" everything but the material dimension.[10] O'Connor, as a believer, could not abide this state of affairs, which bespoke a deeper crisis—namely that of nihilism. At least that is what Wood thinks. He quotes O'Connor, again in a letter, thusly:

> If you live today you breathe in nihilism. In or out of the Church it's the gas you breathe. If I hadn't had the church to fight it with or to tell me the necessity of fighting it, I would be the stinkingest logical positivist you ever saw right now.[11]

The problem of nihilism was, for O'Connor at least, the central problem of the modern world. It was also, first and foremost, a religious problem, which is what Hulga Hopewell the Heideggerian found out the hard way.

* * *

That an American writer steeped in Christian, and specifically Catholic, theology such as O'Connor would reference the works of Martin Heidegger, which at the time—the fifties—were being translated into English only haltingly, should not come as a surprise. Just the opposite, in fact, for it was precisely via religious or theological avenues that Heidegger's thinking first made inroads into American cultural and

[10] Wood, *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*, 15.
[11] Quoted in ibid., 1.

intellectual life. The story of Heidegger's American reception could not be told without including this part of the slow, transnational, migratory process. From the earliest reviews and discussions of his work to the first translations, monographs, and yes, even conferences, the theological Heidegger was perhaps the first version of the Freiburg philosopher to gain any currency in the United States.

These days, it is generally taken for granted that theology departments and philosophy departments at religiously-affiliated schools offered the earliest home to Heidegger's work in the United States.[12] Indeed, long before Heidegger became a point of constant reference in literature departments, as he is today, Heidegger was being interpreted and discussed by theologians and religiously-minded cultural critics, who, it goes without saying, found more of value in Heidegger's writings than did O'Connor. In part, this was because of Heidegger's religious roots. Although he had broken from the church in 1919, Heidegger received a Catholic education as a youth and, early in his career, intended to teach Catholic philosophy. His earliest writings, which have been rediscovered only recently, reveal a profoundly Christian—and anti-modern—young thinker struggling to find a critical-philosophical language all his own.[13] Though less explicitly religious than this body work, Heidegger's writings after 1919—lecture notes mostly—were nevertheless still in dialogue with religious themes and concerns. His courses in 1920 and 1921, for example, carried titles such as "Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion," and "Augustine and Neoplatonism."[14] And even courses

---

[12] See, for example, Alexander Nehamas, "Trends in Recent American Philosophy," in *American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines*, edited with an introduction by Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske, foreword by Stephen R. Graubard (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998), 227-241.
[13] Some of these writings have been translated and included in Martin Heidegger, *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to* Being and Time *and Beyond*, edited by John van Buren (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002).
[14] Although the original manuscripts of these lectures have been lost, the courses have been recreated using various extant classroom transcripts prepared by some of Heidegger's students at the time. This synthetic

that did not carry overtly religious titles, such as the course he offered during the winter semester of 1921-22, "Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research," had as their mottos quotations from the likes of Kierkegaard and Luther.[15] For these reasons and more, Heidegger scholars such as Theodore Kisiel have persuasively argued that Heidegger's confrontation with theological themes was of paramount importance in his philosophical development.[16]

Heidegger was certainly interested in the religious thinking of his age, which during the twenties was dominated by the so-called "crisis theology" associated with Karl Barth, as well as Rudolf Bultmann, who taught alongside Heidegger at the University of Marburg.[17] By the time he arrived at Marburg in 1922, Heidegger was deeply involved in these theological debates, which questioned the rationalism of liberal theology and emphasized the individual or existential demands of faith in a corrupt and fallen world, and had undertaken in-depth studies of Kierkegaard, Luther, and Barth himself as a result.[18] Although Kisiel thinks that by this time Heidegger had already shed most of his

---

work has recently been translated into English as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004).

[15] See Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001), 137.

[16] Kisiel's meticulous reconstruction of Heidegger's path of thought during this time is without question the gold standard of Heidegger scholarship on such issues today. See in particular chapters two—"Theo-Logical Beginnings Toward a Phenomenology of Christianity"—and four—"The Religious Courses (1920-21)"—of his magisterial *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 69-115, and 149-220, respectively. See also Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion, 1920-21," *The Personalist* 55 (1979-1980): 312-24; and John van Buren's *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994). Also relevant are the essays by Kisiel and van Buren collected in the book they co-edited entitled *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), section IV, "The Retrieval of Primal Christianity," 159-194.

[17] On crisis theology, see Gustav Krüger, "The 'Theology of Crisis,'" in W. Warren Wagar, ed., *European Intellectual History since Darwin and Marx* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 135-158. This article is based on lectures that were originally delivered, in 1926, at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and first published in the *Harvard Theological Review* XIX (July 1926), 227-58.

[18] One of the earliest commentaries on Heidegger written in English was in fact a comparison of Heidegger and Kierkegaard by Michael Wyschogrod. Originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation at Columbia, *Kierkeggard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence* (London: Routlegde & Kegan Paul, 1954) was

religious skin, he nevertheless admits that Heidegger continued to hold "joint seminars with Bultmann on Paul and Luther."[19] And these were the seminars that mesmerized students.

Alongside Neokantianism, Christian theology dominated the intellectual life of Marburg.[20] But while the star of the former was already approaching its twilight, the latter was very much in ascendancy—especially amongst students—thanks to the vogue of crisis theology. Crisis theology was in many ways a theological reaction to the First World War. It rejected nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism, which grew from the same soil as Neokantianism and consisted primarily of an unflagging adherence to the values of science, progress, and liberalism. Indeed, to some, liberal Protestantism had effectively rationalized the religious moment out of religion, making faith a product of reason rather than revelation.[21] For a generation who had been to the front, and who had seen the pieties of the old bourgeois order lay shattered on the fields of France, crisis theology, with its harsh critique of the rationalized, watered-down theology of liberal religion, offered something that spoke directly to their condition. And there is much

---

largely written under the supervision of former Heidegger student P.O. Kristeller, and offers a careful examination of Heidegger's debts to—and differences from—his existential forefather.

[19] Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time, 218. I am of course highlighting the religious side of Heidegger's though during this time because I think that it carries over into American debates, but it is worth stressing that Kisiel is convincing when he argues that Heidegger, while in Marburg, was already heading in a different direction than somebody like Bultmann. In other words, Heidegger was more interested in the methodological questions religious topics posed for philosophy than in religion per se. Indeed, as Kisiel points out, even the lecture course on the phenomenology of religious life in 1920-21 was interrupted midway by students protesting that it failed to offer enough discussion of religious topics. Heidegger had spent almost the entire first half of the course lecturing solely on the methodology of his approach. See Kisiel, 170-173. For more on Heidegger's theological origins, see also Thomas F. O'Meara, "Heidegger and His Origins: Theological Perspectives," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 205-226.

[20] On Heidegger's relation to Neo-Kantianism, see Charles R. Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995), 224 ff.

[21] This line of critique would reappear, in a different postwar context, in Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1949). See, for example, page 206: "The Christian hope is not a worldly desire and expectation that something will happen but a cast of mind based on unconditional faith in God's redemptive purpose. Genuine hope is, therefore, as free and absolute as the act of faith itself. Both hope and faith are Christian virtues of grace. The reasons for such an unconditional hope and faith cannot rest on a rational calculation of their reasonableness."

evidence to suggest that students were enthralled by its call to experience religion anew on a rigorously individual basis. Heidegger's students certainly were. Even students from self-professed "agnostic" backgrounds, such as Hans Loewald, were steeped in the debates that Heidegger had with Bultmann about all manner of topics immediately relevant—and not so immediately relevant—to Christian doctrine.[22] It is the reason why Loewald was fascinated by Kierkegaard, Hans Jonas by the Gnostics and the question of God, and Hannah Arendt by St. Augustine. As Karl Löwith put it, Heidegger during this time resembled more the "militant" or the "preacher" than the typical academic. "The enormous success of his lectures and the extraordinary influence of his work" was a "natural consequence," Löwith suggested, of Heidegger's role as a "displaced preacher."[23] So, whether or not religion dominated Heidegger's thought from 1922 onward the way it did between 1915 and 1921, during his overtly religious phase, it is clear that the tone of his work after this period owed much to it. The manner of his lecturing carried on the style, if not the substance, of the religious belief into which he

---

[22] See Loewald, "Letter to Stuart A. Plummer, November 2, 1980," Hans W. Loewald Papers, Yale, Box 1 Folder 4: "You ask about my personal experiences with religion. I was born and raised in Germany, in what might be described as an agnostic German-jewish family…Before and during my studies with Heidegger I was interested in modern catholic and protestant theology (Romano Guardini, Bultmann, Barth, among others), read a good deal in Kierkegaard and some of the writings of St. Augustine, as well as the New Testament, especially St. Paul. In those days (the early twenties) and later during my medical education I was part of a circle of friends who shared these interests." Plummer's letter was written in response to an essay Loewald had published on "Psychoanalysis and Modern Views on Human Existence and Religious Experience," in 1953. In this essay as well as in the final installment of his Freud Lectures at Yale (originally published in 1978), Loewald spoke approvingly of the religious experience, and chastised all theorists who would do away with its importance.

[23] Karl Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, trans. Elizabeth King (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 28, 30. Löwith also described Heidegger's thinking during this time as a "godless theology" (31). These assessments are shared by Löwith's classmate Hans-Georg Gadamer, who has also suggested that "Theological questions motivated [Heidegger] from the start." See Gadamer, "The Marburg Theology," and "The Religious Dimension," in his *Heidegger's Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley, with an introduction by Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994). The quote is from page 31. Heidegger's theological appearance may also have reflected the style of philosophical education in Germany at the time. In 1930 Sidney Hook suggested that the philosophical lectern was rather like a "pulpit." See his "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* 27:6 (March 13, 1930), 150.

was born.[24] Given this fact, and given that almost everyone who studied under Heidegger during this time wrote dissertations on religious themes, it would only be shocking if Heidegger *did not* enjoy a religious reception here in the United States.[25]

But Heidegger's children and step-children, those students who were so engrossed in the early Freiburg and Marburg lectures, were not the only émigrés to have brought the religious dimension of the *Seinsfrage* with them across the Atlantic. As the work of figures such as the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, who taught alongside him in Marburg, shows, an entire tradition of thought had been paying close attention to Heidegger's work long before any of Heidegger's own students became household names in the United States. Theological interest in Heidegger was, in other words, a crucial, early moment in the reception.[26]

Anxiety and Courage

"Today," Tillich wrote in his 1952 bestseller, *The Courage to Be*, "it has become almost a truism to call our time an "age of anxiety." This holds for America and

---

[24] As William Barrett once put it: "Heidegger strikes me as a South German Catholic who lost his faith and—remained a South German Catholic." *What is Existentialism?* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 144.
[25] Löwith revealed his familiarity with these topics when he taught briefly at the Hartford Theological Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. As he explains in *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, Tillich played an instrumental role in securing the position for him (162). An essay Löwith wrote on Nietzsche while affiliated with the institution shows him to be quite aware of the theological discourse of the time. See Löwith, "Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)," *Church History* 13:3 (September 1944): 163-181.
[26] It is also important to stress that the theological reception of Heidegger's philosophy in the United States did not inaugurate this trans-Atlantic exchange. To the contrary, continental theological thought had already made inroads in America long before Heidegger's work became a topic of conversation itself. See for, example, Julius Seelye Bixler, "German Phenomenology and Its Implications for Religion," *The Journal of Religion* 9:4 (October 1929): 589-606. The insightful early survey by Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Continental Influence on American Christian Thought since World War I," *Church History* 27:3 (September 1958): 256-272, covers this ground as well. See also George Cotkin's discussion of the "Kierkegaardian moment" in America in his fine study, *Existential America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003), 33-87.

Europe."[27] Writing after the horrors of total war, after the Holocaust, the dropping of the atomic bombs, Tillich, in this masterful summation of his existential theology, addressed directly the anxious underside of postwar American prosperity. The oft-noted conformism of American culture during the fifties went hand in hand with anxiety—about the fate of society in the face of unfettered consumerism, the fate of religion, and ultimately, the fate of the world itself, as the battle lines of the cold war became more menacingly obvious.[28]

In this context, it is important to remember that the postwar years in America, in addition to being a time a great economic and industrial expansion, were defined by a growing religious sensibility as well.[29] At first, the religious revival was hesitant, and could be dismissed by such notable public figures as John Dewey and Sidney Hook as a "new failure of nerve."[30] A *Partisan Review* symposium held in 1950 on "Religion and the Intellectuals" was largely dismissive of what was by then a more recognizable upswing in popular religious expression. Aside from Tillich and Maritain, the participants all, in the words of historian John P. Diggins, "regarded with aloof disdain the religious revival taking place in America."[31] Indeed, philosopher and *Partisan Review* regular William Barrett, sounding very much like Heidegger, whom he would go

---

[27] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1952), 35. Future references to this work will be parenthetical within the text.

[28] For an excellent history of the anxieties of the consumer society of postwar America, see Daniel Horowitz, *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of Consumer Culture, 1939-1979* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004). For more on religion and the cold war, see Diane Kirby, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[29] See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd Edition, foreword and concluding chapter by David D. Hall (1972; New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), 949-963.

[30] John P. Diggins, *Up from Communism: Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual Development* (1975; New York: Columbia UP, 1994), 285.

[31] Ibid., 296.

on to introduce to the American public in such influential works as *Irrational Man* (1958), suggested that the "American masses,"

> immersed in their gadgets, radios, television sets, automobiles, know nothing of the religious passion that once characterized the peasantries of Europe.[32]

Postwar interest in religious matters was, in his view, no more than a fad, a cheap and disposable approximation of age-old faith.

It may not have lived up to the lofty standards of the New York Intellectuals, but the postwar religious revival was in fact very real, and in the years following the 1950 symposium it only grew. So much did it grow that by 1968, when a *Daedalus* symposium decided to revisit the *Partisan Review* debate, its participants could speak confidently of a fourth "Great Awakening."[33] There was no doubt about it: between 1950 and 1968, the public prestige of religion in the United States expanded greatly. Even William Barrett had to grudgingly concede in 1962 that "theology has once again become intellectually exciting."[34] The power and influence of religious thought—on politics, the Civil Rights movement, the counterculture, and so much more—during the fifties and sixties cannot be overestimated.[35] How else do we explain the prominence of Reinhold Niebuhr, the omnipresence Martin Luther King, Jr. (who read Heidegger before he read Tillich), or even the dabblings in Eastern mysticism amongst the counterculture?[36]

---

[32] Quoted in ibid.
[33] William G. McLoughlin, "Introduction: How is America Religious?," in William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah, eds., *Religion in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), x.
[34] William Barrett, "Introduction to Neo-Orthodoxy," in Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, eds., *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Volume 4 (New York: Random House, 1962), 617.
[35] On religion and the Civil Rights movement see, for example, David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
[36] On Martin Luther King, Jr.'s reading of Heidegger, see "Martin Luther King Jr. Traces his Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," in Arthur and Lila Weinberg, eds., *Instead of Violence: Writings by the Great Advocates of Peace and Nonviolence throughout History* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1963), 71. On Niebuhr, see Richard Wightman Fox's classic *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon, 1985). See also,

"Religion," concluded William McLoughlin, one of the editors, along with Robert Bellah, of the *Daedalus* symposium, "is a serious matter in America, from politicians to Pentecostals and from Babbits to beatniks."[37] Or, as intellectual historian Anthony Grafton memorably put it in a recent *New Yorker* essay on the early career of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger: "By the early sixties, German-speaking professors of theology had become rock stars. The audiences for their lectures filled the largest auditoriums, and publishers competed to print their long, erudite books."[38] Who needs the Beatles when you have Karl Barth?

In times of great social and cultural transformation, religion returns, but never as it always was. In his contribution to the *Daedalus* symposium, the Catholic writer Michael Novak claimed that "the twin shocks of Nazi barbarism in Europe and of the new technology in the United States have constituted a turning point in the spiritual history of the West."[39] The philosophical position of this turning point was undoubtedly that of existentialism. But existentialism's relation to Christian belief, like religion's place in the modern, post-Holocaust world, was unclear. Wasn't Sartre, after all, an atheist? Didn't Nietzsche proclaim the death of God? And even more importantly, how could any God have allowed Auschwitz? In a climate of such pervasive uncertainty and doubt, otherwise obtuse-seeming theological debates took on immediate and practical

---

more recently, Kevin Mattson, *When America was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[37] McLoughlin, "Introduction," in *Religion in America*, xv. On religion and the student movement, see Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), especially chapter two, "Breakthrough: the Relevance of Christian Existentialism," 53-84.

[38] Anthony Grafton, "Reading Ratzinger: Benedict XVI, the Theologian," *The New Yorker*, July 25, 2005, 44. The aura of openness and tolerance that defined Vatican II of course played a major role in this. Without Vatican II, such notable theologians as Karl Rahner and Hans Küng would not have been become household names, let alone theological "rock stars". Since his elevation to the papacy, Benedict VXI's (i.e. Ratzinger's) relation to Vatican II has been much debated. In addition to Grafton's essay, see Eamon Duffy, "On the Other Side," *TLS* December 16, 2005.

[39] Michael Novak, "Christianity: Renewed or Slowly Abandoned?," in *Religion in America*, 390.

relevance, which is precisely why a systematic theologian trained in the rarified tradition of German Idealism could grace the cover of *Time* magazine in 1959.[40] Tillich's success—Novak describes him during this time as, along with Niebuhr, one of the "prime molders of religious language" in the United States—was due in large part to his ability to speak to the current situation, even if he did so in a language still replete with the turgid terminology of German academic discourse.[41] His remarks in *The Courage to Be* about the culture of conformism in American society are especially relevant in this regard.[42] An anxious age was seeking an easy way out of doubt, he thought, by conforming, by fleeing into the easy embrace of everydayness, of quotidian distractions. His existential theology, insofar as it got to the heart of this flight from doubt and uncertainty, from, above all, individual responsibility, spoke directly to the age of anxiety; and he clearly had the anxieties of the age in mind when he sat down to pen *The Courage to Be* in his modest summer house in the Hamptons, where daily, during breaks from the task of writing, he walked the thin strip of sand that separated the *terra firma* of Long Island on one side from the infinite Atlantic on the other.

The Courage to Be cannot be separated from the context of its creation, but to truly understand it, we must also go beyond this particular historical context. The book, although it spoke directly to the culture of the postwar moment in the United States, had its roots in another post-bellum period, and in another national context altogether—

---

[40] *Time*, March 16, 1959. Grafton, in his *New Yorker* article on Ratzinger, also notes that Barth made the cover of *Time* as well. See page 44.

[41] Novak, "Christianity: Renewed or Slowly Abandoned?," 395. Novak does qualify this judgment somewhat, saying that Tillich and Niebuhr shaped the religious language more "of the elite" than everyday Christians. Next to Tillich, the most prominent theologian in the United States at the time was of course Reinhold Niebuhr, who not only secured Tillich a position at Union Theological Seminary in New York, but encouraged and supported Tillich as he adapted to life in the U.S. On their intellectual and personal relationship, and how both disintegrated due to Niebuhr's disapproval of Tillich's womanizing, see Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr*.

[42] See *The Courage to Be*, 103-119.

namely Germany after the Great War. Reading Tillich's most famous text without acknowledging the impact of this historical moment upon his thinking obscures much of the book's meaning. In other words, it should be read contextually.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, Tillich, an ardent defender of the Protestant faith even in his youth, was well on his way to becoming a minister steeped in the usual academic liberal theology of his time.[43] The war, however, shattered Tillich's illusions about liberal or natural theology. As a chaplain, he saw the grotesque horrors of trench warfare up close.[44] The so-called Great War also exposed, for Tillich, the bankruptcy of German Idealism, which was so easily transformed into a narrow and self-serving kind of patriotic militarism.[45] It is a truism of course that World War I shattered every civilized notion of progress amongst western intellectuals, but for Tillich this was no academic abstraction; to the contrary, it was something that reached down to the bottom of his soul.[46] From this point on, Tillich would remain a persistent questioner of the pieties of liberal theology. And so, by the time he came to it, the religious existentialism of the time fit his new-found skepticism perfectly.

Tillich's brand of religious existentialism, I want to argue (none too controversially, really), comes directly out of Heidegger's early philosophical work.[47]

---

[43] On the tradition of liberal theology in Germany, and how it came under attack by crisis theology, see Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God* (forthcoming).

[44] These horrors were depicted in the art of painters such as Otto Dix and writers such as Ernst Jünger, whose memoir, *The Storm of Steel*, which was originally published in 1920, became a sensation in Weimar-era Germany. See Jünger, *The Storm of Steel* (1920; New York: Howard Fertig, 1996).

[45] On Tillich's reaction to the horrors of the First World War, see Harmut Lehman, "Religious Socialism, Peace, and Pacifism," in Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, eds., *The Shadows of Total War: Europe, East Asia, and the United States, 1919-1939*, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 85-95, especially 87-88.

[46] On the Great War and the intellectuals, see, for example, H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (New York: Knopf, 1958), 338-391.

[47] Others have commented on the relationship of Tillich's thought to that of Heidegger's. The most succinct account is Thomas F. O'Meara's "Tillich and Heidegger: A Structural Relationship," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968): 249-261. O'Meara documents in fine detail the debt that Tillich's

Although Tillich was already reading Kierkegaard and Nietzsche long before he came into contact with Heidegger personally, and was thus well on his way towards an existentialist understanding of the religious situation, his exposure to Bultmann and Heidegger, who both, year after year, held legions of students captivated in their lecture halls, was a crucial turning point in his career. Of Tillich's time in Marburg, which was brief—he taught there for only three semesters in 1924-1925—but, intellectually speaking, very important, philosopher J.H. Randall, Tillich's longtime friend at Columbia University, has said:

> Tillich found an exciting colleague at Marburg, Martin Heidegger. He was impressed by Heidegger's profound influence on his students, and finished absorbing from him the existentialist criticism of Idealism his reading and his war experience as chaplain on the western front had already led him to take seriously.[48]

At the time, Heidegger, like Bultmann, was laboring under the intellectual influence of Karl Barth's neo-orthodoxy. Compared to this triumvirate, Tillich, for his part, was certainly more liberal, "both theologically and culturally" (as his friends and biographers Wilhelm and Marion Pauck have put it), but this did not prevent him from appropriating many of their insights, particularly Heidegger's. Indeed, as the Paucks explain: "there are

---

systematic theology owes to the philosophy of Heidegger. Curiously, however, he does not discuss *The Courage to Be*. James M. Edie, in "The Absence of God (Heidegger and Tillich)," which can be found in William Earle, James M. Edie, and John Wild, *Christianity and Existentialism* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1963), also explores Tillich's relation to Heidegger. But Edie, unlike O'Meara, does discuss the *Courage to Be*, and finds in it examples of Tillich's closeness to, as well as—more importantly, perhaps—his distance from, Heidegger. For example: "The difference between Heidegger and Tillich is that, whereas Heidegger calmly accepts the *nothingness* which is in man as *definitive* of the human condition, Tillich considers it as a *threat*. Whereas Heidegger is resigned, Tillich is impatient" (141).

[48] J.H. Randall, "The Philosophical Legacy of Paul Tillich," in James R. Lyons, *The Intellectual Legacy of Paul Tillich* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1969), 33. In his *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), Tillich wrote: "When existential philosophy was introduced in Germany, I came to a new understanding of the relationship between theology and philosophy. Heidegger's lectures at Marburg, the publication of his *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), and also his interpretations of Kant were significant in this connection" (56).

some who feel that had it not been for Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Tillich would never have developed his ontology as he did."[49]

Tillich was busy developing this ontology in the late twenties and early thirties, by which time he had settled in at Frankfurt University, where he had close relations with the still new Institute for Social Research. (As it turned out, Adorno wrote his habilitation thesis—on Kierkegaard—under Tillich and was his seminar assistant for a year.[50]) By then of course, the political situation in Germany was deteriorating by the minute and Tillich, an outspoken critic of the Nazis, was among the first professors in the country to lose his appointment. In this regard, Tillich could not be more different from Heidegger, who at the same time was busy translating his philosophical work into the language of the new regime.[51] But their respective intellectual foundations still had much in common. Indeed, as philosopher Johannes Fritsche has shown, though their political platforms faced in different directions (Tillich was, by this time, a committed socialist), their diagnoses of shortcomings of the modern world were in some instances quite similar.[52]

---

[49] Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life & Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 95, 98. The Paucks also explain that this intellectual transfer occurred in only the most roundabout of ways: Tillich "became acquainted with Bultmann, but only from a distance. Heidegger was open only to the most formal relations. Indeed, the only 'conversation' Tillich seems to have had with him was by way of points made in the course of lectures, transported back and forth from classroom to classroom by student gossip. But Heidegger's thought made a profound impression on Tillich" (98).

[50] Renate Albrecht and Werner Schußler, *Paul Tillich: Sein Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), 80-81. See also, Eduardo Mendieta, "Religion as Critique: Theology as Social Critique and Enlightened Reason," in Mendieta, ed., *The Frankfurt School on Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 13. For more on Tillich and Adorno, see Guy B. Hammond, "Tillich, Adorno, and the Debate about Existentialism," *Laval theologique et philosophique* 47 (October 1991): 343-55. It would be worth exploring whether Adorno's later animus towards Heideggerian existentialism had its roots in Tillich's teaching. See Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973).

[51] The most recent (and forceful) analysis of Heidegger's attempt to put philosophy at the service of the Nazi movement is Emmanuel Faye's *Heidegger l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie: Autour des seminaries inédits de 1933-1935* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).

[52] See Johannes Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 173-187. Fritsche compares Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) to Tillich's *The Socialist Decision* (1933).

Tillich would later offer an unsparing critique of the "political romanticism" to which Heidegger fell prey in the early thirties, but he nonetheless continued to draw from Heidegger's existential insights into the human condition.[53] Even as he made his way to the United States and even as he lent his support to the allied war effort (in the form of weekly radio addresses to the German people, urging them to abandon the Nazi cause), Tillich continued to employ the fundamental existential categories Heidegger had outlined in *Being and Time*.[54] Among his earliest American writings, in fact, was an essay for the *Journal of the History of Ideas* entitled "Existential Philosophy," which offered a carefully reconstructed genealogy of *Existenzphilosophie*, one which traced this new intellectual movement from its origins in the crisis of nineteenth-century German theology directly up to Heidegger.[55] But nowhere are Tillich's Heideggerian debts more evident than in *The Courage to Be*.

Heidegger is directly referenced only a handful of times in *The Courage to Be*, but his intellectual influence pervades the entire text. He is there at the opening, as Tillich tries to define his key terms. Take, for example, his description of *Angst*: "Anxiety is finitude, experienced as one's own finitude" (35)—a statement that could

---

[53] See Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998), 175; and Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 260, 265.

[54] On Tillich's wartime addresses, see *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*, edited by Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998). For a current attempt to revive this legacy, see Jean Bethke Elshtain's polemical, and in my opinion misguided, *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (New York: Basic, 2003), especially her chapter on "Where is the Legacy of Niebuhr and Tillich?," 99-112.

[55] Paul Tillich, "Existential Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (January 1944): 44-70. It is worth noting that Tillich's tone regarding Heidegger is quite different from that of Hannah Arendt, whose own introductory essay on German Existentialism—"What is Existenz Philosophy?," *Partisan Review* 13:1 (Winter 1946)—included the famous disparagement of Heidegger as "the last (we hope) romantic" (46). A comparison of these two essays, both early American writings of figures who would go on to have a profound impact on American thought and culture, would thus highlight both the common intellectual background of the émigrés, but also the subtle differences that separated them.

very well summarize the central insight of the first half of *Being and Time*. This direct appropriation of a Heideggerian concept is no fluke. What Tillich does throughout the text is translate Heidegger's description of existence, which itself derives from the Christian writings of figures like Kierkegaard, Luther, and even St. Paul, among others, back into an explicitly theological language. In a sense, he, like Bultmann, was reversing Heidegger's own method: Heidegger had extracted from Christian thought a description of existence that, shorn of its historical origins, he then placed into a formal, academic framework. Tillich, like Bultmann, was injecting this description back into the Christian tradition from whence it came.[56] The result was a striking similarity between the two works, composed some twenty-five years apart: placed side by side, entire passages of *The Courage to Be* read as if they had been lifted directly from *Being and Time*. Whereas Heidegger, for example, could write about "Being-towards-death" as a formal, philosophical concept, Tillich could describe "the anxiety of ultimate nonbeing" in terms of its theological valence.[57] And this comparison only scratches the surface. On

---

[56] I take this insight from John D. Caputo, himself a prominent figure in the religious reception of Heidegger's work in the United States. See Caputo, "Heidegger and Theology," in Charles B. Guignon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993): "When Bultmann 'applied' *Being and Time* to Christian theology he was 'de-formalizing' the existential analytic and articulating it in terms of a historically specific, existential ideal, namely, historical Christianity. The reason this deformalization worked so well was that the existential analytic was in the first place and in no small part itself the issue of a formalization of Christian factical life. Bultmann was largely reversing the process that had brought *Being and Time* about in the first place. I believe that much the same thing could be said of Paul Tillich—also a Marburg colleague of Heidegger—whose early existential theology draws on motifs in *Being and Time* that are themselves originally drawn from an analysis of the New Testament" (275). Leo Strauss took note of this dynamic in the preface to the English translation of his book on Spinoza: despite Heidegger's wish "to expel from philosophy the last relics of Christian theology," his works failed "to escape from" what Strauss called "the Biblical understanding of man." Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 12-13. Hans Jonas also makes this point as well, which I discuss below.

[57] The problem of non-being was the key thematic in most of Tillich's works. Compare, for example, these remarks in volume I of his *Systematic Theology* (1951; Chicago: Chicago UP, 1967), 189: "Heidegger's 'annihilating nothingness' describes man's situation of being threatened by nonbeing in an ultimately inescapable way, that is, by death. The anticipation of nothingness at death gives human existence its existential character […] In existentialism there is no way of conquering this threat. The only way of

meaninglessness: "The anxiety of emptiness drives us into the abyss of meaninglessness" (48). On everydayness and its inauthentic relation to the claims of *Angst*: "…all human life can be interpreted as a continuous attempt to avoid despair. And this attempt is mostly successful. Extreme situations are not reached frequently and perhaps they are never reached by some people" (56). On the authentic appropriation of anxiety: "Courage resists despair by taking anxiety into itself" (66).

By the time that Tillich begins his direct discussion of existentialism—"the expression of our own situation" (126)—he has already made it clear that a theology that avoids taking into consideration the fundamental insights of this new philosophical perspective does so only at great risk to its continued relevance. Existentialism, Tillich argues, offers the most trenchant account of the problem of meaninglessness, which in his view represents the key problematic of the postwar world; any theology that ignores this is simply retreating into the tired truisms of conventional belief.[58] Having lost its place in the universe, humanity was on the verge of being consumed by its own technological creations, so no traditional religious option would do.[59] Writing in the wake of total war, perhaps such an assessment by Tillich is to be expected; for across the political spectrum there was a concern at the time that science and technology may have finally opened Pandora's Box, and that it was only a matter of time until its contents wreaked their

---

dealing with it lies in the courage of taking it upon one's self: courage! As this survey shows, the dialectical problem of nonbeing is inescapable. It is the problem of finitude."

[58] Tillich, in his *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (New York: Oxford UP, 1959), says the following: "Theology has received tremendous gifts from existentialism, gifts not dreamed of fifty years ago or even thirty years ago" (126).

[59] This assessment was one Tillich shared with both Bultmann and Barth even before the outbreak of World War II, which no doubt only reconfirmed it. In the words of one commentator: "For all three men faith in the modern world could only be paradoxical, a resolute stance in the face of meaninglessness…Each saw that the old liberal certainties were no longer valid, and each struggled to develop a position within the Christian tradition that would accommodate this revelation." Douglas J. Cremer, "Protestant Theology in Early Weimar Germany: Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56:2 (April 1995), 306.

havoc upon all God's creation. What existentialism offered was an accurate diagnosis of this situation. In Tillich's words:

> Twentieth-century man has lost a meaningful world and a self which lives in meanings out of a spiritual center. The man-created world of objects has drawn into itself him who created it and who now loses his subjectivity in it. He has sacrificed himself to his own productions (139).

This was the fount of modern meaninglessness, the nadir of nihilism, and Tillich was among the first to label it as such. Indeed, for decades to come, theologians would decry the soulless condition of American society. As late as 1974 the keynote speaker of the American Society of Church History, though no admirer of Tillich's, told his audience that "meaninglessness" had "worked itself into the fabric" of American society, and was only "intensified by the depersonalization apparent in today's industrialization."[60] In such a situation, where technology governed all life and, at the height of the cold war at least, threatened it with mass-death in the form of nuclear Armageddon, even the traditional God of theology had lost His (or Her) place, which compelled Tillich, like Kierkegaard before him, to speak, alternatively, of a "God above God."

As Tillich searches for solutions to the problem of meaninglessness towards the end of *The Courage to Be*, he turns yet again to Heidegger. The solution to the problem of "meaninglessness," which he sometimes calls the problem of nihilism, can be found, he thinks, in Heidegger's notion of *Entschlossenheit*, or resolve. Along with finitude, resolve is a key term in the first half of *Being and Time*, and Tillich, in *The Courage to Be*, suggests that no other thinker until Heidegger had grasped its true importance:

> Meaninglessness in all its aspects can be faced only by those who resolutely take the anxiety of finitude and guilt upon themselves. There is no room, no criterion for what is right and wrong. Resoluteness makes

[60] Clyde L. Manschreck, "Nihilism in the Twentieth Century: A View from Here," *Church History* 45:1 (March 1976), 95.

> right what shall be right. One of Heidegger's historical functions was to carry through the Existentialist analysis of the courage to be as oneself more fully than anyone else and, historically speaking, more destructively (149).

More destructively—there is so much embedded in these words, added as if they were no more than an afterthought, an inconsequential aside. For somebody forced from his homeland by the Nazi regime, for somebody who knew Heidegger before the infamous *Rektoratsrede*, in which Heidegger put *Entschlossenheit* in the service of Hitler, the brevity of this remark is astonishing. Perhaps because Tillich's own theological existentialism was so entwined with Heidegger's he could say no more. Tillich could not take Heidegger's Nazism as evidence against the exalting of resolve over and above other ethical norms, because that would, in the end, amount to a kind of self-incrimination. Perhaps this is why Tillich, in a lecture delivered at Cooper Union in New York two years after the publication of *The Courage to Be*, would warn against the temptation to equate any philosopher with his or her political decisions.[61]

To be sure, a number of fundamental differences separated Tillich and Heidegger. Chief among these was Tillich's unfailing allegiance to the core teachings of Christianity, with which Heidegger's thought, after 1919 at least, was only in the most ambiguous of ways associated. Tillich drew, again and again, from that which Heidegger rejected. Self-affirmation, for example, could never come at the expense of God. To the contrary, Tillich thought that it could only take place by the grace of God. In *The Courage to Be*, he repeatedly stresses the need for such transcendence. Thus his notion of the courage to

---

[61] The lecture, "Heidegger and Jaspers," is referenced in Paul Tillich, *Political Expectation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), xii, 7. I get this reference from Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich*, 318 n.44. In this context, one thinks instantly of a counter-example from the other end of the political spectrum, namely the life and death of the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. See the insightful new documentary *Bonhoeffer*, written and directed by Martin Doblmeier (2003).

be as self-affirmation may in action look like Heideggerian resoluteness, but in actuality it was to grow from a completely different soil: "every courage to be has an open or hidden religious root. For religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself" (156). Elsewhere in the text he suggests, quite frankly, that the courage to be is "a matter of grace" (84-85). And, to quote the final line of the book: "*The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt*" (190, italics in original).[62]

Whether or not these passages offer an effective bulwark against the more "destructive" decisionism of somebody like Heidegger, or even somebody like Carl Schmitt, the infamous "crown jurist" of the Third Reich who also employed such terminology, is of course open to debate.[63] It could certainly be argued that such talk, despite its affirmative and therapeutic intent, in the end only anticipates the fatalism of Heidegger's later remark that "only a god can save us" (more on this below). Again, Tillich, a bohemian socialist by the time he reached Frankfurt in 1929, could not have been farther from Heidegger politically. But this did not prevent him from continuing to employ Heidegger's early existential writings in his own theological work both then and for years to come.

Tillich's existential theology, so influential here in the United States that historian H. Stuart Hughes once described the émigré theologian as "the only existentialist to

---

[62] On this point, I thus agree with the early assessment of James M. Edie in "The Absence of God (Heidegger and Tillich)": "Where Tillich goes beyond Heidegger is in his refusal to let the question of affirming man's relation to God remain a matter of indifference or neglect while we wait for a new revelation or for our thought to mature. Man, Tillich finds, is *unable* to face his finite situation alone. In order to achieve the courage for the anxiety which the post-Nietzschean world demands of him, man discovers, through Anxiety and Despair, an experience of *absolute faith* which gives him the *courage to be*" (139-140). For more, see note 43 above.

[63] On Schmitt's decisionism, see Richard Wolin, "Carl Schmitt, Political Existentialism, and the Total State," in *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 83-104.

thrive on American soil," marks a crucial moment in the dissemination of Heidegger's thought.[64] But Tillich also aided this process in other, more direct, ways as well. Not only did he continue to draw from the existential analysis as it was presented in *Being and Time*, he also sought to make that work itself available to a whole new audience. It is a little known fact that Hannah Arendt, when she was first making inquires about the prospects for having *Sein und Zeit* translated into English, contacted Tillich, a fellow émigré and, in those days, a fellow New Yorker. On her behalf, Tillich sent off a letter to Oxford University Press. A brief reply eventually came, to Arendt, on 11 November 1954: "Although our Editorial Board is impressed with the importance of such a book" wrote Wilbur D. Ruggles, manager of the press' religious department, "we also feel that the trade sale would be most discouraging. We have therefore, come to the conclusion that publication by us is not possible."[65]

London Calling

The translation of *Sein und Zeit* that eventually found a willing publisher was the work of two academics. Edward Robinson was, at the time, a professor of philosophy at Kansas University, and John Macquarrie, his counterpart, a Scottish theologian. As Macquarrie recounted it many years later, in the Hensley Henson Lectures he delivered at Oxford in 1993-1994, "it was almost an accident" that he ended up translating

---

[64] H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change* in *The Obstructed Path & The Sea Change, 1930-1965* (1975; Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan UP, 1987), 267. Hughes also suggests that, "of all the intellectual émigrés to the United States, Tillich was perhaps the one who embraced America most whole-heartedly and received most affection in return. Yet in his case also an ambiguity lurked in the background: he too remained more German than his American admirers suspected" (265). Compare this to Tillich's own remarks in Paul Tillich, "The Conquest of Theological Provincialism," in W. Rex Crawford, *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America*, The Benjamin Franklin Lectures (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), 138-156.

[65] Wilbur D. Ruggles to Hannah Arendt, 11 November 1954, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.

Heidegger's magnum opus.[66] Like J. Glenn Gray, another of Heidegger's chief translators, Macquarrie, too, served in the war, but as a chaplain. On account of his knowledge of German he also—again, like Gray—remained in uniform for postwar duties, which in his case involved overseeing chaplaincy services for German POWs.[67] It was only upon returning to Scotland and resuming his studies that he came across *Sein und Zeit*. Macquarrie was about to begin a thesis on the theology of Bultmann when his advisor, Ian Henderson, told him that in order to really understand Bultmann he would first have to delve into Heidegger.[68]

Macquarrie found *Sein und Zeit* "both difficult and fascinating," completely unlike anything he had ever encountered in his philosophical studies. He kept detailed notes as he worked slowly through the text, page by page.[69] When he finally emerged from the thicket of Heidegger's philosophical prose, he had what was in essence a *précis*, in English, of the entire work. He also had a different thesis topic: what began as an examination of Bultmann's theology had expanded to become a comparison of the work of both Bultmann and Heidegger, the two former colleagues from Marburg.

In 1955, when Macquarrie was arranging for the publication of his thesis, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*, with the London-based religious publisher Student Christian Movement Press, he was offered a proposition that he could very well have refused but ultimately chose not to.[70] Based on his extensive notes on *Being and Time*, SCM Press suggested that Macquarrie undertake

---

[66] Macquarrie, *Heidegger and Christianity*, 109.
[67] Ibid., 116.
[68] Ibid., 109.
[69] Ibid.
[70] John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1955).

a full translation of the book, a laborious task if there ever was one. Luckily, he did not have to go it alone. When SCM Press discovered that an American philosopher at the University of Kansas, one Edward S. Robinson, was also attempting a translation, they asked the two to collaborate.

Being and Time, the first English translation of *Sein und Zeit*, appeared in 1962, after seven years of cross-Atlantic cooperation, and thirty-five years after the book first appeared in German.[71] Clearly, there had been parties interested in translating Heidegger's work into English for a number of years. In the postwar era, according to Nietzsche translator Walter Kaufmann, a steady "demand for English translations of Heidegger mounted."[72] Some philosophers, such as Harvard University's John Wild, took it upon themselves to translate the work without securing any formal contract or permission, so convinced were they of the work's importance.[73] But publishers, interested as they always are in the bottom line, thought otherwise. What Kaufmann saw as a growing demand, publishers, like Oxford, saw only as potential sales debacle. Only a smaller, more specialized press, like SCM, could consider such a project. Sales were indeed slow in the UK in 1962, so when the religious division of Harper & Row publishers in the United States put in a call to SCM in London with a proposal to buy the translation rights, along with all unsold stock of the first run, there seemed no reason to expect that the book would fare any better on this side of the Atlantic.[74]

---

[71] The SCM edition of *Being and Time* appeared as part of a series called the "Library of Philosophy," alongside the works of such figures as Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Macquarrie, and Scheler.
[72] Walter Kaufmann, "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States," *Salmagundi* 10-11 (Fall 1969-Winter 1970), special issue on "The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals," page 80.
[73] For more on Wild, see chapter five below.
[74] For his part, Heidegger could not have cared less about the book being translated into English—until the translation started selling. Once he became aware of the book's almost instant success, Heidegger quickly abandoned his earlier indifference and, as Macquarrie documents in *Heidegger and Christianity*, became

A funny thing happened along the way to the States, however: Heidegger suddenly became popular. Harper & Row quickly and unexpectedly sold out its entire stock, which consisted of the remaining SCM editions and a limited American run. An in-house memo from 1963 conveys just how shocking this was, even for those who had sealed the deal: "This book keeps establishing all kinds of new records."[75] Years earlier, editors at Harper & Row had looked into having *Sein und Zeit* translated into English, only to be told, by more than one person, that the book was "virtually untranslatable."[76] Even Tillich had at one point suggested that translating Heidegger's magnum opus was "practically impossible."[77] Macquarrie and Robinson obviously proved otherwise.

It is worth dwelling on the details of this curious publication history because they reveal the extent to which Heidegger was introduced to the English-speaking world via the channels of theological discourse. It was, after all, a protestant theologian who got *Sein und Zeit* translated, a religious publisher who first brought it out, and the religious imprint of a major trade house in the United States that eventually sold it to the masses. In this sense, Heidegger's relevance for theology was his entry ticket into American intellectual and cultural debate. And while the theological reading of Heidegger would

---

keenly interested in the wide dissemination (and sales figures) of his translated works. See *Heidegger and Christianity*, 110-112.

[75] "Heidegger/Being and Time," October 8, 1963, correspondence related to Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, offices of HarperCollins in San Francisco. I thank John Loudon for making these files available to me. Macquarrie, for his part, was just as surprised buy the U.S. sales as anybody else. See *Heidegger and Christianity*, 117.

[76] The quote comes from an early Harper & Row memo to Hugh Van Dusen from Mel Arnold. While in Oxford, Arnold spoke with the refugee scholar F. H. Heinemann about the feasibility of translating *Sein und Zeit*. In addition to being "virtually untranslatable," Arnold relayed that Heinemann considered "Heidegger's mentality," in the end, to be too "different from the Anglo-American mentality." "Heidegger/Sein Und Zeit," Oxford 10/12/58, correspondence related to Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, offices of HarperCollins in San Francisco. Heinemann, a refugee scholar, was the author of, among other works, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953). It has been suggested that he was actually the first to coin the term "existentialism." For more on this, see Walter Kaufmann, "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States," 72-73.

[77] Tillich, "Existential Philosophy," 44.

eventually give way to other (philosophical) fads, it is obvious that in the sixties the theological question was still the central one.[78] And it went both ways: those interested in the cutting-edge theology of the time, as Macquarrie could confidently proclaim in 1968, had to come to terms with Heidegger; and those interested in Heidegger had to know the theology, too.[79]

"Heidegger and God—and Professor Jonas"

"Scholar Breaks with Heidegger—Conference at Drew is Told Philosopher's Work Lacks Meaning for Christians—Pro-Nazism is Charged—Teacher at the New School Cites German's Statement Ending with 'Heil Hitler'." Thus ran the headline in the *New York Times* on the eleventh day of April, 1964. Nobody could have imagined that a small conference held at Drew University, in Madison, New Jersey, and, furthermore, one that carried the cumbersome title of "The Second Consultation on Hermeneutics, Devoted to the Problem of Non-Objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Contemporary Theology," could possibly have produced anything newsworthy enough for the *Times*, let alone such an attention-grabbing scandal as this. But thanks to an unexpected keynote address this small gathering of mostly Protestant theologians in a sleepy, suburban town turned out to be more than your run-of-the-mill academic

---

[78] As evidence of the boom in theological publishing during the sixties, see, for example, Nash K. Burger, "In the World of Religion," *New York Times* 1 December 1963, which discusses the work of Macquarrie, Heidegger, Tillich, Bultmann, and others.

[79] John Macquarrie, *Martin Heidegger* (London: Lutterworth Press, London, 1968), preface, no page: "I think it would be true to say that one could hardly hope to advance very far in the understanding of contemporary theology without some knowledge of Heidegger's thought."

gathering. Indeed, as Richard Wolin has put it, it was "an intellectual event of international magnitude."[80]

Heidegger himself was supposed to deliver the inaugural address of the conference since the affair was devoted largely to his own philosophical work and its potential relevance to contemporary theology. A book published only a year earlier, *The Later Heidegger and Theology*, had confirmed the view held by many American theologians that Heidegger did indeed have something worthwhile to say to them.[81] The occasional reference to Heidegger as an important existentialist, or as an inspiration for Bultmann or Tillich, had been replaced by a sustained interest in Heidegger himself. And Heidegger, for his part, seemed willing to meet this interest half-way. To meetings of "the old Marburgers", i.e. the students of Bultmann (and sometimes Heidegger, too) which took place regularly in Germany throughout the fifties and sixties, he spoke approvingly and interestedly of the relationship between thought and theology.[82] Although in his writings Heidegger still kept his distance from organized religion, in the postwar decades he seemed ever more receptive to a kind of religious discourse, especially as he came to emphasize the passive, meditative qualities of what he considered to be authentic thinking, which stood in contrast to his own earlier, more anthropocentric writings, as well as to the calculative rationality of the modern, technological world.[83] This new turn in his thinking culminated in his oft-quoted remark,

---

[80] Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 101.
[81] James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., eds., *The Later Heidegger and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).
[82] Ibid., 5. This quotation comes from an essay by James M. Robinson on "The German Discussion of the Later Heidegger," which provides a wonderful overview of the debate as it stood at the time in Germany.
[83] This turn in Heidegger's thinking was also marked by an interest in Eastern thought—Tao and Zen—evident in his writings. For more on this, see Reinhard May, *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*, trans., with a complimentary essay by Graham Parkes (New York: Routledge,

in an interview granted to the German magazine *Der Spiegel* in 1966 (but published only after his death a decade later), that "only a god can save us."[84] For these reasons, and others, Heidegger was invited to the conference at Drew. It would have been his first (and only, since he never did manage to journey across the Atlantic on any other occasion) trip to the United States, the country he once denounced as the pinnacle of modern nihilism.[85]

But Heidegger, already seventy-four years of age by then, stayed home in Freiburg. For health reasons, his doctor forbade him from making the long transatlantic flight. Unable to attend, Heidegger prepared a brief statement to be read in his absence entitled (again, none too captivatingly) "The Theological Discussion of 'The Problem of a Non-Objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Today's Theology'—Some Pointers to Its Major Aspects," in which he outlined what philosophy could, and could not, offer the discipline of theology, which, he believed, had to follow its own course, separate and distinct from all that philosophical thinking undertook.[86] With this, the organizers at least had an inaugural text, but they no longer had an inaugural speaker for the three-day event; luckily, they found a willing if initially reluctant replacement across the Hudson River, at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan.

1996), and Graham Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987). William Barrett, it is worth noting, followed Heidegger down this path, eventually editing and publishing *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956).

[84] A translation of the *Spiegel* interview can be found in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 91-116.

[85] On Heidegger's view(s) of America, see James Ceaser, "*Katastrophenhaft*: Martin Heidegger's America," in *Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Political Thought* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), 187-213; Michael Ermarth, "Heidegger and Americanism: *Ruinanz* and the End of Modernity," *Modernism / Modernity* 7:3 (2000): 379-400; and Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Heidegger's Amerika als Ursprungsort der Weltverdüsterung," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 45:4 (1997): 599-617.

[86] Heidegger's text has been translated and collected in James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, *The Piety of Thinking* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1976), 22-31.

Hans Jonas, who at the time was professor of philosophy at the New School, was of course one of Heidegger's "children," but this was by no means his only qualification for giving such a lecture. In addition to studying under Heidegger, whom he once described as a kind of "*Wunderrabbi*," Jonas had also worked extensively with Bultmann, and had written a well-respected study of the Gnostic tradition, which had been translated into English in 1958.[87] If anyone could shed light on the possible relevance of Heidegger's philosophical work for theology, it was Jonas. Imagine the surprise, then, when this "small, dapper Jewish scholar," as the reporter for the *Times* described him, "warned the assembled theologians that they would be accepting more than they bargained for" if they too quickly and too easily assimilated Heidegger's work into their own.[88]

From the outset of his lecture, it was clear that Jonas had certain reservations about Heidegger's relevance for the tasks of theology—his language alone said as much. He spoke of "spurious" and even "falsifying" claims on Heidegger's part, of the "temptation" that a philosophical discourse such as Heidegger's represented for theologians.[89] Nobody, Jonas admitted, could deny the affinities that Heidegger's thought exhibited with Christian teaching, but he nevertheless cautioned that theology was being "lured by them onto alien ground made all the more dangerous by the

---

[87] Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Tradition* (Boston: Beacon, 1958). On Jonas's debt to Bultmann, see his "Is Faith Still Possible?: Memories of Rudolf Bultmann and Reflections on the Philosophical Aspects of His Work," in *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*, ed. Lawrence Vogel (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1996), 144-164. On his reference to Heidegger as a type of *Wunderrabbi*, see *Erinnerungen*, and the review of it by Steve Aschheim, "Our hour, our war," *TLS* July 2, 2004.
[88] Paul L. Montgomery, "Scholar Breaks with Heidegger," *New York Times*, April 11, 1964.
[89] Hans Jonas, "Heidegger and Theology," *Review of Metaphysics* XVIII:2 (December 1964), 212.

mysterious masking," of Heidegger's language.[90] Heidegger, in other words, was a dangerous seduction. Beneath the supposedly Christian veneer of his philosophical writings hid a thoroughly pagan ethos that could only lead theologians astray in the end.

Jonas was particularly interested in demonstrating that Heidegger's conception of Being could not—and should not—be equated with "the radical transcendence of God."[91] Heidegger's ontology, especially in its later versions, was little more than a defense of destined historicism; Heidegger's Being was simply "a fate-laden happening upon thought," something which, in jettisoning the concept of transcendence, left no room for normativity.[92] This, according to Jonas, was the real danger that Heidegger's later thought represented: conceiving of Being—in place of God—as simple fate effectively negated the moral demands of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which emanated from an external source, namely the commandments of a transcendent God. All that was left, once Being was conceived as fate, was an empty decisionism, the same "destructive" resoluteness to which Tillich had called attention, however briefly, in *The Courage to Be*. The consequences of following Heidegger down this path were disastrous as Jonas, who was forced from Germany by Nazi anti-Semitism, had of course seen first-hand.[93] There

---

[90] Ibid., 211. Jonas, too, like Tillich and others, argued that many of the main concepts of *Being and Time* were thinly veiled accounts of traditional Christian terminology—"fallenness," "conscience," "guilt," "care," etc. See ibid., 212.
[91] Ibid., 219.
[92] Ibid., 218.
[93] Jonas later recalled that learning of Heidegger's embrace of Nazism while he was in exile in London came as a "cruel, bitter shock," one that changed his opinion not only of Heidegger, but of the "power of philosophy" as well. See Jonas, *Erinnerungen*, Nach Gespräpchen mit Rachel Salamander, Vorwort von Rachel Salamander, Geleitwort von Lore Jonas, Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Christian Wiese (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2003), 299. See also Jonas, "Philosophy at the End of the Century: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Mortality and Morality*, especially page 49, where he says the following: "Heidegger's conduct in the year 1933. Does that have anything to do with philosophy? In my opinion, yes. Since ancient times philosophy, unlike every other branch of learning, has been guided by the idea that its pursuit shapes not only the knowledge but also the conduct of its disciples, specifically in the service of the Good, which is after all the goal of knowledge. At the very least, philosophy's schooling of its adherents in discriminating among values ought to protect them from being infected by the mass mind

was a direct link, he argued, between Heidegger's paganism and his support of Hitler.[94] Quoting from a collection of political ephemera that had been published in Switzerland only two years prior to the Drew conference, a collection which documented Heidegger's embrace of the Nazi regime in the early thirties (and included the text of the *Rektoratsrede,* from which the quote was drawn), Jonas showed how Heidegger had replaced the ethical commandments of Christianity with those of the Führer. "'Not theorems and 'ideas' be the rules of your being," Jonas quoted Heidegger as saying in 1933. "The Führer himself and alone is the present and future German reality and its law. Learn ever deeper to know: that from now on each and every thing demands decision, and every action, responsibility. Heil Hitler!"[95]

For those in the audience who had expected a celebration of all things Heideggerian, Jonas's pointed remarks, humble, witty, and playful as they for the most part were, must have come as a shock. In addition to outlining the political dangers that awaited the uncritical assumption of the Heideggerian perspective, Jonas also called attention to the "exceedingly *kitschig*" mysticism of Heidegger's later writings, which at times more resembled poetry than philosophy. Responding particularly to an assertion made by James M. Robinson in *The Later Heidegger and Theology* that Heidegger's later thought, with its emphasis on poetry and art, was more "hauntingly suggestive" than it was "conceptually explicit," Jonas went so far as to joke: "God protect theology from the

---

[…] Therefore, when the most profound thinker of my time fell into step with the thundering march of Hitler's brown battalions, it was not merely a bitter personal disappointment for me but in my eyes a debacle for philosophy. Philosophy itself, not only a man, had declared bankruptcy."

[94] Jonas later recalled this as being one of the main aims of his lecture. See *Erinnerungen*, 305-306.

[95] Jonas, "Heidegger and Theology," 218. In this version of the text, the quote from Heidegger's political speech is listed in the footnote, but it was read aloud during the lecture at Drew. The material came from Schneeburger's *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu Seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962), portions of which were translated into English in the volume entitled *German Existentialism*, trans. and with an introduction by Dagobert Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965).

temptation of resorting to haunting language!"[96] Theology, he implied, should not be in the business of mystification.

Jonas's lecture, like all great rhetorical displays, reversed and overturned received opinion. Instead of Heidegger's thinking rescuing theology, it was theology, he asserted, that should rescue us from Heidegger. This was his conclusion, and as he neared it, lamenting again the "presumption" and "arrogance," the "seeming, and false humility" of Heidegger's claim that he alone had heard the true call of Being, the audience rose to reward Jonas with a standing ovation.[97] It was by all accounts a masterful performance, and the *New York Times* article covering it only amplified its effect.[98]

When compared to Tillich's meager attempt to distinguish between the political Heidegger, who was dangerous, and the philosophical Heidegger, who represented a rich and valuable intellectual resource, Jonas's explicit discussion of the philosophical origins of Heidegger's politics is all the more striking. But not everyone who heard his lecture—or read the account of it printed in the *Times*—was convinced. William J. Richardson, whose path-breaking—and back-breaking, at six-hundred-plus-pages—introduction to Heidegger's thought had just been published, was among the skeptics.[99] He replied publicly only a few weeks after the event. For the annual Suarez Lecture at Fordham University, Richardson had planned to discuss the topic of Heidegger's thinking as it related to the question of God, but at the last minute he abandoned his planned remarks and addressed instead Jonas's charges themselves. A scheduled lecture on "Heidegger

---

[96] Ibid., 227.
[97] Ibid., 228.
[98] See Jonas, *Erinnerungen*, 304.
[99] William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Fourth Edition (1963; New York: Fordham UP, 2003).

and God" thus became "Heidegger and God—and Professor Jonas."[100] "Never again did I appear in such distinguished company," Jonas later quipped.[101]

If neither of the first two of the lecture's primary subjects could attend Richardson's lecture, at least the third, Jonas, could. Jonas recalled years later that he had trouble finding parking on the streets surrounding Fordham's Bronx, New York, campus, and thus walked into the lecture hall late. He missed Richardson's opening remarks, but he arrived just in time to hear the Jesuit philosopher's direct reply to his Drew lecture. Richardson admitted that Jonas's earlier "performance was brilliant," that it was full of "erudition and fire," "lucidity and wit," and that it ultimately "launched what may well be one of the most incisive criticisms that has ever been directed against" Heidegger.[102] But it must have been clear to Jonas, as well as to the rest of the audience, that Richardson felt Jonas's charges against Heidegger were baseless and misinformed, for he went on to challenge almost everything Jonas had said at Drew. He accused Jonas of indulging in "verbal jiujitsu" to support his case; he suggested that Jonas had forgotten the phenomenological importance of what Heidegger had called the "ontological difference," which held that thinkers must always distinguish between ontological (Being) and ontic (beings) registers; and finally, he concluded that "all ontic considerations," including even the lowly fact of Heidegger's own Nazism, were, in the end, "philosophically irrelevant."[103]

---

[100] William J. Richardson, "Heidegger and God—and Professor Jonas," *Thought* XL (1965): 13-40. It is also worth looking at Richardson's "Heidegger and Theology," in *Theological Studies* 26:1 (March 1965): 86-100.
[101] Jonas, *Erinnerungen*, 307.
[102] Richardson, "Heidegger and God—and Professor Jonas," 14.
[103] Ibid., 20, 30-31, and 39, respectively.

Richardson then proceeded to recount the standard Heidegger myth, which the German thinker was himself busily disseminating during the postwar years. The myth goes something like this: a young peasant is educated by the Catholic Church in southwestern Germany; at the age of eighteen, he is presented, by a friend who just happened also to be a priest, a copy of Franz Brentano's *The Manifold Sense of Being in Aristotle* (1862), a book that sets him upon the path of the question of Being, which he pursues in his mountain-top hut; and the rest is history.[104] It was a succinct and convenient tale insofar as it subordinated the ontic facts of Heidegger's own life circumstances to the ontological quest after Being itself. And increasingly it seemed as if American readers of Heidegger, having followed Heidegger's post-war *Kehre*, or turning, could not be bothered with the lowly facts of the ontic world. Jonas saw it differently. Perhaps to him (after all, he had studied with Heidegger back in the twenties), hearing a younger American scholar recount the Heidegger myth was but another example of his former teacher's *kitschig* legacy at work. And there can be no denying that Richardson had something at stake in this legacy, especially since, after the publication of his *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, he was touring the lecture circuit regularly, offering quick introductions to, and expositions of, the work of the Freiburg sage to many an interested audience.[105]

---

[104] This myth permeated many of the postwar introductions of Heidegger. It always suggested, in the end, that Heidegger somehow existed at a remove from the real world; that he spent most of his time alone, thinking deep thoughts in his Black Forest hut. See, for example, Arthur C. Cochrane, *The Existentialists and God: Being and the Being of God in the Thought of Sören Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Tillich, Etienne Gilson, Karl Barth* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 58: "Heidegger now spends much of his time in the solitude of the mountains of the Black Forest."

[105] See William J. Richardson, "An Unpurloined Autobiography," in James R. Watson, ed., *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), 142-152.

In the wake of the responses to Jonas's performance at Drew, something of a generational divide in Heidegger scholarship began to emerge. Those who had studied with Heidegger before the war, his children and step-children, but also American-born philosophers such as Marjorie Grene and Paul Weiss, seemed more inclined to address the ontic fact of Heidegger's Nazism, whereas those who came to Heidegger in the postwar years, by which time the Heidegger "myth" had been firmly established, seemed quick to dismiss such concerns as philosophically unimportant. This resulted in two very different interpretations of Heidegger's work (especially regarding its relation to theology), and two very different estimations of its lasting value. By no means was either Jonas or Richardson alone in their assessments. On Jonas's side there was a whole lineage of critique that sought to expose Heidegger's secret Gnosticism, or if not that exactly, to highlight at least the indebtedness of his thought to religious thinking and terminology.[106] Such analyses tended for the most part to focus on Heidegger's earlier, or pre-*Kehre* writings, and attempted to expose, as Jonas later put it, "the nihilistic element that lies" in these works.[107]

On the other side of the debate, in, if you will, Richardson's corner, were all those who came to Heidegger via his later, or post-*Kehre* works, in which the early "Gnostic" terminology had been abandoned in favor of the poetic, meditative attitude, which emphasized releasement (*Gelassenheit*) and the so-called piety of authentic thinking. So

---

[106] See, for example, Ernest H. Freund, "Man's Fall in Martin Heidegger's Philosophy," *The Journal of Religion* 24:3 (July 1944): 180-187; Susan Anima Taubes, "The Gnostic Foundations of Heidegger's Nihilism," *The Journal of Religion* 34:3 (July 1954): 155-172; Richard Kroner, "Heidegger's Private Religion," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 11 (1956): 23-27; and Helmut Kuhn, *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism* (1949; London: Metheun, 1951), especially 35-36. See also the collected writings in Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, ed. Richard Wolin, trans. Gary Steiner (New York: Columbia UP, 1995).

[107] Hans Jonas, "Heidegger's Resoluteness and Resolve," in Günther Neske and Emil Kettering, eds., *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, Introduction by Karsten Harries, trans. Lisa Harries, French portions translated by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 203.

wrapped up in the question of Being—to say nothing of the Heidegger myth itself—were these commentators that they failed to see the importance of such lowly ontic considerations as historical context. Like Richardson, Charles E. Scott, who has since become a leading figure in the world of American Heidegger scholarship, also dismissed Jonas's critique of Heidegger's politics as "philosophically irrelevant."[108] Because Jonas, in his opinion, had failed to appreciate Heidegger's later philosophical position (which supposedly overcame—not succumbed to—nihilism), Scott concluded that the Drew lecture left its audience "with a task to be accomplished rather than with answers upon which we can rely"—an assessment clearly at odds with the enthusiastic reception Jonas's talk received, both initially at Drew and at various other universities in Germany after that.[109]

Overcoming Ontotheology

If Jonas and Richardson were ships traveling in different directions by the time they met in 1964, then the strategies of reading Heidegger their respective lectures represented became only more divergent in the coming years.[110] Although theological interpreters like John Macquarrie continued to make a living by introducing students to

---

[108] Charles E. Scott, "Heidegger Reconsidered: A Response to Professor Jonas," *Harvard Theological Review* 59:2 (1966): 180-181, note 14.

[109] Ibid., 185. In *Erinnerungen*, Jonas recounts that invitations eventually came from all over Germany to have him repeat the lecture there. He traveled throughout the country, but refused to deliver the lecture in Freiburg, "under Heidegger's nose." But the list of philosophical stars who attended his lectures is nevertheless quite impressive: among them were Adorno, who was "enthusiastic"; Gadamer, who kept quiet during the lecture but later confessed to Jonas in private that his assessment was correct; and even Ernst Bloch. So influential was Jonas's turn on the lecture circuit in Germany that a collection of responses eventually appeared under the title *Heidegger und die Theologie: Beginn und Fortgang der Diskussion* (München, 1967). On this, see *Erinnerungen*, 307-308.

[110] This is not to imply any personal hostility on either's part. Supposedly, after Richardson's Suarez Lecture, the two enjoyed a glass of wine together and had a friendly chat. See Jonas, *Erinnerungen*, 307.

the religious relevance of Heidegger's existentialism, by the early seventies this interpretive middle-ground was rapidly eroding.[111] There were those who increasingly insisted upon taking the ontic facts of Heidegger's biography into consideration while others, who had ears for only the ontological, turned their backs on such topics. For the latter, Heidegger's writings either offered solutions to problems in thought or were even treated as semi-sacred texts in need of devoted explication. For the former, Heidegger's life and work increasingly became a kind of modern *Faust* tale, shorthand for the dangers of mixing good philosophy with bad politics.

Since many of the young, up-and-coming interpreters of Heidegger were emerging from courses of study in theology as much as philosophy, they generally tended to be more patient with the seeming mysticism of Heidegger's later writings—at least more so than their philosopher colleagues who were trained in the more dominant Anglo-American tradition. Many of those who would go on to become the central figures in American continental philosophy were, early in their careers at least, staunch defenders of the later, "only a god can save us," Heidegger. For them, the quest for Being, recast as pious and simple thinking, was everything.[112]

---

[111] In addition to *An Existentialist Theology*, Macquarrie also published *Martin Heidegger* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968); and *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, revised edition (London: SCM Press, 1971).

[112] I am thinking here of figures like Charles Scott, especially essays of his such as "Heidegger, the Absence of God, and Faith," [in *The Journal of Religion* 46:3 (July, 1966): 365-373] but also Thomas Sheehan and others. In addition to contributing to Heidegger scholarship with such edited collections as *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing1981), Sheehan authored a study of the Jesuit theologian—and former Heidegger student—Karl Rahner [*Karl Rahner: The Philosophical Foundations*, Preface by Karl Rahner, SJ (Athens: Ohio UP, 1987)]. He also published a controversial account of Easter traditions: *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity* (New York: Random House, 1986). Unfortunately, I do not have enough space here to do justice to Sheehan's unique career—in addition to his work on Heidegger, Sheehan was commentator on the post-Vatican II era Church and also fiercely criticized in a number of prominent journalistic pieces the involvement of the U.S. in El Salvador.

A distinct interpretation of Heidegger emerged from these quarters, one that eventually came to share in and borrow from the general outlook of what is today called postmodernism. Heidegger was first read in the United States by religious-minded commentators within the framework of Christian existentialism, which was followed by such radicalizing off-shoots as so-called "Death of God Theology," an intellectual current so prominent in the late sixties and early seventies that *Time* magazine's April 8, 1966 issue asked, in bold, red type: "Is God Dead?" Clearly, as the radical theologian Thomas J.J. Altizer once put it, "a theological fervor engulfed" the United States at the time.[113] But Heidegger was not read by theological radicals alone. He was also appropriated—by Catholics especially—for his trenchant critique of modern, technocratic rationalism.

Postmodern theology has gone beyond both the radical/existential and Catholic positions, however; especially insofar as it has refused to accept the ultimate positions toward which they applied Heidegger's various insights. It has refused, in other words, to turn to faith alone as the solution, whether to the problems of modern meaninglessness or secular rationalism. Death of God theology argued for an existential-like turn inwards and Catholicism advocated a return to tradition, but neither of these were options for a postmodernism devoted to questioning both the coherence of the autonomous subject and

---

[113] "Death of God Theology" is largely associated, in the United States at least, with the work of Altizer. For more on this movement, see Altizer, ed., *Toward a New Christianity: Readings in the Death of God Theology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1967); and Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966). See also John B. Cobb, Jr. ed., *The Theology of Altizer: Critique and Response* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970). For Altizer's response to postmodernism, see Robert P. Scharlemann, ed., *Theology at the End of the Century: A Dialogue on the Postmodern with Thomas J.J. Altizer, Mark C. Taylor, Charles E. Winquist and Robert P. Scharlemann* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1990). This text revisits an earlier volume entitled *Deconstruction and Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1982). The quotation is from the informative autobiographical account in "Altizer on Altizer," *Literature and Theology* 15:2 (June 2001), 190. Altizer, in the same piece, explains that the general enthusiasm for theology in the late sixties and early seventies has waned considerably: "Perhaps it has since wholly disappeared, and if one could not now imagine magazines such as *The New Yorker* devoting whole issues to theology, it is now odd when a publisher of any kind releases a genuine book of theology" (190).

the strictures of the tradition, which, following Heidegger, they have denigrated as being nothing more than a legacy of oppressive "ontotheology"—a Heideggerian neologism for metaphysics, or any tradition that spends more time classifying beings than pondering the question of Being as such.[114]

The career of John D. Caputo encapsulates the shifting ground upon which more recent theological interpretations of Heidegger have tried to lay their foundations. As a student, he has said, he studied philosophy not "in order to learn theology, but because [he] did not perceive a distinction between philosophy and theology."[115] Having an interest in the shared heritage of both theology and philosophy prepared him for his confrontation with Heidegger. His reading of theologians and Catholic critics—such as Maritain, Gilson, Pieper, Weil, and Rousselot—made him a ready and willing interpreter of Heidegger's own subterranean religious sensibilities, especially as they manifested themselves in the Freiburg philosopher's totalizing critique of modernity. In his first book, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (1978), Caputo attempted to draw out and make sense of the mysticism that crept into Heidegger's later works, a mysticism that arises, he argues, from Heidegger's engagement with the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart. Although the pages of *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* are filled with reverential and unquestionably sober explications of Heidegger's unique appropriation of age-old mystical thought, there is nonetheless, at the end of the book, evidence that Caputo is no mere acolyte. In the face of the later Heidegger's wholesale

---

[114] See Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Nature of Metaphysics," in *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference*, trans. Kurt F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 33-68. This volume was also translated by John Stambuagh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969). For a recent commentary on Heidegger's conception of ontotheology, albeit one carried out in a slightly different register than the one I am outlining here, see Iain Thompson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

[115] John D. Caputo, "Of Mystics, Magi, and Deconstructionists," in James R. Watson, ed., *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), 25.

condemnation of the modern world, with its dependency upon technology and rationalism and science (from which "only a god can save us"), Caputo raises a small flag of caution. His critique is couched in great admiration for Heidegger, whom he repeatedly, incessantly even, names as the greatest thinker of the twentieth century, but this does not diminish its forcefulness. "The later Heidegger," Caputo eventually concludes, "leaves us between the devil and the deep blue sea."[116] To Heidegger's suggestion that there existed only two paths, that of calculative reason and technology on the one hand, and the authentic thinking of Being on the other, Caputo replies with a call for a third way. This would be the way between "the piety of thought and cybernetics." There had to be room somewhere for a compromise between the demands of Heidegger's lofty thought and those of "mathematical science." "We need philosophical reflection, a reason which, while it does not match the simplicity of thought, still does not degenerate into technological calculation." It was too bad, Caputo laments, that "for Heidegger such an intermediate knowledge is impossible."[117]

Caputo followed up *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* with another attempt at delineating Heidegger's religious roots in *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (1982). Here he sets Heidegger up against Aquinas, in order to show that Heidegger's attempt to break free from the metaphysical legacy of medieval rationalism (read ontotheology) cannot be reconciled—as some Catholic interpreters had hoped—with the Scholastic tradition. Heidegger's thinking of Being is not a modern updating of ontology, the *prima philosophia* of the medieval tradition. Rather than reading Heidegger back into the tradition that is still taught in every Catholic university's

[116] John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Athens: Ohio UP, 1978) 268.
[117] Ibid., 269.

philosophy department, Caputo ends up effectively reading Aquinas into Heidegger. Instead of emphasizing Aquinas's rationalism, he exhumes what he thinks is a more primordial mystical foundation of the thought of the patron saint of philosophers and scholars. Quoting some of the last words Aquinas was purported to have spoken—"Everything which I have written seems like straw to me when compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me"—Caputo suggests that for all Aquinas's rational system-building, it is the revelatory experience of Being that underlay all else.[118] He thus interprets Aquinas's famous self-imposed silence as evidence of a reverence for the mystery of Being, a recognition that rational thought can only accomplish so much. If all this seems a little more receptive to the (later) Heideggerian message than *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* was, that is because it is. In Caputo's next works he continues rather faithfully along the path of Heidegger's critique of ontotheology, which leads him to Heidegger's most-recognizable heir in this project, namely Jacques Derrida.

In the eighties, Caputo, like so many others in the United States, encountered Derrida. Deconstruction, which supposedly held the promise of Heidegger's critique of ontotheology, but without the reactionary anti-modern nostalgia, seemed at first like it might just be the middle way for which Caputo had pleaded in *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought.* Caputo's next works, *Radical Hermeneutics* (1987), *Against Ethics* (1993), and, later, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (1997), all exhibit a newfound respect for Derrida's writings. They also reveal, however, a far more pervasive skepticism regarding Heidegger's overall project.[119] Caputo, while reading

---

[118] John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham UP, 1982), 9, 11.

[119] John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987); *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant*

Derrida, began to question fundamental Heideggerian premises. The culmination of this turn against Heidegger was, as it had been for Jonas, political.[120] When debates about Heidegger's Nazi past once again grabbed headlines in the late eighties, in the wake of a similar scandal that exposed Yale literary critic (and, with Derrida, founding deconstructionist) Paul de Man's early collaborationist writings, Caputo joined the fray with *Demythologizing Heidegger* (1993), his attempt to once and for all puncture the mythical aura surrounding all things Heideggerian.[121] No doubt the book was also an attempt to come to terms with his own Heideggerian past as well.

Like that of postmodernism more generally, Derrida's turn to religion, which Caputo followed, was somewhat belated. But its fervor more than made up for its tardiness. So pronounced has postmodernism's turn to religion been, in fact, that commentators now speak of a veritable "theological turn" in philosophy and theory both.[122] This turn is not a return to tradition, or traditional notions of God, which are but the residues of ontotheology; instead, it marks an attempt to salvage the ethical core of religion for the postmodernist cause. Religion in this sense gives the postmodernist task of overcoming metaphysics a normative bent otherwise lacking in Heidegger.

Reference to Deconstruction (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993); *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997).

[120] This was true for others, like Sheehan, as well. Sheehan eventually arrived at what to me seems like a clear assessment of the problem in his "Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times," [in Charles B. Guignon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1993)]. "The point is not to condemn a man for his past but to learn something about oneself in the present, not to dismiss Heidegger's philosophical work out of hand but likewise not to join the Perpetual Adoration Societies that currently thrive among the Heidegger faithful in Europe and America. The task for those who care to take something from Heidegger, is to learn how to read him critically, both his life and his works, not swallow his philosophy whole but to sift it for what is still of value and what not" (92).

[121] John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993). On Caputo's turn away from Heidegger and to Derrida, see also Walter Brogan and James Risser, eds., *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000), 261-262. On the de Man scandal, see the conclusion of this dissertation below.

[122] A classic example of this theological turn can be found in Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, *Religion* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998).

For the most part, this newfound normativity has been based on the influence of Jewish theology.[123] The existentialist ethics of Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (1923), with its emphasis on dialogical exchange between autonomous subjects, was the resource that for the longest time dominated ethical discussion, but in Derrida's case, the religious revival is to be found in his reading of another Jewish thinker, namely Emmanuel Levinas.[124] Levinas had studied with Heidegger in the twenties and, along with Sartre and so many others, was much influenced by his existentialist writings. But Levinas later went on to level a simple yet profound critique against Heidegger. Challenging Heidegger's elevation of ontology—the question of Being—to the level of first philosophy, Levinas argued that, to the contrary, all philosophy stems first and foremost from ethics, from the face-to-face encounter of human beings with one another.[125] Levinas turned to the theological tradition to ward off Heidegger, just as Jonas had done

---

[123] This Jewish rediscovery has not been limited to postmodern circles alone, though it could perhaps be argued that the postmodern rediscovery of Jewish theology made a broader intellectual renaissance possible. In particular, see the surprising return of the work of Franz Rosenzweig, and its relation to Heidegger's own thought. See Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); Reyes Mate, *Memory of the West: The Contemporaneity of Forgotten Jewish Thinkers*, trans. Anne Day Dewey, ed. John R. Welch (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004); and, also by Mate, *Heidegger y el judaísmo: y sobre la tolerencia compasiva* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1998). For an overview of the Rosenzweig revival, see Mark Lilla, "A Battle for Religion ," *New York Review of Books* December 5, 2002.

[124] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1937). See also Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, trans., with and introduction and additional notes by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1978), 79-153; and his later meditation on religion, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1995).

[125] See Sam Moyn, "Judaism against Paganism: Emmanuel Levinas's Response to Heidegger and Nazism in the 1930s," *History and Memory* 10:1 (Spring/Summer 1998): 25-58. See also, Bouckaert, "Ontology and Ethics: Reflections on Levinas's Critique of Heidegger," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1970). Levinas's most sustained critique of Heidegger can be found in his classic text, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Duquesne UP, 1969). Moyn's recently published *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005) argues convincingly that Levinas's ethical thinking is based as much on German philosophy and Protestant thought as it is Jewish theology. Whether specifically Jewish or not, his thinking is nonetheless indebted to theology, which is why I have included him here.

at the Drew conference. In appropriating Levinas's theologically-based critique, Derrida seemed to suggest that his deconstruction was nothing if not an ethical project.

This is not the place to delve too deeply into Derrida's deconstruction. We will have time for that in later chapters, where we also revisit both the de Man and Heidegger scandals of the late eighties and early nineties. Needless to say, however, even the notion of postmodern theology would not exist in the United States were it not for Derrida. And, to follow the thread still farther, it certainly would not exist were it not for Heidegger. In France, in particular, Heidegger's impact upon postmodern theology was profound, and was not limited to just Levinas or Derrida. Proof of Heidegger's pervasive influence in French theology can be found in a high-profile collection of essays, *Heidegger et la Question de Dieu*, which appeared in 1980 and in many ways set the tone of the debate.[126] It included contributions from not only Levinas, but such French Heideggerian heavyweights as Jean Beaufret and Francois Fedier, as well as other prominent figures working along the boundary between philosophy and theology, like Paul Ricouer. Perhaps no participant's work, however, has been as identifiable with the topic of Heidegger and theology as that of the other big name to contribute to the volume, Jean-Luc Marion, whose *God Without Being* (1982) remains, for better or worse, one of the standard texts of postmodern theology.[127] To be sure, Marion, in *God Without Being*, struggles to *overcome* Heidegger, but this overcoming is itself indebted to Heidegger's

---

[126] Richard Kearney and Joseph Stephen O'Leary, eds., *Heidegger et la Question de Dieu* (Paris: Grasset, 1980). Exhibiting the international appeal of this topic, both Kearney and O'Leary organized the conference from whence these essays came at their home institution: The Irish College of Paris. For more on this, see Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France*, I (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 478-489.

[127] Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson, with a foreword by David Tracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

attempt to step outside of the tradition of ontotheology. Without Heidegger, postmodern theology simply would not exist.[128]

Thanks to the efforts of figures such as Caputo, Mark C. Taylor, and Edith Wyschogrod, the postmodern theology of Marion and Derrida and the rest has gained a foothold in the United States.[129] Taylor's work in particular has gone a long way toward establishing deconstruction as a productive successor to the "Death of God" theology of the sixties and seventies.[130] Taylor insists that Derrida's deconstruction—a project which derives from Heidegger's own attempted *Destruktion* of ontotheology—and contemporary theology have much to say to each other. In his estimation, "Derrideans who disregard such theological issues risk superficiality, just as theologians who ignore [d]econstruction risk irrelevance."[131] Heidegger, or at least the Heideggerian legacy carried on by Derrida and co., is thus considered a force to be reckoned with.

Despite all this, Heidegger's place in the cannon of postmodern theology remains a point of contention. All recognize the importance of Heidegger's path-breaking attempt to overcome metaphysics, the ontotheology of the tradition, but this acknowledgement is often accompanied by a desire to break free from and in fact go beyond the Heideggerian

---

[128] For evidence of this fact, look no further than Graham Ward, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001), which contains an entire section devoted to "Heideggerians". It also has sections devoted to "Derrideans" and "Phenomenology," which both contain excerpts from a number of important theologians and philosophers working within the Heideggerian tradition. For these figures, Heidegger is the link between "death of God" theology and full-blown postmodern theology. See in particular the excerpts from Altizer, Hemming, Vattimo, Kearney, Marion, O'Leary, and Caputo.

[129] Edith Wyschogrod's, *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1990), attempts to delineate a postmodern ethics.

[130] In the preface to his *Deconstructing Theology* (New York and Chico, California: Crossroad Publishing and Scholars Press, 1982), Taylor writes that "Deconstruction is the hermeneutic of the death of God and the death of God is the (a)theology of Deconstruction" (xix). As if this were not proof enough of Taylor's links to both death of God theology and to Derrida, none other than Altizer contributes a foreword to the book, arguing precisely as much.

[131] Ibid., xx. Taylor attempted to outline a deconstructive theology in his *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1984).

idiom.[132] Indeed, that postmodern theology has in some instances turned one-time Heideggerians against Heidegger is evident in Caputo's writings.[133] But so long as there is interest in fostering a post-metaphysical religion, there will be attempts to situate Heidegger within the context of specific religious traditions.[134] Whether as a guiding light or a flashing red light, Heidegger in one way or another continues to illuminate postmodern theological debate.

Conclusion: "Give My Leg!"

Heidegger's gift to postmodern theology is the possibility of a postmetaphysical religion, or if not a religion exactly, a postmetaphysical belief at least.[135] His later writings especially seem to hold out hope for an overcoming of ontotheology by the powers of non-calculative thought. Part and parcel of these later writings is of course the sweeping account of western decline, the narrative of nihilism that supposedly described

---

[132] The desire to break free from Heidegger is usually, at root, a desire to sidestep in some fashion his sweeping critique of all things modern. For more on this, see Harvey Cox, "Toward a Postmodern Theology," in *Religion in the Secular City: Toward a Postmodern Theology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 216-221.

[133] In addition to *Demythologizing Heidegger*, see also Caputo's trenchant essay, "Toward a Postmodern Theology of the Cross: Augustine, Heidegger, Derrida," in which he compares Heidegger's and Derrida's readings of Augustine and solidly sides with the latter. Whereas Heidegger uses Augustine to emphasize the struggle (*Kampf*) of faith, and does so in language replete with the Nazi jargon of the twenties and thirties, Derrida, Caputo argues, uses Augustine to construct an ethic of compassion for the suffering. Caputo suggests that Heidegger's Augustine was mediated by Luther and Kierkegaard, while Derrida's was by Levinas. Again, Caputo does not shy away from political analysis. Heidegger's reading of *Kampf*, he suggests, "explains why Heidegger was so defenseless against the *Kampfsphilosophie* of the Nazis and against the bizarre extremes to which *Kampfsphilosophie* was taken by Jünger and Jünger's strange embrace of Nietzsche, which had cleared the way for Heidegger's embrace of National Socialism" (203). Caputo's essay can be found in Merold Westphal, ed., *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), 202-225.

[134] See, for example, the special issue of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, LXIX:2 (Spring 1995) devoted to Heidegger. The issue includes essays by Caputo, Thomas Sheehan, William J. Richardson, and Thomas F. O'Meara among others.

[135] Gianni Vattimo describes it as "faith without 'substance,' perhaps without dogma, and without a theology as a science" in his *After Christianity*, trans. Luca D'Isanto (New York: Columbia UP, 2002), 134.

the predestined and continuous "forgetting of Being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*) since the time of the ancient Greeks; with the rise of metaphysics—ontotheology—beings supposedly replaced Being as the prime topic of thought. As outgrowths of metaphysics, modern science and technology, which deal only with things, and not with the more elusive Being (or even, as Hulga the Heideggerian knew, its sometime counterpart, the Nothing), are simultaneously causes and a symptoms of this forgetting. In the wake of the Second World War, this narrative obviously appealed to those who saw behind them only mass death and, ahead of them, in the shape of the mushroom cloud, mutually assured destruction. In this context, Heidegger's *Verfallsgeschichte*, or narrative of decline, seemed frighteningly apropos. When Tillich returned to Germany in 1948 as part of the "Reeducation Army" (he toured the nation giving lectures in systematic theology), he was invited by Hans Georg Gadamer to discuss Heidegger's just published "Letter on Humanism," which offered an initial exposition of this notion of *Seinsvergessenheit*, before a small audience of students in Marburg. To their mutual surprise, over a thousand people showed up for the event, filling the auditorium right down to the last seat.[136]

Given that so many people would turn out to hear a theologian—admittedly, a pretty famous one—and a little-known philosopher discuss a dense philosophical essay written by somebody who had just been removed from his professorship by a denazification committee, it is perhaps understandable that Heidegger would go on to influence German theology (among other things) in profound ways. Clearly there was a pervasive interest in his thought. The debt of theologians such as Heinrich Ott, Karl

[136] See Albrecht and Schußler, *Paul Tillich: Sein Leben*, 114-117. A translation of the "Letter on Humanism" can be found in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, Revised and Expanded Edition, edited by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 213-266.

Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar to Heidegger's philosophy makes a certain amount of sense in this regard.[137] But when it comes to Heidegger's religious reception in the United States, where interest in Heidegger had to be cut from whole cloth, how should we explain it? Is it just that American culture is inherently religious—and not just religious, but specifically Christian? Is this what allowed Heidegger's work to gain a foothold where none was previously available?

It is no doubt significant that even Heidegger's more expressly secular American interlocutors, such as the philosophers William Barrett and J. Glenn Gray, to whose work we will turn next, stressed the religious aspects of Heidegger's philosophy, something they thought might counter the dehumanizing effects of (American) technology and mass society.[138] It is also noteworthy that the early Harper & Row translations of Heidegger's work appeared as part of the publisher's "Religious Perspectives" series, alongside the works of Tillich, Karl Jaspers, Karl Barth, and Erich Fromm.[139] But it remains unclear whether Heidegger thrived on this side of the Atlantic because he spoke to a dominant religious sentiment, or because he subverted it. Either way, there is no doubt that his reception has gone a long way towards de-secularizing American philosophy, which, during the cold war especially, had tried hard to portray itself as a pure science.

Historian David Hollinger has recently asserted—in an essay appropriately entitled "Jesus Matters in the USA"—that "twentieth-century American intellectuals, unlike their counterparts in most European nations, operated in a society the

---

[137] On the eccentric writings of von Balthasar, see David L. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

[138] See J. Glenn Gray, *On Understanding Violence Philosophically & Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) and especially the foreword to the 1970 edition of his *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). See William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1958) and *The Illusion of Technique: A Search for the Meaning of Life in a Technological Age* (London: William Kimber, 1979).

[139] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

overwhelming majority of which declared Christianity to be much more than a nominal affiliation inherited from a distant past."[140] Certainly this is true, and it makes any simple application of the secularization theses so in vogue in Europe today—such as that of Marcel Gauchet—to the American case difficult at best and impossible at worst.[141] The United States is not yet a post-Christian (or post-religious) society. And it was even farther from being one in the postwar period, when Heidegger's thought first began to make its way to the United States.[142] This is important to remember, for only in a religious society could Tillich have brought his existential theology to prominence. Only in a religious society could the first translations of Heidegger, this obscure peasant philosopher from the Black Forest (as the myth would have it)—only in this context could they have sold like hotcakes. And only in a religious society could modern consumer materialism be interpreted as a malady of the spirit, whose sole cure was pious thought.

But these reasons alone do not explain why Heidegger was initially imported by theological discourse. In truth, Heidegger was first read in theological terms because no other framework for interpreting his work existed at the time. Discourses other than theology simply did not have the resources with which to properly confront Heidegger's work. Philosophers, literary critics, and others lagged behind the theologians in this regard. Or, to put it another way, it could be argued that the theological reception was an evolutionary step, one that mirrored Heidegger's own intellectual development ("without

---

[140] David A. Hollinger, "Jesus Matters in the USA," *Modern Intellectual History* 1:1 (April 2004), 135. I have removed the italics from the original quotation.
[141] See Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, translated by Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997). A similar secularization thesis can also be found in the work of Vattimo.
[142] The classic account of postwar American religiosity remains Will Herberg's *Protestant Catholic Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1955).

this theological background I should never have come upon the path of thinking"). Just as the devout Heidegger of the early writings gave way to the Heidegger of the romantic quest for Being and then, following that, the meditation of divinity and pious thought; the Christian existentialist reading of Heidegger (as peddled by Tillich and Macquarrie) gave way to a more receptive reading of Heidegger's later pagan mysticism (such as Vincent Vycinas's 1961 *Earth and Gods*), which in turn gave way to a full-blown postmodern theology that rejected the nostalgic paganism of even Heidegger's own last works.[143] But with each evolutionary step there was also a falling off, and in this sense Heidegger's work underwent a process of secularization in the United States (at the same time, ironically, that it de-secularized American professional philosophy).[144] Some figures present for the first stage of interpretation fell away from the religious sphere and became continental philosophers, some traded him in for Derrida or somebody else, and some abandoned Heidegger altogether. In the process, Heidegger eventually slipped out of the exclusive domain of expressly theological thought.[145]

All those who carry on the critique of ontotheology today represent the final attempt to read Heidegger alongside the theological tradition (if only in a critical or

---

[143] Vincent Vycinas, *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961). See especially the appendix, "Heidegger and Christianity," 312-321, where Vycinas justifies his sympathetic approach by writing: "No attempt has been made throughout the whole study to criticize Heidegger or to try to indicate any shortcomings in his thought. The aim of this study was not to criticize Heidegger but to introduce him" (321). This book, though published in the Netherlands, was composed in the United States, under the supervision of Bernard J. Boeler of Duquesne University.

[144] The fact that there is not even a contribution devoted specifically to the topic of Heidegger and theology in the new, encyclopedic English-language companion to his work says something about this. The religious question has effectively fallen by the wayside of Heideggerian scholarship, at least as far as most commentators are concerned. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, *A Companion to Heidegger* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2005).

[145] There is a whole school of historical scholarship that locates the origins of American philosophy in the theological traditions of the colonial era. From this perspective, philosophy is simply secularized theological inquiry. The secularization of Heidegger's philosophy in some sense mirrors this trajectory, though it takes place on an entirely different plane. See Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985).

negative fashion). But even this approach is losing steam. A conference held in Utah in 2001 revealed the cracks and fissures already apparent in the project of overcoming ontotheology.[146] And amongst some of the most avant-garde writers of theory today, such as the ubiquitous Slavoj Žižek, there is a growing weariness of postmodern theology.[147] A few Heideggerian holdouts remain, of course, such as the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, who attempts to revalue nihilism, and thus turn Heidegger's narrative of decline into a call for hope and humility, but American theologians for the most part remain guarded about such grand pronouncements.[148] The handful of philosophers and theologians who remain devoted to (re)constructing a Heideggerian (a)theology (to use a term first coined by Mark C. Taylor and most recently taken up by Laurence Paul Hemming), are looked upon—as they themselves admit—with suspicion by many of their counterparts.[149] Increasingly, Heidegger seems less and less relevant. The original appeal of his thought, that it offered a sweeping reversal of centuries of

---

[146] See Mark A. Wrathall, ed., *Religion After Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). This volume, which collects the papers presented at the conference, is by far the best book on the subject. It includes essays by, among others, Rorty, Vattimo, Caputo, Dreyfus, Marion, and Charles Taylor. See also the insightful review of the book by Christopher Insole, "Kant for Christmas," *TLS* December 17, 2004. Also writing in the *TLS*, Nicholas Wolterstorff suggests that the philosophy of religion has been enriched more by the analytic than the continental tradition for the past thirty or so years—an overstatement perhaps, but a revealing one. See his "Probably there," *TLS* December 16 2005.

[147] Slavoj Žižek's *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), tries to rescue the "materialist" core of Christianity from postmodern attempts to overcome ontotheology (5-6). He does this not in order to clear the way for a religious revival, but to highlight the transgressive core of Christianity (as opposed to its overcoming) itself. For his critique of Derrida, see pages 139 ff.

[148] See, in particular, Vattimo's *Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, & Law*, ed. Santiago Zabala, trans. William McCuaig, with a foreword by Richard Rorty (New York: Columbia UP, 2004). For a different take on nihilism and religion, see James C. Edwards, *The Plain Sense of Things: The Fate of Religion in an Age of Normal Nihilism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

[149] Laurence Paul Hemming's *Heidegger's Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002) is perhaps the most concerted recent attempt to read Heidegger's work through a theological lens. Though Hemming, a Catholic who teaches in London, does not claim to be a Heideggerian (ix), his careful reading of Heidegger's critique of theology goes a long way toward rescuing Heidegger's thought from the criticisms of figures such as Jonas, Marion, and others. Hemming's text-based account eschews questions of context, offering instead a very personal rendition of what Heidegger's "methodological atheism" might mean for individual faith. For an example of the suspicion of all things Heideggerian, see, for example, Thomas K. Carr's review of Macquarrie's *Heidegger and Christianity*, "Only a God Can Save Us," in *First Things* 55 (August/September 1995): 57-62.

previous philosophical reflection, has waned. American theologians seem more skeptical than ever. And who can blame them? Perhaps, like Hugla, they welcomed Heidegger into their home, only to learn later that he had run off with the one prosthesis—be it existential courage, pious thought, or even the ontotheology of metaphysics—that allowed them to survive in the modern world, the one thing that kept them standing. Maybe theology just wants its leg back.

CHAPTER 4
An Officer and a Philosopher: J. Glenn Gray and the Postwar Introduction of Heidegger into American Thought

What to make of Heidegger as a thinker is a baffling question, perhaps especially to those who have little use for his character.

—J. Glenn Gray[1]

If the American philosopher Jesse Glenn Gray is remembered at all today, it is for his 1959 book *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*.[2] Gray wrote *The Warriors* in order to heal, as he put it in the foreword to the 1970 reprint of the work, "the intellectual wounds of World War II."[3] They were, by all accounts, deep wounds. The war was a formative moment in Gray's life. He had served the duration of it as a counter-intelligence officer before returning to the United States to pursue a career in philosophy. He spent time in Italy, North Africa, France, and eventually Germany, where he stayed on after the war as part of the reconstruction effort. Gray kept detailed notebooks during these years, and when he finally sat down to write *The Warriors*, he used these to help ground his philosophical examination of modern warfare in the most concrete terms possible. Only by remaining true to the realities of total war could he begin to heal the wounds of war, wounds reopened, in the late sixties at least, by evening news reports from Southeast Asia.

Although writing *The Warriors* may have been therapeutic for Gray, it was not immediately apparent that the book would enjoy much of a public reception. Part

---

An earlier version of this chapter first appeared as "J. Glenn Gray: Philosopher, Translator (of Heidegger), and Warrior," in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* XL:3 (Summer 2004): 487-512.

[1] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger's Course: From Human Existence to Nature," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Volume LIV Number 8 (April 11, 1957): 197.

[2] J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (1959; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

[3] Ibid., xv.

personal reflection, part philosophical meditation, Gray's unique little book did not fit into any of the neat pigeon holes of the publishing world and was subsequently overlooked when it first appeared. Slowly but surely, however, it attracted a growing readership. And when the book was reprinted in 1967 with an introduction by Gray's good friend Hannah Arendt, its legacy was assured. It was reprinted again three years later, with the new foreword that addressed Vietnam specifically, and remains in print today. You'll find *The Warriors* mentioned in the literature of just about every American military intervention since the Second World War. Even in this, the age of the so-called war on terror, the book has once again become a point of reference. In the summer of 2002, an editor at *The National Interest* even recommended it to readers of the conservative foreign policy journal as "a book well worth reading, or re-reading."[4]

Today, as television news anchors recount the day's military events in another faraway land, *The Warriors* has indeed found a new audience, but its author remains shrouded in neglect. This chapter attempts to rescue Gray's legacy outside of and beyond the contemporary relevance of his work in *The Warriors* by focusing on Gray's career as a philosopher and, more specifically, as a translator of Heidegger. Following in Gray's philosophical footsteps will also offer a different perspective on the changing landscape of American philosophy in the years following World War II. It might just pry open, if only a little, the current historical (and historiographical) discussion of this dynamic period, and thus prepare the way for a new, more transnational approach to the writing of the history of ideas—American, European, and beyond—in the age of globalization.[5]

---

[4] *The National Interest* (Summer 2002): 146. I would like to thank Jack Diggins for bringing this reference to my attention.

[5] Emblematic of the current historiographical literature on this period are the recent works of Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720-2000* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001); John McCumber,

* * *

Jesse Glenn Gray was, if anything, a reluctant Heideggerian. Although he and Heidegger eventually became friends in their later years, he remained a critical, if not skeptical, reader of the German thinker's work throughout his own philosophical career. He steered clear of the cultish reverence that Heidegger—the 'little magician from Meßkirch' as his students once described him—has inspired in his devotees around the world to this day.[6] Indeed, nothing was more troubling to him than this peculiar cult of personality, especially given Heidegger's actions during the Third Reich. Gray, who had seen Nazism up close, found this sort of unreflective adulation troubling. Nevertheless, despite his suspicions and ambivalence, despite his frequent inability to reconcile Martin Heidegger the man with Martin Heidegger the thinker, he proved to be one of Heidegger's most influential American allies. Aside from Hannah Arendt, no other single individual did as much to foster Heidegger's reception on this side of the Atlantic. Whatever his reservations concerning the German thinker's philosophical legacy or his political past, Gray made the trip to Freiburg, where Heidegger lived and taught for so long, many a time before his death in 1977, just one year after Heidegger's own passing. And he never returned from visiting Heidegger empty-handed. He always brought back

---

Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2001); and Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2001).

[6] It is from Heidegger's student Karl Löwith that we get this description of the philosopher. Quoted in Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 34.

laboriously prepared translations, whether just a few pages or an entire manuscript, which the magician himself had encouraged.

Born in 1913 in rural Mifflintown, Pennsylvania, and raised on a farm there, Gray went on to attend Juniata College and the University of Pittsburgh before heading to Columbia University for his doctorate in Philosophy. Under the supervision of Horace L. Friess, but the influence of J.H. Randall, Jr., "to whose instruction and suggestion" Gray felt himself deeply indebted, he completed a dissertation, *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal*, in 1941.[7] On May 8th of that year, he received what was to prove a fateful batch of mail. Included in it was not only word that his doctorate in philosophy had been awarded, but also "greetings from the president"—that is, his draft notice, something for which philosophical study can rarely prepare one.[8] Indeed, H. Stuart Hughes, who later went on to achieve notoriety as one of the preeminent intellectual historians of his generation, recalled being "quite literally scared shitless" when his papers arrived. "An overpowering attack of diarrhea sent" him, as he unabashedly put it in his memoir, *Gentleman Rebel*, "scampering to the toilet."[9]

Gray's wartime experiences were the rough material for *The Warriors*. Thanks to the wider, if belated, popularity of the book and to his commitment to writing for broader audiences via various newspapers and periodicals, Gray became a recognized figure beyond the confines of academia. But his most lasting contribution in the history of ideas, however, rests with his work pertaining to the introduction of Heidegger's philosophy to American readers. It is a fascinating, if rarely discussed subject. How a

---

[7] J. Glenn Gray, *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941). Quote from page viii.
[8] Gray recounts the story in a note at the beginning of his *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, introduction by Hannah Arendt (1959; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xxiii.
[9] H. Stuart Hughes, *Gentleman Rebel* (New York: Tichnor & Fields, 1990), 128.

second lieutenant in the United States Army came to be a former Nazi's foremost academic advocate is one of American philosophy's greatest untold tales.

Denazification

Gray's time in the service understandably left a lasting impression on his life and work. While serving in counter-intelligence units, he came face to face with, as he described it later, "some of the most evil human beings of our time, Nazi Party leaders, Gestapo officers and men, and SS Security Service personnel, these last frequently the worst of all."[10] Gray interrogated such figures long after the end of the war, before heading back to the States for a brief glimpse of civilian life. When he returned to Germany less than a year later, in August, 1946, he once again found himself dealing with former Nazis, but this time it was primarily in the hallways of German Universities. Now doing something more in line with the training he received back at Columbia, Gray acted as the Military Government's education officer in Bavaria.

Ludwig-Maximillian Universität, where Gray was stationed between 1946 and 1947, was hardly more than a patchwork of bombed-out ruins. In an article he penned for *Commentary* in 1948, shortly after returning to the states to take up a teaching position at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, he described unheated university buildings (the ones still standing of course), hungry students, and massively overcrowded lecture halls.[11] Chaotic denazification efforts at the university only made matters worse in Gray's eyes.

---

[10] J. Glenn Gray, "German Recovery: Apparent or Real?" *Western Humanities Review* Volume XI, Number 4 (Autumn 1957): 307.
[11] J. Glenn Gray, "Munich University: Class of '50. A Case Study in German Re-education," *Commentary* (May 1948): 440-448.

"The effect of this eccentric denazification has been," as he reflected, "crushing."[12] The dilemmas facing German education after the collapse of the Third Reich were all too plain to Gray. While recognizing the necessity of denazification efforts in the reconstruction of Germany, his firsthand experience made him yearn for a "less arbitrary method of determining who is to teach," so that the occupying forces could "ensure these young people some continuous instruction, however poor in quality."[13] Gray was skeptical that denazification could achieve what it set out to do, namely, erase Nazism from the German mind in one fell, ideological swoop:

> Ultimately the process of denazification, in so far as the Nazi philosophy is a matter of belief, is an inward process, and simple logic forces one to conclude that it must be carried out by the persons who are infected. A faith is not eliminated by fiat, nor is punishment effective without consciousness of guilt. It also seems clear that to overcome National Socialism, the German people, especially the younger generation, must be given something worthwhile to replace lost ideals. Democratic ideals can hardly appeal as a desirable alternative as long as there is no hope for economic and political stability for the great majority of young and vigorous Germans. One does not acquire ideals of any sort while animal needs go as largely unsatisfied as is the rule in Germany today.[14]

There is little chance that Gray failed to come across Heidegger's name amongst the rosters of German academics brought before denazification authorities, even if Freiburg, unlike Munich, was under French control. After all, Heidegger was under enough suspicion at the end of the war to warrant a visit from another American intelligence officer, the historian Felix Gilbert, then employed by the OSS, who grilled

---

[12] Ibid., 443.
[13] Ibid.
[14] J. Glenn Gray, "Denazification: An American Appraisal," *American Perspective* Volume III Number 8 (January 1949): 429. For a careful and detailed account—and case study—of the denazification of Germany universities after the war, see Steven P. Remy, *The Heidelberg Myth: The Nazification and Denazification of a German University* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2002). See also, James Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

him about his political commitments.[15] Heidegger's party membership and his tenure as the Nazi rector of Freiburg University necessitated that he face full hearings later on. The ordeal was a trying one for Heidegger, as his biographers Hugo Ott and Rüdiger Safranski have shown.[16] The damning testimony that Heidegger's former friend Karl Jaspers provided no doubt proved difficult to bear. In a letter to the denazification committee, Jaspers had described Heidegger's "manner of thinking" as "in its essence unfree, dictatorial, and incapable of communication." He suggested that the effects of Heidegger's teaching on the immediate postwar generation might be "disastrous." "As long as in his case an authentic rebirth does not come to pass," Jaspers explained, "one that would be evident in his work, such a teacher cannot in my opinion be placed before the youth of today, who, from a spiritual standpoint, are almost defenseless. The youth must first reach a point where they can think for themselves."[17] This solidified the denazification committee's verdict, and Heidegger was stripped of his right to teach. It was not until the 1951-52 school year that Heidegger resumed lecturing.[18]

Although Glenn Gray was back in the United States when Heidegger faced the committee's fateful verdict, his time in Munich exposed him, as we have seen, to the inner-workings of denazification. He knew very well that the kinds of "rebirth" Jaspers hoped for in Heidegger's case were long and arduous events; as late as 1957 he maintained that "the reformation of inner man is always a more painful and longer

---

[15] See Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1989), 88-89.
[16] See Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998), 332-352; and Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 309-351.
[17] Karl Jaspers, "Letter to the Freiburg University Denazification Committee (November 22, 1945)," trans. Richard Wolin, in Wolin, editor, *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 149. Translation slightly altered.
[18] Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 373.

process than the reformation of the outer."[19] In a reference to a certain prominent German professor—undoubtedly Heidegger himself, whom Gray had by now met—Gray wrote of the deep "roots of totalitarian faith." To Gray it was all but self-evident that "people did not get rid of previous illiberal ideologies without replacing them with something equally strong and positive. They merely drive them into the subconscious and cover them up."[20] Despite the *Wirtschaftswunder* of the Adenauer years, despite the seemingly miraculous recovery of West Germany that Gray and his German wife witnessed in 1954, during their first trip to Germany since leaving in 1947, Gray still fretted that the Germans "may not be as far along on the road to inner health as Americans, anxious to believe the best about Germany, have assumed that they are."[21] He was hesitant to proclaim Germany a fully rehabilitated nation. He had seen enough over the years to have his suspicions. No doubt these reservations carried over into his philosophical work as well, for it was, after all, with just such hesitancy that Gray first engaged Heidegger's philosophical work.

Existentialism

For a philosopher trained in and familiar with the tradition of German thought, as Gray was, there was no escaping Heidegger, even after the denazification committee's ruling against him. French existentialism, on the rise after the Second World War, was deeply rooted in Heideggerian philosophy and its popularity almost single-handedly ensured that Heidegger would remain a constant point of reference for European

[19] J. Glenn Gray, "German Recovery: Apparent or Real?," 318.
[20] Ibid., 317.
[21] Ibid., 319.

philosophers, not to mention their American commentators (like Gray). Gray penned a number of essays introducing existentialism—and Heidegger—to American audiences in the years following his military service.[22]

One of existentialism's most lasting contributions to western philosophy was its privileging of themes related to human existence—especially the fact that we are all mortal—over and against the rarefied topics of epistemology or logic. With its focus on lived experience, existentialism suggested a whole new way of thinking about truth, meaning, and life itself. For philosophers like Jaspers and Heidegger, as Gray explained, truth "is not something caught in the bonds of logic or concepts."[23] It is, rather, something lived. For the existentialists, human existence is given meaning not by some prior essence but by action and decision, by such things as resoluteness and an embrace of one's own mortality. The existentialists, as Gray read them, claimed that "the individual who lives in the face of death will not only gain insight into the truth of being, but he will *be* that truth, at least a substantial part of it."[24]

Existentialism ultimately resonated on this side of the Atlantic with counter-cultural pockets that together formed the underside of postwar American prosperity.[25] The period after the Second World War was "America's Half-Century," during which the United States Government did all it could to foster the steady rise of American international hegemony—in terms of military might, industrial strength, economic

---

[22] See, for example, J. Glenn Gray, "The Idea of Death in Modern Existentialism," *The Journal of Philosophy* Volume XLVIII Number 5 (March 1, 1951): 113-127. See also, "Heidegger's Being," *The Journal of Philosophy* Volume XLIX Number 12 (June 5, 1952): 415-422.
[23] J. Glenn Gray, "The Idea of Death in Modern Existentialism," 123.
[24] Ibid.
[25] This phenomenon will be explored in greater detail in the excursus that follows this chapter.

prowess, and cultural visibility.[26] The United States, as was thought at the time, was making the world safe for democracy and capitalism (the two were synonymous in the eyes of policy-makers).[27] But it was also solidifying its position as a world superpower—as *the* world superpower. And yet, while the United States was exporting anti-communism and consumerism to the rest of the world, hoping ultimately to rebuild it on its own narrowly nationalist terms, it was also importing, often unknowingly, cultural products that would take root and eventually have great effect on American life. As we shipped off toasters, refrigerators, cars, washers and dryers, Coca-Cola and Lucky Strikes, even Jackson Pollock's Abstract Expressionism, the teachings and trappings of existentialism found their way across the Atlantic and onto American shores.[28] No mere academic fad, existentialism, especially in its Sartrean version, permeated postwar cultural life in America, from the Beats to the Civil Rights movement and beyond. And Gray remained an active interpreter of existentialism over the years, contributing both academic and more popular pieces to journals and magazines throughout the fifties and sixties.

At this early stage of the American reception of existentialism, however, Gray made it plain that the transatlantic transfusion might not take, for readers on this side of the Atlantic, he thought, "are nearly certain to find something perverse in this European point of view." Existentialism was "too bleak, too extreme, above all, too

---

[26] Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*, Second Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995).

[27] For more on this, see John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); or, for another perspective, Neil Smith's magisterial *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[28] I am certainly not the first to highlight this import/export dynamic. Allan Bloom's pithy formulation of it is perhaps the most well-known, as is discussed in the conclusion below. I hope it is obvious that I am attempting to recast the discussion of this phenomenon in an altogether different tenor.

individualistic."[29] Gray was himself prevented from embracing existentialism by a residual religious faith. Though he never articulated an explicit position on this, it is clear that he found existentialism too prone to nihilism and self-absorbed navel-gazing. In this regard, it seems that Gray was happy to find in Heidegger a reworked religiosity.

Agreeing with Heidegger that the modern age is rife with spiritual decay, technological dehumanization, "the loss of faith and all sense of direction," Gray wondered, in an essay from the early fifties, about the fate of man. Paraphrasing Heidegger, and returning to a concern he articulated in the conclusion of his own Hegel dissertation, he writes, "Self-alienation and the homelessness of man have become…the fate of millions."[30] Never mind the millions killed as a result of Nazi aggression and barbarism, of which Heidegger said nothing and of which Gray makes no mention here. More pressing than this, seemingly, is the spiritual hopelessness of the modern, technological world. Heidegger, in Gray's opinion, addresses this and in his work "seeks to relate men again to the sources of their being, to give them something they can revere." In this regard, "it is a great error to call Heidegger atheistic." Gray readily admits that Heidegger's conception of piety, which he describes as "this-worldly," is a far cry from any traditional understanding of devotion or reverence, especially in that it is not so much "a piety directed toward Nature, such as Santayana likes, but piety directed toward present and future possibilities of man in Being."[31] But perhaps sensing the reaction of potential critics, Gray goes on to stress that "this piety need not be condemned as

---

[29] J. Glenn Gray, "The Idea of Death in Modern Existentialism," 124.
[30] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger's Being," 422. Compare this with *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal*, page 94, where he writes: "Because of the effect of the industrial and technological revolutions in breaking the continuity of tradition, these problems have grown more, rather than less, perplexing. We have not yet learned to be at home in our world."
[31] Ibid.

conservative, since the concern for Being is future-directed and Being itself is rife with ideal possibilities."[32]

If Gray is guilty of following Heidegger a little too closely here, of too approvingly and uncritically welcoming Heidegger's thought, the same cannot be said of his next published piece devoted to the Freiburg sage. Whereas he had previously defended Heidegger from critics such as Günther Stern/Anders, whose essay on pseudo-concreteness he had read and taken issue with, here he not only abandons the defense but in fact takes up the attack himself.[33] Less than a year after appreciatively reconstructing Heidegger's new piety, Gray mercilessly lambastes him for succumbing to the false allures of pseudo-mysticism. Reminiscent of Arendt's dismissal of Heidegger as "the last (we hope) romantic" in her 1946 piece for *Partisan Review*, "What is Existenz Philosophy?", Gray goes so far as to suggest that, like Nietzsche, Heidegger is little more than an "aristocratic prophet."[34] He even suggests that Heidegger shares more in common with "Old Testament prophets" than modern philosophers.[35]

Only six pages in length, "Heidegger 'Evaluates' Nietzsche" is more of a note than a proper essay. Structurally, it is a review of an essay of Heidegger's on Nietzsche—"Nietzsche's Wort 'Got is tot'" ["Nietzsche's Word 'God is Dead'"]—that appeared in the collection *Holzwege* [*Wood Paths*], which was first published in 1950.[36] Gray immediately alludes to Heidegger's notoriously difficult philosophizing, adding that

---

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 421.
[34] Hannah Arendt, "What is Existenz Philosophy?" *Partisan Review* Volume 13 Number 1 (Winter 1946): 46. J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger 'Evaluates' Nietzsche," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Volume XIV Number 2 (April 1953): 309. On this, with regard to Nietzsche, see Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[35] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger 'Evaluates' Nietzsche," 308.
[36] An English translation of Heidegger's essay can be found in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated with an introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 53-112.

the thinker himself is of no help. Heidegger, according to Gray, "complains that no one has come to aid him in his struggle for truth," that he is misunderstood—all this while "he rejects the interpretation of friends as well as foes."[37] Gray suggests that Heidegger's Nietzsche piece would be as good a point of approach to his work as any, for "how a philosopher regards Nietzsche often reveals," Gray seems to think, "a great many of his own cherished convictions."[38]

A staunch Hegelian, at least in terms of training, it is clear from the start that Gray thinks little of Nietzsche's contribution to the western philosophical tradition. But what he finds most troubling in Heidegger's essay is not so much an uncritical embrace of Nietzsche as a similarity in tone and theme. Heidegger, we now know, was a prominent member of the Nietzsche Society for many years and avidly followed the activities of the Nietzsche archive in Weimar, though it is doubtful that Gray knew this at the time. [39] Nevertheless, he did recognize in Heidegger's work the presence of a disturbingly Nietzschean pathos. His words cut to the core of Heidegger's philosophical self-conception and are worth quoting at length:

> Both men have felt themselves to be deeply in revolt against prevailing tendencies of their generation, moral, social, and metaphysical. They see themselves as lonely prophets, who are inevitably misunderstood in the present. They look to the future for vindication and write for posterity. How much Heidegger has been consciously influenced in this attitude by Nietzsche, I cannot say. But the philosophic posture he assumes is nearly identical. Like Nietzsche, he has an aristocratic disdain for the opinions of the masses, for common sense, and for ordinary logic. Few are called to the pursuit of truth and wisdom; the many are forever lost and inauthentic. Heidegger communes with himself, like Zarathustra, on the mountain top, in his ski hut, and the result of these communings is only for those who are

[37] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger Evaluates Nietzsche," Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] See Marion Heinz and Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's Bezeihungen zum Nietzsche-Archiv im Dritten Reich," in Herman Schäfer, ed., *Annäherungen an Martin Heidegger: Festschrift für Hugo Ott zum 65. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1996), 103-136.

> of his spirit. For him the truth is not the residue of cooperative inquiry or the balancing of opinions. On the contrary, it is found in the surmises of the lonely listening mind, by him who is selected and set apart.[40]

Things only get worse for Heidegger in the last two pages of Gray's review. Whereas he had earlier defended Heidegger from those who might find his thoughts about the inauthentic masses to be reactionary or conservative, whereas he had lauded Heidegger for his reintroduction of the religious spirit, whereas he had virtually heralded Heidegger as offering a beneficial antidote to the nihilistic bleakness of the French existentialists like Sartre, and quite recently; Gray now finds such thinking not only problematic but almost unforgivable. Nietzsche and Heidegger are both "seers" who deal in "revelation," not philosophy. Both are "mystical, dogmatic." Gray even makes special note of Heidegger's infamous claim, which bewildered commentators have recounted ever since, that "Reason (*Vernunft*), which has been glorified for centuries is in reality the most stubborn opponent of genuine thinking."[41]

Glenn Gray was a careful and deliberate philosopher. His prose was always clear and direct, whether penned for popular weeklies or academic journals. Wonderfully

---

[40] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger Evaluates Nietzsche," 308.

[41] Ibid. Because this particular line of Heidegger's has so frequently been invoked by his critics and detractors as evidence of the underlying mysticism (read irrationality) of his thought, and has thus become a sticking point in the debate between various philosophical camps regarding the merit of Heidegger's work as a whole (defenders argue that Heidegger is only objecting to "calculative reason" in this quip), this is perhaps as good a place as any to stress that Gray's interpretations of Heidegger are just that, his own interpretations. His later career as Heidegger's chief translator may have bestowed his earlier Heidegger exegeses with an air of authority they might not otherwise have enjoyed, but they remain, in the end, the work of an active, critical engagement. That is, some may of course find fault with Gray's presentation of Heidegger's work, perhaps even think it misleading or incorrect. Partly for reasons of space, but also because what I hope to do most of all here is restore Gray's own philosophical voice, which has been too silent for too long, I have tried to avoid a general assessment regarding the accuracy, if we should use that term, of Gray's Heidegger interpretations. One of the most interesting aspects of Heidegger's American reception has been its astounding diversity—here, there, everywhere a different Heidegger. Rather than assuming, then, that there is one correct account of Heidegger's philosophical corpus, I am here taking a more historical approach, one which attempts to contextualize, as well as possible, one particular thinker's productive or creative—in the sense of a creative misreading perhaps—interaction with the work of another, and the way in which it changed over time. I leave to the philosophers the question of the philosophical value of Gray's interpretations for their contemporary research.

jargon-free and unencumbered by needless abstraction, Gray's writing is an appropriate reflection of his sober manner of philosophizing. But the final paragraphs of his review of Heidegger's essay on Nietzsche resemble an almost breathless diatribe. Building on his characterization of Nietzsche and Heidegger as "Old Testament prophets," Gray writes:

> Through these men the Lord speaks in riddles, in parables, in all manner of ambiguous phrase, as has been His wont in the past. But plainly discernible is the meaning that our civilization is doomed, the vast majority are blind and worse than blind. Only the rebel few can be saved, those who have set their faces resolutely against the security of common sense, the Golden Mean, the middle way. Only in the extremes can one find truth and genuine life. Only in rebellion against tradition and the established order can man reach his goal. The rebellion of these aristocratic prophets is directed with bitterness against the rapid and complete triumph of technology and the consequent mechanization of so much of life. To the gradual socializing of all relationships, they oppose a radical individualism.[42]

If he was indeed aware of Heidegger's political past, Gray must not have known the full extent of the little magician's Nazism when he penned this article, for he goes on to describe Heidegger as "a revolutionary without a program," failing to realize that Nazism, at least at first, was precisely that program for the then revolutionary Heidegger.[43] But, after the war, it was certainly true that Heidegger was "a man living in the reality of Nietzsche's dark prophecies." Gray finally concludes the essay with this portrait of the very thinker he had sympathetically introduced to American readers only a year or so earlier:

> He would like to build for the future because the present is intolerable and the past is remote and irrevocable. There is no hold, nothing on which to stand. The revolutionary, thus disconsolate, has seized upon the most general of all philosophical entities on which to build: Being. By an attitude of piety and reverence toward Being, the lonely rebel, exposed to

[42] Ibid., 308-309.
[43] Ibid., 309.

> nothingness and the feeling of dread, can gain a viewpoint from which to look beyond the flotsam and jetsam of this crumbling world. God is dead, saith Zarathustra, henceforth let the *Übermensch* live. God is dead, saith Heidegger, henceforth let us worship Being.[44]

Given that Heidegger published—in the same year that Gray's critical appraisal appeared (1953)—the manuscript of a lecture course he delivered in 1935 that made reference to the "inner truth and greatness" of Nazism, Gray's bitter attack is perhaps understandable. To be sure, many others were astonished by Heidegger's callous decision to publish the lectures without omitting—or explaining—the offensive passages. Indeed, a small scandal ensued when Jürgen Habermas, no more than a student at the time, published a piece in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that took Heidegger to task for failing to acknowledge the post-Holocaust context of the publication of his lectures. The debate that ensued, which saw Heidegger snub Habermas entirely, choosing instead to respond only to his supporters, was a turning point in Habermas's own career. Not only did it mark his definitive entrance into the world of public philosophy, it turned him away from Heidegger's philosophical influence, which, until then, had actually been quite overpowering.[45] He concluded that it was high time to "think with Heidegger against Heidegger."[46] The event was destiny-shaping from the twenty-four year old Habermas. The "radical break from Heidegger"—as his biographer calls it—was the first of many such public interventions over the course of what has been a very long career.[47] In 1953 Habermas bravely confronted Heidegger and he has not look back since. Gray took a different path.

---

[44] Ibid.
[45] See Martin Beck Matuštik, *Jürgen Habermas: A Philosophical-Political Profile* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 12-17.
[46] Jürgen Habermas, "Martin Heidegger: On the Publication of the Lectures of 1935," trans. William S. Lewis, in *The Heidegger Controversy*, 197.
[47] Matuštik, *Jürgen Habermas*, 15.

Gray's indignation did not last for long. Just as Arendt later replaced the bitterness she displayed toward her former teacher (and lover) in her *Partisan Review* piece with wide-eyed praise, so too did Gray do an about-face with regard to Heidegger. The man who had satirically equated Heidegger with an Old Testament prophet changed his tune in the coming years. As difficult to comprehend as this reversal might seem, it has been a common phenomenon throughout the American reception of Heidegger, from Arendt and Gray all the way through to Richard Rorty.

Enter the Magician

By 1954 Gray had settled in at Colorado College, where he taught for the rest of his life. Everything seems to indicate that he was happy, both with the liberal arts environment of the college, which allowed him to excel as a teacher, and with the natural beauty of the area. (His letters are full of references to hiking nearby Pike's Peak, to horseback riding, and to the general beauty surrounding Colorado Springs, which was still semi-rural—even Black Forest-like—at the time.) Heidegger, for his part, had actually fared quite well after the war. Even while banned from teaching, his reputation grew, thanks mostly to a series of influential paid lectures for private associations in Bremen, Baden-Baden, and Munich, after which he even received standing ovations.[48] His new work saw him reflecting almost exclusively on the nature of technology and on the dangers of modernity, and audiences were more than receptive to this new turn in his thought. Having seemingly left *Being and Time* long behind—all of it, that is, except for its core, the question of Being—Heidegger embarked on a new path. Gray, who, as a

[48] See Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 390-406.

veteran, was himself coming to terms with the Korean War, with the escalation of the cold war that it represented, and with the legacy of the bomb, was there to join him. Together, they confronted technology, massification, and other such dangers inherent, or so they speculated, in modern life.

After making Heidegger's personal acquaintance in 1954, Gray's estimation of the Freiburger's work changed rather dramatically. Gone is the mocking ridicule and vicious criticism evident in "Heidegger 'Evaluates' Nietzsche." Yet it was not replaced by an overzealous or blind acceptance. What emerged instead was a balanced ambivalence, a subtle skepticism that would inform the rest of Gray's work with, and on, Heidegger. Especially given his "involvement with the Nazis," which was well known, what to make of Heidegger, Gray insisted, was a "baffling question":

> On the one hand, he appears to have genuine insights and originality in viewpoint; on the other hand, his works are surely lacking in balance, in philosophical wisdom, and in responsibility. Either to reject him out of hand, as many of his countrymen are increasingly doing, or to prize him as *the* thinker of our generation, as others are doing both in Germany and in certain other lands, appears to be a mistake.[49]

What was badly needed, he suggested, was "a non-partisan evaluation of his writings," an evaluation that cuts through the "nonsense" in Heidegger. American philosophers interested in Heidegger's work would profit from this insofar as it might help them distinguish "the solid thought from fantasy in his diverse productions."[50] This would become the infinite enterprise of all American Heideggerians. From the very beginning, even Heidegger's most effusive supporters set themselves the task of salvaging and

---

[49] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger's Course: From Human Existence to Nature," *The Journal of Philosophy* Volume LIV Number 8 (April 11, 1957), 197.
[50] Ibid., 197-198.

preserving what they could from a body of work as suggestive and original as it is varied and troubling. It was no easy task.

For Gray, there certainly was good reason to be skeptical of Heidegger. But even more questionable in his eyes was the bitter partisanship that Heidegger seemed to inspire in both his defenders and his detractors. Gray looked askance at all forms of Heidegger worship. In his letters to David Farrell Krell, one of the many young Heidegger translators Gray sponsored, he revealed his "strong antipathy" toward such reverence, almost religious in its excess.[51] Gray, as Heidegger's chief American advocate (alongside Hannah Arendt of course), thus had to negotiate a treacherous path between promotion and devotion, and without relinquishing the duty of critique. Once officially named the general editor of the Harper & Row Heidegger translations in the early sixties, he knew he might eventually be viewed as an authority on Heidegger or even a devout Heideggerian, a thought the stoic Gray dreaded. Because all Heidegger translations were by contract to be approved by him, Gray was quickly bombarded with translation requests. By 1965, he confessed to Hannah Arendt that he felt "like some sort of bottleneck on Heidegger in English." The fact that everybody who wanted to translate Heidegger in America had to go through Gray made him uneasy. It resembled, as even he admitted, "a monopoly," and though it was "a bit flattering to the ego," it had to be "vaguely unethical." "If this keeps going," he quipped, "I may one day be an expert (horrible!) on Heidegger."[52]

---

[51] David Farrell Krell, "A Smile and a Sense of Tragedy: Letters from J. Glenn Gray," *Philosophy Today* Volume XXV Number 2/4 (Summer 1981): 106.

[52] Gray to Arendt, November 12, 1965, General Correspondence, Hannah Arendt Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Almost all of the Hannah Arendt papers have been digitized and are available on the web at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/arendthtml/about.html. Future references to the correspondence will be from this source and will be cited as Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.

For most of his translating career, Gray did his best to provide a balanced account of Heidegger's thought. Knowing full well that his readings of Heidegger were often introductory ones for his American audiences, he attempted to highlight the major themes of Heidegger's work. In the late fifties and early sixties, those themes had to do with—as he put it in a 1957 article—modernity's "scientific mentality," which, in Gray's reading, Heidegger saw as "an historical fate" that threatened "the annihilation of things by a narrow theory which views them from the perspective of human utility."[53] Heidegger of course hoped for a resurrection of the original Greek experience of Being, supposedly so far removed from the dangers of modern technology and the subjectivist metaphysics from which it arises. In opposition to modern technology, this perspective allowed Heidegger to see nature as something other and more than what he called "standing reserve".[54] That is, he increasingly tried to define the natural world—and humans as well—as something more than just exploitable resources, as passive objects awaiting scientific manipulation. It is this Heidegger that later became a source of inspiration for environmentalists of all political stripes. But Gray, for his part, was right to see the stirrings of an almost pagan religiosity lingering behind this trenchant critique of modern technology, for Heidegger would at times lapse into an overt mysticism, especially when he spoke of the "fourfold"—that poetic interaction of earth, sky, gods, and mortals from which all things come and eventually pass away.[55]

---

[53] J. Glenn Gray, "Heidegger's Course: From Human Existence to Nature," 205.
[54] See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 3-35.
[55] For more on this, see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999). The manuscript was never published during Heidegger's lifetime, though he often hinted that it was to be the sequel to *Being and Time*.

Sputnik vs. Beatnik

Sputnik's 1957 debut—a scant six months after Gray's article on Heidegger's critique of modern science—confirmed what at the time were some of the worst fears of many around the globe. For Heidegger himself, it must have seemingly justified his remarks in that infamous 1935 lecture course: "from a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same; the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man." "The spiritual decline of the earth," which Heidegger way back then thought that Hitler's national socialist revolution might rectify, was at hand "when the farthermost corner of the globe has been conquered by technology and opened to economic exploitation."[56]

In the United States, Sputnik meant something very different. It meant that American education had failed, that Soviet socialism was producing engineers at an amazing rate, while public schools in the U.S. were merely producing a generation of lazy underachievers, a generation who could no more fend off the Soviet threat than pull themselves away from their afternoon television. Walter Lippmann predicted the worst: the United States was "falling behind in the progress of science and technology," and if nothing was done about it, "Russia will be ahead of the West in almost all fields in a few years. Unless the West steps up its scientific development, it will become technologically inferior to Russia within ten years."[57] Although federal aid to public education was already on the rise by the fall of 1957, Sputnik aroused a sense of urgency

---

[56] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), 37-38. Hannah Arendt's remarks on the event, in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), are very similar.

[57] Quoted in Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994), 21-22.

on the part of lawmakers and educators both. As one commentator has put it: "The Cold War had generated the arms race; the arms race precipitated the 'scientists' or 'knowledge race'."[58] Education thus became as much a national security concern as a question of social welfare. Or, as the historian William Leuchtenberg put it: "what a generation of liberals clamoring for federal aid to education had failed to achieve, the cold war accomplished almost overnight."[59]

Glenn Gray was deeply interested in the philosophy of education.[60] By the time he published his book on the subject—*The Promise of Wisdom: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*—in 1968 he had already established himself as prominent figure in the field.[61] Throughout his writings on the philosophy of education, Gray consistently spoke of the importance of tradition, something he thought the pragmatist theory of education did not recognize. In a 1952 article on progressive education that was published in *Commentary* he explained that "our preoccupation with science and our pride in American diferentness have made us neglectful of the educational possibilities of art and religion, which are the chief bearers of tradition."[62] And the claims of tradition were not to be dismissed lightly, at least not according to Gray. "Men without a sense of

---

[58] David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York: Oxford, 1979), 189. For an interesting take on the Cold War and public education, see Louis Menand's *New Yorker* piece "Cat People: What Dr. Seuss Really Taught Us" (December 23, 2002).

[59] Quoted in Morris Dickstein, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 55.

[60] See, for example, the final pages of "Munich University: Class of '50," where he discusses the struggle in Germany as well as the United States between competing philosophies of education, "one insisting upon a democratization of higher education with emphasis on method and general courses, the other persuaded that university training is within the competence of only the intellectually gifted minority, who are able to deal with abstract ideas and pure technical investigations" (448).

[61] J. Glenn Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1968). The book was reprinted by Harper Torchbooks in 1972 with the subtitle *A Philosophical Theory of Education*, and again in 1984 by Wesleyan University Press under the title *Re-Thinking American Education: A Philosophy of Teaching and Learning*, preface by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl.

[62] J. Glenn Gray, "Is Progressive Education a Failure?: Some of the Current Criticisms Examined," *Commentary* (August 1952): 114.

tradition," he explained, "seem to lack certain dimensions of being, and perhaps this is the most damaging thing that can be said about the educational pragmatists."[63]

When, in 1965, Gray penned an influential essay on existentialism and the growing counterculture of the sixties for *Harper's* he must have felt that his earlier warnings had gone unheeded. Fostering education in the sciences may prevent another Sputnik embarrassment, but it did little to promote real learning and only further severed students from tradition. "Salvation on the Campus: Why Existentialism is Capturing the Students," is in many respects a portrait of a generation uprooted from tradition. Sputnik-spending resulted in larger, better equipped Universities, but they were also more impersonal, more factory-like. Confronted with massification, students of the time yearned for "uniqueness," they yearned for, according to Gray, "self-definition."[64] For Gray, "it was hardly an accident that the campus rebellions at Berkeley and earlier at the University of Colorado were led by philosophy majors," for they were usually the first ones exposed—often through existentialism—to thinkers, like Heidegger and Sartre, who gave voice to the fears and hopes of a generation searching for self-understanding and, most of all, authenticity.[65] Gray suggests that a myriad of factors contributed to the popularity and relevance of existentialism in the mid sixties: the fact that America was, at the time, an affluent society; that university education had become a kind of impersonal "knowledge business"; the murder of President Kennedy; the disillusionment with communism, which Gray thinks precipitated a turn inwards; the Civil Rights movement;

---

[63] Ibid., 110.
[64] J. Glenn Gray, "Salvation on the Campus: Why Existentialism is Capturing the Students," *Harper's Magazine* May 1965, 54.
[65] Ibid., 55. Perhaps it is worth noting here that the noted feminist historian of science Donna Haraway was among those young students who learned their philosophy—and their Heidegger—from Glenn Gray. See Donna J. Haraway, *How Like a Leaf: An Interview with Thyrza Nichols Goodeve* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 114. I would like to thank Professor Haraway for sharing some of her memories of Glenn Gray with me.

and, not least of all, "technological society".[66] Faced with all, or even some of these developments, students were certainly living in an anxious and unprecedented age. While their mothers and fathers found legitimacy in fighting the good fight against fascism and, after World War II, communism, they, on the other hand, were left to face the specter of a seemingly soulless society, drunk of its own technological achievements. Technology, massification, inauthenticity—"the whole cancer of your country" as one novelist put it at the time—these were the new dangers.[67] And for everyone from beatniks to hippies, yippies to radicals, folk-singers to mods, the revolution of everyday life was now underway to meet these dangers head-on.

No C. Wright Mills or Herbert Marcuse, Gray was happy to comment on rather than spearhead this countercultural revolution (although he did admit in 1970 to Hannah Arendt that "whatever else one can say about this generation of college students, I think it is still true that they are more involved, more 'with it', to use their slang, than preceding ones. And that continues to make teaching great fun for me").[68] Much of his characteristically reserved commentary can be found in his education book, which he spent the 1961-62 academic year working on at the Wesleyan University Center for Advanced Study, which had awarded him, along with Hannah Arendt, a Guggenheim grant. Their encounter, to which we will return shortly, proved fateful.[69]

By the time he finally published his education book in 1968, Gray had become a Heideggerian, even if only a reluctant one. Heidegger is referred to only twice in *The*

---

[66] Ibid., 56-58.
[67] Richard Fariña, *I've Been Down So Long It Feels Like Up to Me* (1966; New York: Penguin, 1996), 64.
[68] Gray to Arendt, April 25, 1970, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[69] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For the Love of the World*, Second Edition (1982; New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), 441.

Promise of Wisdom, but his influence suffuses the entire project.[70] Gray's Heideggerian distrust of technology and the sciences frames the entire work. "We simply cannot afford in education," he warns at one point, "the mechanical, the bureaucratic, the mammoth organization that has long since imperiled our industrial, recreational, and political life." For Gray, like Heidegger, technology was to blame for much of this:

> The task of forming individuality in our day is the task of humanizing and naturalizing an environment threatened with the loss of both by virtue of man's incredible inventiveness and reproductive powers. Our species is threatening itself, in peril of making its own continuance either undesirable or impossible, perhaps both. Yet because this threat to individuality is of human origin, it would seem possible that human beings could overcome it.[71]

No matter how deeply he shared Heidegger's fears of technology, Gray, unlike Heidegger, refused to elevate it into some sort of fateful destiny, some sort of mystical power over which humanity had no control. (Heidegger would famously remark in an interview granted late in his life—partly on the condition that it would only be published after his death—that "only a god can save us."[72])

Gray's education book is, in essence, a treatise on the relevance of the liberal arts in the age of technology. What can education mean in a world that has become "man-made and machine-manufactured," in a world in which "the accelerating revolution in scientific technology" has resulted in "a loss of hold on our natural environment"?[73] Sputnik may have ushered in a new age in education, but it was only the expression of a much greater phenomenon—the technological blanketing of the world and its peoples.

---

[70] The first reference is an indirect one in the introduction, and the second comes in the form of a quotation culled from *What is Called Thinking?*, which Gray uses as an epigraph for the third section of the book.
[71] J. Glenn Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 66.
[72] The text of the interview with *Der Spiegel,* "Only a God Can Save Us," has been translated into English and can be found in Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*, 91-116.
[73] J. Glenn Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 78.

Unlike Heidegger, however, Gray thought something practical could be done about this. For instance, he suggested that a change in curriculum might sensitize students to what he late in the book calls "world tragedy." That "American technology has contributed to making this planet fantastically dangerous for human habitation" was obvious to him, and it was one of the many reasons why students needed to be exposed to issues of global significance.[74] American technology had already begun to globalize the world, Gray thought, and American educators had a responsibility to make their students conscious of this fact—not only conscious, but conscientious as well.

Gray had no great reason to be an optimist with regard to either the saving powers of man or technology. His wartime experience exposed him early on to the horrors of which both were capable. But instead of succumbing to the allure of destruction, of total technological mobilization, as some European writers were wont to do, especially in the interwar years, Gray remained a critical chronicler of its grim realities.[75] This is one of the many reasons why *The Warriors* has been so widely read for so long.

Unfortunately, this is not the place to go into a close reading of Gray's most well-known text. But *The Warriors* contains at least one substantial Heideggerian residue of which we should take note. It is Gray's examination of what he calls the "technological mentality," which comes near the very end of the book.[76] This comportment, which has brought forth the "separation of man from nature," leads directly, Gray thinks, "to the

---

[74] Ibid., 249.
[75] It is worth comparing Gray's writings on war and technology with the German writer Ernst Jünger. Like Gray, Jünger was a kind of philosopher, though his novels and memoirs, especially his wartime ones, are the source of his fame. Whereas Jünger aestheticized violence, Gray could describe its allures for soldiers in battle without glorifying it. See Elliot Neaman, *A Dubious Past: Ernst Jünger and the Politics of Literature After Nazism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 150-151.
[76] J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, 235.

exploitation of things and people."[77] In this sense, the technological mentality goes hand in hand with an "exploitative mentality," one which seemingly affords man control of all things in this world.[78] The impulse to destruction in war is also, in this sense, a symptom of a much broader phenomenon, one rooted in the very core of Western civilization itself. Even if he resists Heidegger's full-blown cultural pessimism, Gray sometimes slips into a kind of civilizational self-doubt that sounds rather like it. Take, for example, this passage from *The Warriors*:

> Few serious students of our society would have the temerity to assert that Western man is more at home in the world now than formerly, any less anxious, or more in charge of his institutions and the larger forces of history. Indeed, most agree that contemporary civilization in America and Europe is unfulfilling in so many ways. Impersonality, monotony, standardization, the scramble to consume and to achieve material comfort induce at times a measureless ennui and the longing for an escape no matter how dangerous and violent.[79]

In the foreword that Gray penned for the 1970 reprint of the book, he even went so far as to offer a subtle critique of American military action in Southeast Asia along these lines.[80] Specifically, he explained the events in Vietnam as a product of "modern culture, which has increasingly become godless."[81] Returning to all those themes he had by now been teasing out of Heidegger's works for years, Gray let loose on "the

---

[77] Ibid., 237, 236.
[78] Ibid., 238.
[79] Ibid., 225.
[80] Whatever the paradox of a former American Army officer using the work of an ex-Nazi to criticize America's role in Vietnam, the mix makes for an interesting take on the conflict. For another suggestive, if problematic, attempt to use Heidegger to critique American activities in Vietnam, see William V. Spanos's lively intervention in the Heidegger controversies of the late eighties and early nineties, "Heidegger, Nazism, and the 'Repressive Hypothesis': The American Appropriation of the Question," in *Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 181-251.
[81] J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, xviii.

monstrous present" and all that it represented.[82] Like the exploitative or technological mentality, living godlessly—as America was—betrayed, in Gray's opinion, a

> forgetfulness of the encompassing world to which we are so totally bound, both as individuals and as a species. No longer do we feel answerable to this encompassing which is within us, as memory, imagination, and consciousness, or without us as soil and sun and air and water. We are forgetful of the fact that these latter are not simply things of our environment but natural powers and fibres of which we are made and which enable us to be sustained in existence every moment.[83]

Some commentators, such as William Appleman Williams (writing in the *New York Review of Books*), found this line of thinking a little too "abstract," especially in view of "My Lai, Cambodia, and Laos," but they ultimately agreed with its tone.[84] Eisenhower's dire warnings in his 1961 farewell address about the rise of a "military-industrial complex" were, after all, materializing right before their eyes.

Sputnik, like the bomb and the cold war more generally, had seemingly helped usher in the age of technological hubris, of which the Vietnam War, alienated and protesting university students, and rioting inner-city denizens were only symptoms. Though he for the most part resisted Heidegger's world-weary pessimism, often highlighting, for example, the need for love—a theme nowhere to be found in Heidegger—in the modern world, Gray was at times prone to regurgitating Heidegger's all-too-sweeping condemnations of modern life, as the 1970 foreword shows.[85] His final remarks in *The Warriors* are no different in this regard. Betraying the concrete tenor of

---

[82] Ibid., xxii.
[83] Ibid., xviii-xix.
[84] William Appleman Williams, "Officers and Gentlemen," *New York Review of Books* May 6, 1971. For more on Williams and the intellectual opposition to Vietnam, see Kevin Mattson, *Intellectuals in Action: The Origins of the New Left and Radical Liberalism, 1945-1970* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 2002), 145-185.
[85] See, for example, chapter three of *The Warriors*, "Love: War's Ally and Foe," 59-96. See also his meditation on a line from Auden, "We Must Love One Another or Die," *The Personalist* Volume XXXIII Number 3 (Summer, July 1952): 266-272.

the entire book, Gray, as if relinquishing in exasperation his attempt to make sense of war, suggests that "the final secrets of why men fight must be sought beyond the human, in the nature of being itself."[86] As if to make war a force beyond the comprehension of mere mortals, Being once again rears its mysterious head.

"Dear Hannah"

What is Called Thinking? (1968) was the only Heidegger text that Gray actually received credit for translating (which he did with the help of Fred D. Wieck), though in the end he bore ultimate responsibility for ten other translations published between 1966 and 1977, the year of his death.[87] Hannah Arendt had nominated him for the general editor's position, but as her voluminous correspondence with Gray reveals, her role in the Heidegger translation business, as she and Gray often referred to it in their letters, did not end there.

As they must have quickly realized when they first met back at Wesleyan (both were Guggenheim Grant recipients during the 1961-62 school-year), they had more than just Heidegger in common. Gray often remarked on the intellectual and personal kinship he felt with Arendt. And according to her biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Gray

---

[86] J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, 242. This, it should be said, is not necessarily a direct reference to Heidegger. Nonetheless, it seems to me to be emblematic of a certain kind of detached, Heideggerian perspective, one which turns the realities of war into the stuff of philosophical/poetic abstraction.

[87] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). For a bibliography of Gray's works, including the Heidegger translations he oversaw, see *Something of Great Constancy: Essays in Honor of the Memory of J. Glenn Gray, 1913-1977*, edited by Timothy Fuller (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College, 1979), 194-198. See also the memorial minute published after Gray's death: "J. Glenn Gray, 1913-1977," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 51:5 (May 1978): 578-579.

was, along with Mary McCarthy, one of Arendt's most treasured confidants.[88] In later years, he even "took up," as Young-Bruehl puts it, "the role from which Jaspers and then Blücher [Heinrich, her second husband] had departed: he encouraged Arendt, discussed her work with her, supported her in person, by letter, and over the telephone."[89] Gray's letters during these years often contained long analyses of Arendt's current work, of essays and drafts that eventually became *The Life of the Mind*.[90] When she despaired of even completing the project, Gray was there to offer support—"You must finish this enterprise, Hannah."—and praise, which in at least one instance came in the form of a favorable comparison to her former teacher—"You keep… becoming clearer as you grow older. Heidegger unfortunately does not, for some reason."[91] But it was Heidegger's opaque thought itself that was most often the subject of their correspondence.[92] As soon as a question regarding Heidegger translation came his way, Gray quickly penned Arendt, asking for her advice and guidance. If Gray, as the general editor of the series, was directing any number of translations at any given time, Arendt was pulling all of the necessary strings behind the scenes, ensuring that all went as smoothly as anything in the publishing world possibly could. From communicating with German and American publishing houses to double-checking manuscripts for translation bloopers, Arendt did it all.

---

[88] See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For the Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982). This book was reissued with a new preface in 2004.
[89] Ibid., 440.
[90] In this vein, see Gray's memorial piece on Arendt, which has much to do with *The Life of the Mind*, "The Winds of Thought," *Social Research* 44:1 (Spring 1977): 44-62. See also, Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, edited by Mary McCarthy (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978).
[91] Gray to Arendt, Nov. 21, 1971, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[92] Having entered Heidegger's inner circle with Arendt's help, Gray was also frequently mentioned in the correspondence of these former lovers. See Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger, *Briefe, 1925-1975*, edited by Ursula Ludz (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998); recently translated into English by Andrew Shields as *Letters*, 1925-1975 (New York: Harcourt, 2004).

The task of the translator—"so removed from being the sterile equation of two dead languages," as Walter Benjamin memorably described it—was a subject of constant discussion for Gray and Arendt.[93] They shared their opinions of early Heidegger translations like Ralph Manheim's *An Introduction to Metaphysics* and the version of *Being and Time* put out by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, which Arendt found wanting.[94] More often, they debated the connotations of various German philosophical terms, and the ways in which Heidegger played with them in his own prose, making their job all the more difficult of course. The endless red tape involved in publishing translations only made matters worse, and both tended to describe the process as a "general mess."[95] But they could not, however, limit their discussions to Heidegger's work alone. As is to be expected, Heidegger the person slipped into their letters as well. Given their past relationship, Arendt could not simply sever the man from the philosopher. And in his letters to Arendt, Gray reveals his own struggles in this regard. The Nazi question, for example, was something that Gray would not overlook. He even sought to confront Heidegger directly on this, and hoped that he could, with his permission, write a piece clarifying the exact duration and nature of Heidegger's political misadventures. "This political chapter," as Gray wrote Arendt once from Freiburg, may not be the "primary thing" in the end, but "it is of real importance."[96] Arendt warned Gray to be careful, saying that Heidegger's "Misstrauen" [mistrust] was "easily aroused."

---

[93] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations*, edited with and introduction by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (1968; New York: Schocken, 1969), 73.
[94] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphyshics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1953). See also, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962). For Arendt's disgust with the translation, see her letter to Gray, October 30, 1962, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[95] Gray to Arendt, Feb. 15, 1972, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[96] Gray to Arendt, March 22, 1967, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.

He had to remember "how complicated things are" when it came to asking questions like these.[97] She tried to explain:

> I think it was unwise to leave in the infamous sentence about "die Grosse des Nationalsozialismus" in "Einleitung [sic] in die Metaphysik, but I think I understand. Heidegger there points out what he thought National Socialism was all about. This was a grotesque error. But the way he phrased the sentence at the time shows his error as well as a certain courage, because he says explicitly that this does not jive with "what is being peddled nowadays as philosophy of National Socialism." He probably left the sentence in in order to explain in an underhand way what he thought National Socialism was, namely the encounter global technology and modern man. The idea is, as I said, grotesque, but he is not the only one. I just found a very similar notion in Benjamin. The trouble with these gentlemen was, and always has been, that they couldn't read books like "Mein Kampf"—too boring—and preferred to read slightly crazy but highly interesting books by Italian Futurists who later all turned Fascists.[98]

Gray ultimately backed off, and nothing came of his initial desire to press Heidegger for answers regarding his Nazism. The question did not go away, though. When he first read the German version of Arendt's tribute to Heidegger on the occasion of his 80th birthday Gray was taken aback. He admitted to her that "you can really interpret MH [Martin Heidegger], Hannah, like no one else," but he was disturbed by the way she downplayed his political past. In particular, he took objection to the fact that she referred to it as merely an "escapade." Still, he recognized the messiness of the situation. "In a way,' Gray concluded, "I blame him more than you do, for his political stupidity, but sympathize with him also more."[99]

---

[97] Arendt to Gray, March 25, 1967, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[98] Arendt to Gray, March 25, 1967, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress. The history of the actual *An Introduction to Metaphysics* manuscript is addressed in Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's Philosophical Geopolitics in the Third Reich," in Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger's* Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), 226-249.
[99] Gray to Arendt, October 28, 1969, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress. An English version came out later: "Martin Heidegger at 80," *New York Review of Books* Volume 17 Number 6 (21 October 1971): 50-54.

For the most part, though, the two friends, Hannah and Glenn, especially as the years went by, largely exchanged less pressing news of Heidegger, relaying instead reports on his ailing health and mood, and various other tidbits of information and gossip. Both had become close to him in the twilight of his life. So close in fact, that Martin and Elfride even approached the Grays, as they had Arendt herself, about the possibility of selling the manuscript of *Sein und Zeit*. In one of the oddest episodes of twentieth-century philosophical gossip, the original typescript almost went to the University of Texas at Austin, where Chancellor Ransom was in the process of building an impressive collection of rare books and manuscripts.[100] It would have been strange indeed if the manuscript had landed in Texas (of all places!). That Heidegger would have even considered such a possibility was surprising. Heidegger, who had for so long staked out such a hostile position toward all things American, seemed to be changing, at least on the surface. To Gray he even expressed an active interest in his reputation in the United States.[101]

In the end, it was Heidegger's American legacy with which Gray and Arendt were most concerned. Choosing to translate *What is Called Thinking?* was no arbitrary decision in this regard. It was perhaps the perfect introductory text. When he got news that it would be brought out in a paperback edition Gray was very happy. "I think what

---

[100] Gray to Arendt, January 5, 1968, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress and Gray to Arendt, 5 May, 1969, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress. For more on the very interesting story of Ransom and the Austin rare books library, see chapter nine, "Instant Ivy," of Nicholas A. Basbanes' *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books* (1995; New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 312-354. For more on Arendt's role with regard to selling the manuscript, see Elżbieta Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt / Martin Heidegger* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995), 123 ff. See also the *Briefe* and *Letters*, number 111 (pages 174 and 145, respectively).

[101] Gray to Arendt, Nov. 21, 1963, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress. On this note, see some of the many letters Heidegger sent to professors in the United States who had organized conferences on his work in *Reden Und Andere Zeugnisse Eines Lebensweges*, Gesamtausgabe 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000).

pleases me most about this paperback," he wrote to Arendt, "is that it will likely be used increasingly as an introduction to Heidegger by American students. I have taught it enough to know that it *works* and works exceedingly well."[102] Comprised of some of the first lectures that Heidegger delivered, in 1951 and 1952, after his teaching ban had been lifted, *What is Called Thinking?* sketches out in broad but clear strokes the major thrust of the philosopher's later path of thought, which privileged what Heidegger called "thinking" over traditional philosophy. In the introduction to the translation, Gray stresses that for Heidegger "thinking defines the nature of being human and the more thoughtless we are, the less human we are."[103] Clearly, by 1968, Gray thought that there was ample reason to believe that thoughtlessness had spread far and wide across the globe.

American Beauty

Near the end of his life, Gray frequently confessed to Arendt that he had to fight off feelings of misanthropy. He had begun to seek the wisdom not of man, but of the ages. More and more he became interested in what he at one point described to Arendt as "philosophic mysticism." Outlining a current project, he explained that "if I can write a chapter on what I call natural religion, it will come out strongly for polytheism in which I believe. Of late … I have been turning more and more against all sorts of humanism."[104] Already in 1965 he had begun to highlight this theme. In an article for *The Personalist* he critiqued the early Heidegger of *Being and Time* as too "voluntaristic and

[102] Gray to Arendt, November 7, 1972, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[103] J. Glenn Gray, "Introduction," Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, xii.
[104] Gray to Arendt, July 6, 1975, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.

individualistic."[105] He concluded his by-the-book commentary of this issue sounding very much like the later Heidegger himself, who had abandoned the project of *Being and Time* for precisely these reasons:

> The religious passion for permanence, for a realm above the flux of change, may well be dormant only and not dead, to reappear in some future generation as something nearly self-evident. Our day for philosophy at least is characterized by a sense of God's absence and silence. But it may be more than idle curiosity to reflect on how permanent is our epoch's pervasive conviction of the impermanence of everything.[106]

Far from ridiculing Heidegger for worshiping Being as he had in 1953, Gray eventually came to find Heidegger's later philosophy helpful in enabling us to cope with the modern world. He thought that Heidegger's later image of man as "so inextricably bound up with the being of others as well as with the being of things and creatures of Nature" pointed the way out of technological rootlessness and anxiety.[107]

Ultimately, Gray, like Heidegger, had come to think of the "modern mode of Being" as one of "homelessness and anxiety."[108] Even the modern landscape was conspiring against a thoughtful existence. Showing that he also shared Heidegger's anti-urban mentality (after all, he was raised on a farm and he did live amid such natural beauty in Colorado, alpine beauty not unlike Heidegger's beloved *Schwarzwald*), Gray explained that "cityscapes are notoriously less stable than landscapes, particularly in a technological age. And roots are harder to put down in the asphalt canyons and cliff

---

[105] J. Glenn Gray, "Martin Heidegger: On Anticipating my own Death," *The Personalist* XLVI:4 (Fall, October 1965), 451.
[106] Ibid., 458.
[107] J. Glenn Gray, "The New Image of Man in Martin Heidegger's Philosophy," in George L. Kline, ed., *European Philosophy Today* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 57.
[108] J. Glenn Gray, "Homelessness and Anxiety: Sources of the Modern Mode of Being," *Virginia Quarterly Review* Volume 48 Number 1: 24-39. In reaching this conclusion, Gray essentially returned, full circle, to the issues he raised at the end of his dissertation. For a polemical take on the "homelessness" of American cultural life, see William Leach, *Country of Exiles: The Destruction of Place in American Life* (New York: Pantheon, 1999).

dwellings of city streets and apartment houses."[109] In the modern world, "the familiar as the home-like has been replaced in man's being by the exotic, the ever-changing, the never-before-experienced." He saw this happening all around him, especially in booming Colorado Springs: "I have lived for more than twenty years in a city growing so rapidly that I get lost occasionally in its suburbs."[110] Gray was not imagining all of this. There is good reason why a recent social critic has chosen to single out Colorado Springs in his alarming account of the homogenization and massification of the United States—of its food, its landscape, and lastly, its people. The city has only expanded since Gray's death, succumbing to the wild urban sprawl that has engulfed so much of what was not so long ago the beautiful if wild west.[111]

Gray thought the modern world was producing "a generation of nomads," uprooted from any moorings in either tradition or place.[112] While he was thinking mostly of the already aging hippies of his day, so anxious and searching for meaning, perhaps the international migrant labor trade has today borne out his prediction more concretely. In any case, Gray thought that something would have to change if humans were to cope with this new era. "If the rootlessness of Americans continues to grow," he wrote,

> if we are to become nomads once again in a few generations, we shall have to develop nomadic ways of thinking and poetizing, perhaps also an openness to being-called not unlike those of nomads of the Old Testament who seemed to hear voices from above guiding them and their flocks toward green pastures.[113]

---

[109] Ibid., 30-31.
[110] Ibid., 31.
[111] See Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Boston / New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001).
[112] J. Glenn Gray, "Homelessness and Anxiety: Sources of the Modern Mode of Being," 33-34.
[113] Ibid., 35.

"Nomadic Thinking" was the title of an occasional paper Gray was working on at the time of his death.[114] The fact that he was actively working on such a theme seems to suggest that he actually sought to think through the dilemmas of the modern world, that he was in dialogue with the present, while the anti-modern Heidegger, on the other hand, simply pined for a return to the rural Black Forest hut of the Middle Ages. Even though he shared Heidegger's fears, Gray did not seem to want to turn back the clock in the way that Heidegger did.[115] Still, it is difficult not to read Gray's positive invocation of Old Testament prophecy without harkening back to that 1953 article where he so derisively suggested that Heidegger more resembled an Old Testament prophet than a philosopher. But Gray must have long forgotten this particular invective. His new philosophy of "natural religion"—as he described it to Arendt—was very much in tune with precisely that aspect of Heidegger he had so vociferously criticized in the past.[116] Perhaps this is why he once wrote to David Krell with the following advice regarding Heidegger: "But

---

[114] See the bibliography of Gray's works in *Something of Great Constancy*. It would be interesting to compare the evolution of this notion in Gray' writings with the work of Deleuze and Guattari from around the same time.

[115] The matter of Heidegger's anti-modernism (or anti-technologism) is perhaps more complex than I am letting on. For while Heidegger goes out of his way, in essays such as "Building Dwelling Thinking" [in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 145-161], to stress that he is not calling for a simple return to a pre-modern (or pre-technological) moment, in this case, to the simple peasant hut of his native Black Forest, it must also be acknowledged that he spoke only in the language of a romanticized historical past. Every example of a positive dwelling-in-the-world that he invokes—from the peasant hut to the craftsman's relation to his tools—are decidedly anti-technological, anti-modern, and anti-urban. In this he proved incapable of offering anything other than sweeping, totalizing assessments of the current situation. I thus am sympathetic on this point with arguments such as the one Don Ihde makes in his "Deromanticizing Heidegger," in *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1993), 103-115.

[116] That even Heidegger's expressly secular interlocutors, such as Gray but also William Barrett, highlighted the religious dimensions of Heidegger's thought as a beneficial antidote to the horrors of modern technology and mass society is worth highlighting. This seems to suggest that even beyond Christian academic circles in America, where he did indeed enjoy a noteworthy reception after World War II, Heidegger was deployed as a kind of religious bulwark against a calculative rationality ever on the rise. If anything, as the debate about biotechnology only proves, secular and religious arguments have only become more entrenched since then.

let us not be too critical," he explained, "after all, he has given us a lot and I am grateful to him."[117]

Gray's later writings on Heidegger, though they have moments of real flair, are on the whole perhaps less important for the history of Heidegger reception in America than the work he did for the translation series.[118] By the time his last book, *On Understanding Violence Philosophically*, appeared in 1970, the missionary period of Heidegger scholarship in the United States was already coming to an end. Gray no doubt realized this while attending a 1974 conference on Heidegger held in San Diego, a conference he later described in detail to Arendt.[119] In another letter to Arendt he even confessed that he had begun to read the work of Jacques Derrida, whom he called a "sympathetic student of Heidegger and also a perceptive critic."[120] The need and time for introductory texts was quickly passing and new, more daring interpretations were already underway.

Still, Gray proved an insightful interpreter of Heidegger to the end. "The Splendor of the Simple" and "Poets and Thinkers: Their Kindred Roles in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger," are cases in point. Both essays are to be found in *On Understanding Violence Philosophically and Other Essays*, and both are glowing accounts of Heidegger's later work. The first is almost hagiographic in its reverence, and it reveals how preoccupied with the question of beauty Gray eventually became. Nevertheless, Gray still approaches Heidegger, in these texts at least, with his eyes wide open. And precisely where we might least expect it, he surprises us. He proves, in the end, to be quite critical, especially when he confesses that "Heidegger's thinking, despite

---

[117] Krell, "A Smile and a Sense of Tragedy," 107.
[118] An exception to this is the insightful "Heidegger on Remembering and Remembering Heidegger," *Man and World* Volume 10 Number 1 (1977): 62-78.
[119] Gray to Arendt, Oct. 6, 1973, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.
[120] Gray to Arendt, May 26, 1974, Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress.

itself, is too past-oriented."[121] In what must be one of the clearest and most insightful of his assessments, Gray writes:

> Heidegger's regionalism is at once his strength and his weakness. He illustrates what a powerful and imaginative mind can draw of philosophic sustenance from attachment to home and the familiar things of use and beauty. But today we are living in a cosmopolitan world and are becoming nomads once more, exposing ourselves willy-nilly to uncanny and the unhomelike. It will not do for philosophy to lament this new situation, unwelcome as many of its features certainly are. Rather, a philosophy which cherishes practical wisdom must begin with these hard realities and by living close to them strive to make them more comprehensible to a baffled younger generation, drifting rapidly into an unfruitful self-alienation. Such nomadic thinking will not have the appeal that inheres in regional thought, but it will gain in realism and hardness and possibly interpret better man's true situation in all its comic and tragic dimensions.[122]

This task is the very task that Heidegger interpreters and commentators have all faced—how to make a hermetic, *Schwarzwald* philosophy relevant in an increasingly globalized world?

The essay "Poets and Thinkers," the last of the volume, ends on a similar note. Even though Gray, like Heidegger, had also begun to think much of the saving graces of beauty and poetry, especially in an increasingly technological age, he is careful not to slip into the kind of irrelevant or escapist aestheticism to which the later Heidegger was sometimes prone: "I do believe that man should dwell prosaically on earth as well as poetically. He must first build a house in a very literal sense in order to dwell in it poetically as a home." Gray continues:

> Where there is no vision the people perish, as one of the proverbs in the Bible reminds us. But they will also perish just as infallibly unless there is a kind of care-taking that centers on the prosaic functions of existence. Poetry can tempt a man to forget that he has a calling to provide the

[121] J. Glenn Gray, "The Splendor of the Simple," *On Understanding Philosophically & Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 65.
[122] Ibid., 66.

> utilitarian means for an imaginative "dwelling," by being first of all concerned with the material conditions of existence in the sense of man's moral and social well-being.[123]

It is in this regard that Gray takes exception to "the comparative absence of the ethical emphasis in Heidegger's thought."[124] The task of the poet and that of the thinker may indeed overlap, they may even be one in the same, but Gray does not want their mixing to represent a mere aestheticization of philosophy. Clinging to poetry in the face of technology is no solution to the trials and tribulations of the modern age. As he brings the essay—and the book—to a conclusion, Gray hopes "that when philosophy discovers poetry it will not abandon the critical intelligence with which we are slowly learning to approach the deliverances of science."[125]

Glenn Gray remained a reluctant Heideggerian until his final days. Although he became Heidegger's most important ally, although he may have become a rather close friend, Gray could never allow himself to become a Heideggerian in the sense of a disciple. Over the years, he learned to express, in almost the same breath, both admiration for and exasperation with the little magician from Meßkirch. Most subsequent Heideggerians have had to learn the same lesson for themselves, especially as they come to realize that, as Gray once wrote to David Krell, "a hero in thought can hardly be expected to be one in deed or character."[126]

---

[123] J. Glenn Gray, "Poets and Thinkers: Their Kindred Roles in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger," *On Understanding Violence Philosophically and Other Essays*, 88.
[124] Ibid., 89.
[125] Ibid., 90.
[126] David Farrell Krell, "A Smile and a Sense of Tragedy," 107.

EXCURSUS I
Dasein, Death, and Dope: Heidegger and the Culture of American Existentialism

Here we shall speak of existentialism not as the doctrine of Heidegger or Jaspers, but as a spiritual attitude embracing far more notions than are contained in two or three books of philosophy, with associations and echoes in a world much vaster than that contemplated from a university chair.

—Noberto Bobbio[1]

"What a great philosopher, saying shit like that!"[2] So exclaims Dwight Wilmerding, the twenty-something slacker protagonist of Benjamin Kunkel's much-discussed debut novel, *Indecision*. He is referring to the fictional philosopher Otto Knittel, author of the forbidding—and equally fictitious—*The Uses of Freedom*, "or *Der Gebruach der Freiheit* if you're German."[3] Wilmerding, a former philosophy major, is an avid, if slow—"I read the book at maybe two pages an hour"—reader of Knittel, though what he gets out of the experience is not entirely clear.[4] What is clear, or clearly implied, is that reading Knittel is no cake-walk, and anyone who pries open one of his books for pleasure is more intelligent than their cubicle-confined day job would suggest. Wilmerding may be a chronically indecisive slacker, which is the conceit of the plot, but he's got a brain. He just doesn't know how to use it.

Otto Knittel is so obviously a spoof of Heidegger that when Kunkel admits as much in the acknowledgements at the end of his novel it does not come as much of a surprise. After all, we had already been told, by Wilmerding, that Knittel "was *way* into forests," that his major work was a "very deathocentric book," and that "the category of

---

[1] Noberto Bobbio, *The Philosophy of Decadentism: A Study in Existentialism*, trans. David Moore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948), vi.
[2] Benjamin Kunkel, *Indecision* (New York: Random House, 2005), 146.
[3] Ibid., 18.
[4] Ibid., 18.

choice" was the cornerstone of his philosophy (something Wilmerding obviously failed to apply to his life).[5] All these are defining features of Heidegger (or at least the slightly mythic persona Heidegger tried to create for himself). The only thing missing from Kunkel's spoof is the mustache.

Wilmerding is hardly the first fictional character to turn to Heidegger, or Heidegger-like characters, for insight, authority, or just plain fun. And it is unlikely that he will be the last. From Saul Bellow's Herzog to Ethan Hawke's Troy Dyer in the 1994 film *Reality Bites*, both of whom are important precedents for Kunkel's not entirely original Wilmerding, there is a distinct cultural appropriation of Heidegger as the impenetrable Black Forest Philosopher par excellence. This lineage blurs the line between high-brow, philosophical reception history, with its concomitant seriousness, and the satirical smorgasbord of popular culture.[6] While J. Glenn Gray and Hannah Arendt and so many others in the United States were paving the way for a serious academic engagement with Heidegger's ideas, a less reverent exposition was already in the works. This cultural reception, though carried out on an altogether different register, one not commonly examined by intellectual historians, was as important an element in Heidegger's reception—perhaps even more important—as any of the scholarly articles, conferences, or monographs devoted to his thought.

* * *

[5] Ibid., 19, 18, 30.
[6] Ben Stiller, director, *Reality Bites* (1994). Both Saul Bellow's Herzog and Ethan Hawke's Troy Dyer are readers of Heidegger. For more on the precedents for Kunkel's work, see Joyce Carol Oates's review, "Dangling Men," *New York Review of Books* Volume LII Number 17 (November 3, 2005), 36-40.

How should we describe the social reproduction of philosophical thought? Is it distinct from culture or a central part of it? Does it have its own developmental logic? Is this logic universal, or is it culturally specific? These are but some of the questions that bedevil sociologists of knowledge, and they become all the more confusing when asked of contemporary thought. Existentialism, especially, poses a number of thorny problems in this regard. As sociologist Randall Collins has described it in his massive *The Sociology of Philosophies*, existentialism is a "philosophical-literary hybrid."[7] Collins is somebody who has thought long and hard about the questions above, and, as a result, he is very good at showing how philosophies, like amoebas, reproduce and disseminate, but hybrids like existentialism complicate his sociological schematics. Far from co-opting the existing apparatuses of intellectual reproduction—i.e. universities, journals, and academic publishing houses—existentialism disseminated via the channels of popular discourse, and this fact forces him to expand his analysis to the broader world of popular or mass culture.

Like Collins, existentialism forces us to expand our historical frame, for Heidegger was not read as simply a philosopher. His reception was not solely philosophical, but cultural as well. Insofar as Heidegger was initially received in this country as an existentialist, his work, although far from literary in the Sartrean sense (aside from penning some pretty awful poetry Heidegger was not one for fiction), was open to cultural as much as philosophical readings. The earliest readers of Heidegger in America (the students who went to Germany to study with him or the émigrés who

---

[7] Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Belknap, 1998), 770.

landed teaching posts in the states as they fled Nazi-occupied Europe) read him as a philosophical author, but the wider dissemination of his work was predicated upon the broader cultural—as opposed to strictly philosophical—cachet of existentialism. Heidegger became a household name not because of the work of the émigrés or even Glenn Gray himself, but because of the efforts of such forgotten popularizers as William Barrett and others who introduced the Heideggerian corpus to generations of readers, whether they were tuned in, turned on, and dropped out or not.

Dope

In an article on Ken Kesey that he penned for the *New Yorker* not all that long ago, the author Robert Stone—no stranger to the strung-out if you believe his novels, which have steadily documented, over the years, the drug-crazed counterculture bequeathed to us by the turbulent sixties—painted a vivid portrait of late sixties existentialism in action. He described Kesey and co. cavorting down on the Pacific coast of Mexico, near Puerto Vallarta. Partying in a warehouse formerly owned by the Purina Dog Food Company, lent to them by a Chinese-Mexican grocer who constantly referred to them as "*existencialistas*," the rag-tag group of Anglo writers, crackpots, junkies, and thrill-seekers—including not only Stone and Kesey but Neal Cassaday, the real-life model for Kerouac's Dean Moriarity in *On the Road*—eventually, inevitably perhaps, ran afoul of the local authorities. "From the start," Stone guessed, "the authorities in the state of Colima understood that there was more hemp than Heidegger at the root of the

celebration, and that many of us had trouble distinguishing Being from Nothingness by three in the afternoon."[8]

Stone's reference to Heidegger is a throwaway, perhaps, a pretentious literary allusion for the philosophical in-crowd. He is clearly making fun of himself here, for he does not exempt himself from the portrayal of his cohorts, young intellectuals who spent more time smoking dope than reading dense tomes of philosophy. Nevertheless, can we take this passing reference seriously? Perhaps there is something to it. Maybe Heidegger was more widely received in the United States than we think.

As it turns out, Heidegger was an indispensable component of the culture of American existentialism, even when his influence was not immediately apparent. Indeed, because Sartre was the one who graced the covers of national magazines, Heidegger has been discussed only as a philosophical influence, and not as the cultural commodity that he in fact became. In his compelling new book *Existential America*, which traces in fine detail the contours of American existential thought and culture, George Cotkin explains early on that he relegates Heidegger to the background of his portrait. "While critical to the philosophical expression of existentialism," he writes, "Heidegger and Husserl […] failed to quicken the pulse of large numbers of American thinkers and artists. Heidegger achieved his greatest influence only in the 1980s, when academics rushed through the gates of deconstruction."[9] And since Cotkin, to his credit, is interested in telling a story that is more expansive than just a "history of philosophy," he understandably focuses

[8] Robert Stone, "The Prince of Possibility: When Ken Kesey Seemed Capable of Making Anything Happen," *The New Yorker* (June 14 and 21, 2004): 85.
[9] George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 9.

more on figures who, like Sartre, became outright stars when they or their work arrived on this side of the Atlantic.[10]

The difficulty of Heidegger's work is, as we have seen, legendary. But is it true that Heidegger failed to get American hearts racing in the years, in the decades before Derrida? Cotkin's assessment is only partly true: while the rise of deconstruction's academic influence in the seventies and eighties certainly sparked increased interest in Heidegger's work, it was not as if Heidegger had never been read by Americans before. Far from being something unique, Heidegger's rise to prominence during the eighties was but one moment in what has actually been a rather profound and continuous intellectual and cultural engagement since at least the thirties; as, in other words, but the latest wave in a reception as steady—and as unnoticed—as the tides.

It is impossible to make sense of Heidegger's popularity during the heady days of so-called "French Theory"—an intellectual-historical phenomenon recently put into historical perspective by the French scholar François Cusset—if we do not recognize the very important historical precedents in the American reception of European existentialism.[11] Thankfully, historians and scholars like Cusset and Cotkin are at long last beginning to explore in some detail the American reception of European ideas in the twentieth century, a period not only of numerous intellectual sea changes, but profound cultural circulation as well.[12] All of this challenges the received wisdom that currently defines American intellectual and cultural scholarship. Specifically, the new focus of this secondary literature allows us to interrogate the dynamic *process* of international

---

[10] Ibid., 8.
[11] François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003).
[12] In addition to the work of Cotkin and Cusset, see also Ann Fulton's *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America, 1945-1963* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999).

intellectual and cultural exchange that makes some of the usual national or geographical divides in Heidegger scholarship questionable.

To appreciate just how international and dynamic the American reception of Heidegger was, one needs only turn to another drug story. In 1968, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who is best known as the founder of "deep ecology," an environmentalist program that had roots in Heidegger's later philosophy, was teaching at Berkeley.[13] Naess, a convinced Heideggerian, was guest-lecturing on a particularly relevant topic, namely existentialism. Many years later he recalled teaching "Heidegger in an extremely serious way." He told his students that they all had to go out and buy copies of *Being and Time*, which had been translated into English only six years before. Heidegger, he thought then, was indispensable, and he wanted his pupils to understand this. "But the students just sabotaged my plan," he remembered.

> They were just looking for some existentialist kind of sermons you see. One of my teaching assistants said, "At least half of them are high." I said, "You mean tall?" "No, they are high!" And a lot of them were certainly on marijuana, at least. The teaching assistants said we could see in their essays which ones were stoned, because they may be good essays but suddenly the subject would change, or the writing might suddenly become impossible to read.[14]

Naess's story, like Stone's, would seem to suggest that, for the students of the sixties at least, drugs came before *Dasein*, hemp before Heidegger. And yet, although Naess thought his pupils were more interested in illicit experimentation than the hermetic work of Heidegger, a good number of them must have taken his recommendation to

---

[13] On Naess (and Heidegger) and deep ecology, the best work by far is Michael E. Zimmerman's *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

[14] David Rothenberg, *Is it Painful to Think: A Conversation with Arne Naess* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 52. Naess in the same interview goes on to describe with the same humor his own experimentation with LSD in Berkeley, at the suggestion of one "gifted student." Like Foucault, Naess needed a little help from his Californian friends to experience transcendence.

heart. As Glenn Gray pointed out in his piece for *Harper's* in 1965, "it was hardly an accident that the campus rebellions at Berkeley and earlier at the University of Colorado were led my philosophy majors."[15] There was an interest in existentialism, in other words, not just because it went well with drug culture, but because it spoke to a generation searching for self-understanding in an increasingly alienating and unfamiliar world.[16] That existentialism, with its emphasis on action, "being-in-the-world," and, most of all, personal authenticity, was "relevant," that it was a source of inspiration for the student movement, has been documented by historians who, like Doug Rossinow, have undertaken careful case-studies of the cultural moment. In his analysis of the student movement in and around Austin, Texas during the sixties, Rossinow, in his book *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, has shown, for example, how important a precedent Christian existential thinking was for activist students.[17] (A similar trajectory, by the way, can be traced in the German student movement as well, especially since recent evidence reveals that Rudi Dutschke seems to have read Heidegger before he read Marx.[18]) Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* fit right in here, especially when it was repackaged, as we have seen, by the likes of powerful personages such as Paul Tillich.

---

[15] J. Glenn Gray, "Salvation on the Campus: Why Existentialism is Capturing the Students," *Harper's Magazine* May 1965, 54.
[16] On this point, see Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (1998; Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), 14-15.
[17] Doug Rossinow, "Breakthrough: The Relevance of Christian Existentialism," *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), 53-84.
[18] See Dutschke's recently published notebooks: *Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu Leben: Die Tagebücher 1963-1979*, herausgegeben von Gretchen Dutschke (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), 14-15. See also Gretchen Dutschke's "Nachwort" in the same volume, 378.

Death

Even supposedly more secular interpreters of Heidegger were drawn to the explicitly theological valence of Heidegger's analysis of existence. The philosopher William Barrett, who was quick to point out that the high-profile theologians of his day, like Tillich, were steeped in existential thought, embraced Heidegger's almost religious discussion of death and mortality.[19] Barrett, as somewhat of a lapsed Catholic, appreciated the *gravitas* of Heidegger's work. As early as 1947, and as late as 1982, about a decade before his own passing, he referred to Heidegger's analysis of death as the "keystone" of his—that is, Heidegger's—philosophy. Since "death tears us out of the external banality of everyday existence," it forces us to face the greatest of philosophical quandaries: nothingness.[20] Barrett thought Heidegger, like James Joyce, recognized that "man's being is founded in the void." "Modern man has been haunted by the smell of death and nothingness now for over a century," he continued, but confronting this fact at least offered the possibility of attaining the lofty heights of authenticity.[21]

Barrett's comparison of Heidegger to Joyce was not accidental. It went hand in hand with the larger cultural aims of the New York Intellectuals in general, and the *Partisan Review* crowd, with which Barrett was closely affiliated, in particular. The New York Intellectuals sought to simultaneously support the literary and artistic avant-garde

---

[19] William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (1958; New York: Anchor Books, Random House, 1990), 175-6: "The theology of Rudolf Bultmann is not much more than the philosophy of Heidegger touched with the emotions of Christianity."

[20] William Barrett, "What is Existentialism?" reprinted in *What is Existentialism?* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 62-63. The essay originally appeared as part of a *Partisan Review* pamphlet in 1947. Barrett also discussed the centrality of the analysis of death in Heidegger's thinking in an interview with Bryan Magee. The interview, which was part of a BBC series, has been reprinted in Magee's *Men of Ideas: Some Creators of Contemporary Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), 57-75.

[21] Barrett, "What is Existentialism?" 68.

as well as, after World War II especially, the anti-communist Left.[22] But such literary references were also part of Barrett's own attempt to portray existentialism as a cultural—and not simply philosophical—phenomenon. Although he was trained as a philosopher and consistently preferred Heidegger's more philosophical writings to the literary texts of figures like Sartre and Camus, Barrett, especially when writing for popular audiences, did not hesitate to place dense existential texts alongside art, novels, and the rest.[23] In his first *Partisan Review* essays devoted to the subject, Barrett situated existentialism squarely in the aesthetic realm. "Writers and Madness" and "Dialogue on Anxiety," for example, which were both published in 1947, were pieces of aesthetic and cultural criticism as much as they were introductions to contemporary philosophical debate. ("Dialogue on Anxiety" was even an aesthetic adventure in its own right: it was an imagined dialogue between two of the most insightful commentators on anxiety, namely Heidegger and Freud.[24])

Barrett believed that existentialism went hand in hand with, as he put it in a piece for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1959, "the continuing and mounting influence of modern art and literature"—something which, importantly, distinguished it from Marxist, collectivist ideology.[25] Barrett's vast experience as a literary journalist (in addition to working for *Partisan Review* he also frequently contributed essays to the *New York Times*

---

[22] On the world of the New York Intellectuals, see Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986); Terry Cooney, *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: "Partisan Review" and Its Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); Neil Jumonville, *Critical Crossings: The New York Intellectuals in Postwar America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); and Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

[23] For an example of Barrett's more directly philosophical approach, see his appraisal of Heidegger's later thought in "Heidegger: The Silent Power of the Possible," in *What is Existentialism?*, 111-218.

[24] William Barrett, "Writers and Madness," and "Dialogue on Anxiety," *Partisan Review* 14:1 (1947), 5-22; and 14:2 (1947), 151-159, respectively.

[25] William Barrett, "What is Existentialism?" *Saturday Evening Post* 232:21 (November 21, 1959), 45. On Barrett's anticommunism, see Cotkin, *Existential America*, 145.

and the *Atlantic Monthly*), made him sensitive to the wider cultural relevance of existentialism, especially as it spoke to Heidegger's and Joyce's "void". American audiences were not interested in existentialism because of its philosophical novelty, but because, like literature and the arts, it spoke to the current cultural moment—the age of anxiety, or, as he entitled one of his later books, the "time of need."[26] Existentialism confronted all the pitfalls of the modern world: massification, loss of meaning, and, perhaps most importantly for Barrett, the growing dominance of science and technology, which threatened all life.[27] In this context the arts were no mere refuge; to the contrary, they were part of the very discourse of resistance and refusal. In *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*, a book which, after it was reissued as an Anchor paperback four years after its initial publication in 1958, graced the bookshelves of dorm rooms, barrooms, and backrooms across the country, Barrett therefore placed Heidegger alongside not only Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, but Tolstoy, Beckett, and even Hemingway, whose concept of "nada" was a distant cousin, he thought, of Heidegger's notion of nothingness—"das Nicths."[28]

If Barrett attempted to introduce Heidegger to American audiences by highlighting his potential affinities with writers of the lost generation like Hemingway, there were also poets and novelists who inserted Heidegger into their own works directly,

---

[26] William Barrett, *The Time of Need: Forms of Imagination in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

[27] Especially in his later works, Barrett, following to some extent Heidegger's own trajectory, came to focus almost exclusively on the question of technology. See, for example, his *The Illusion of Technique: A Search for the Meaning of Life in a Technological Age* (London: William Kimber, 1978); and *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1986). Although he may have followed Heidegger's lead, Barrett did not simply replicate his anti-technology perspective. Importantly, he even plays William James off against Heidegger in *The Illusion of Technique*.

[28] Barrett, *Irrational Man*, Appendix I: "Negation, Finitude, and the Nature of Man," 283-294.

thus puncturing any academic aura that may have accrued around him.[29] They, too, thought that Heidegger's dethocentrism—as Kunkel's Dwight Wilmerding might put it—was important. But, by and large, they proved slightly less reverent in their discussions of the idea. The poet Delmore Schwartz, for example, paraphrased existentialism's central insight concerning mortality—that nobody can die your death for you—and made it into classic piece of comic redirection. "Having studied existentialism in an offhand way since 1935," he wrote in 1948, for *Partisan Review*, "I become more and more convinced that its meaning can be reduced to the following formulation: *Existentialism means that no one else can take a bath for you*."[30] No doubt this had even his best friend Barrett, from whom he learned most of what he knew about Heideggerian existentialism, in stitches.[31]

Saul Bellow was another writer who simply could not resist a good satirical send-up, especially when presented with such rich source material as Heidegger's *Sein zum Tode*. He punctured the somber piety surrounding Heidegger's discussion of mortality in his 1964 novel *Herzog*, the success of which helped propel him to a Nobel Prize in literature a little over a decade later. The premise of the book, which was the result, as Bellow later put it, of "just a brainstorm," is simple enough: an erudite, middle-aged man confronts a personal crisis.[32] But it is the nature of his breakdown and the remedy for it that proves relevant for our purposes here. As Professor Herzog's life spirals out of control he descends into a kind of madness. Like Nietzsche, he even begins to compose

---

[29] On the lost generation, see the classic works by Malcolm Cowley, *Exiles Return: A Narrative of Ideas* (New York: Norton, 1934) and *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Los Generation* (1956; New York: Viking, 1973).
[30] Delmore Schwartz, "Does Existentialism Still Exist?" *Partisan Review* 15:12 (December, 1948), 1361.
[31] Barrett's intellectual memoir, *The Truants* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982), contains in its pages a loving tribute to Schwartz.
[32] See the obituary for Bellow in the *New York Times*, April 6, 2005.

an endless barrage of letters to all kinds of people: to his ex-wives, to other academics, and to great figures in the history of thought. Heidegger is among the addressees, and frequently at that. Bellow has great fun with this plotline, and he exploits it to the fullest—all at Heidegger's expense. But at the heart of his joking is a serious intellectual hesitation when it comes to things Heideggerian. "Face death. That's Heidegger," says Herzog to his friend, the aptly named Professor Asphalter. But where does that get you? Well, Herzog, like other, non-fictitious critics of existentialism, was not convinced that it got you anywhere: "It all goes back to those German existentialists who tell you how good dread is for you, how it saves you from distraction and gives you freedom and makes you authentic. God is no more. But Death is. That's their story." But "do we need to study *theories* of fear and anguish?" asks Herzog.[33] Clearly, for Herzog (and for Bellow) the answer is no. And this seems to sum up the message of the book as Bellow intended it, which is that the professor's endless erudition is useless in the face of real-life, human, interpersonal problems.

As he explained in his introduction to his good friend Allan Bloom's surprise bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind* (about which we will have more to say later), Bellow meant for *Herzog* to be a satire of the overly-educated. Critics who found his allusions to the likes of Heidegger off-putting or pretentious missed the point entirely: he "was," as he exclaimed, "making fun of pedantry!"[34] Existentialism, for all its concreteness, was essentially useless when it came to living your life. It was just another jumble of words, divorced from the messiness of real living. As Herzog put it to

---

[33] Saul Bellow, *Herzog* (1964; New York: Penguin, 1976), 270, 271.
[34] Saul Bellow, "Foreword" to Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 16.

Asphalter: "Modern philosophers would like to recover the old-fashioned dread of death. The new attitude which makes life a trifle not worth anyone's anguish threatens the heart of civilization. But it isn't a question of dread, or any such words at all […] Still, what can thoughtful people and humanists do but struggle toward suitable words?"[35] This struggle for suitable words is, as Herzog increasingly begins to realize, divorced from the world. The more his life spins out of control the more letters he writes, as if trying to contain and keep his life from falling apart at the seams. It is only when the letter-writing stops that his equilibrium returns, or maybe vice versa. Either way, the message is clear: writing your life and living it are two different things entirely.

Compared to the philosophers who tried to offer a serious philosophical exegesis of Heideggerian existentialism, this stuff was pure candy. Philosophers such as Helmut Kuhn, an émigré who was very familiar with Heidegger's work, struggled hard to present existentialism as something other than "an ephemeral fashion" that was "perhaps relevant for the Old Continent but irrelevant for America."[36] But serious philosophers did not—do not—have a monopoly on Heidegger. Just the opposite in fact. In Europe, for example, there is a venerable tradition of Heidegger-centered satire which includes Nobel Prize winners such as Günter Grass and Elfriede Jelinek.[37] Why should the Americans be any different? After all, from Flannery O'Connor to Saul Bellow and beyond, Americans have had taken their deathocentric philosophy with more than a grain of salt.

---

[35] Bellow, *Herzog*, 272.
[36] Helmut Kuhn, *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1951), ix. This book was originally published in the United States by Hinsdale in 1949.
[37] See the section on satire in Dieter Thomä, ed. *Heidegger Handbuch* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 20003).

Dasein

The culture of American existentialism into which Heidegger was introduced was more than just fun and games, however. Literary allusions to Heidegger were not always comical—Robert Lowell for instance, referred to him in a serious way—and existentialism was more than mere punch-line fodder.[38] Audrey Hepburn and Fred Astaire may have sung and danced their way through a Technicolor rendition of Parisian existentialism in *Funny Face* (1956), but, by the sixties, Americans were taking (Heideggerian) existentialism seriously, indeed.[39]

This more serious engagement was made possible, in part, by a revolution in the world of publishing. With the advent of the non-fiction paperback in the early fifties, cutting-edge ideas were for the first time made available to a wide reading public. When publishers like Doubleday began mass-marketing books that were previously earmarked for only specialist consumption, they, inadvertently perhaps, "pried open"—as Todd Gitlin has put it—"a new cultural space." In this space, "avant-garde currents and European repertories—existentialism, the absurd, all manner of philosophy, history and sociology—could circulate to the idea-hungry and college-bound."[40] The success of Barrett's *Irrational Man* would have been inconceivable without this new space. Published as it was by Barrett's friend, the paperback-pioneering Jason Epstein, the book went on to influence generations of students (and still does).[41] College students in the sixties may have been smoking dope and protesting, but they were also, as Glenn Gray

---

[38] See Robert Lowell, *Collected Poems*, edited by Frank Bidart and David Gewanter with the editorial assistance of DeSales Harrison (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 535.
[39] For a literary examination of the reception of French existentialism, see Holly Hutton, "Imported from France: American Adaptations of Existentialist Ideas and Literature" (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2004).
[40] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 30.
[41] Jason Epstein, *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Norton), 112.

knew, reading. Even a quick glance at Tom Hayden's memoir, for example, proves as much.[42]

Paperback existentialism was really the first place where a widespread engagement with Heidegger took place in the United States. Here, anthologies and commentaries introduced curious readers to the exciting new world of Heideggerian existentialism, without necessarily presupposing that they knew the difference between Kant and Kierkegaard. Among the most influential of these was the anthology composed by Nietzsche translator Walter Kaufmann.[43] Kaufmann was no fan of Heidegger's (primarily because of the Nazi issue), but, by including him in the canon of paperback existentialism, even if only to criticize him, Kaufmann ensured a wide reception for his work.[44]

Before 1960, only two books—published a decade apart—offered up lengthy versions of Heidegger in English: *Existence and Being*, a collection of essays edited by one of Heidegger's Jewish students, Werner Brock, who was forced into English exile; and Ralph Manheim's translation of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*.[45] Neither of these titles was intended for a popular audience. Hence the importance of books like *Irrational Man*, which summarized, condensed, and generally made accessible Heidegger's notoriously dense philosophical writing.

---

[42] See Tom Hayden, *Rebel: A Personal History of the Sixties* (1988; Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 2003), 69 ff.
[43] Walter Kaufmann, ed., *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956).
[44] See Walter Kaufmann, "Heidegger's Castle," in *From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
[45] Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, ed. Werner Brock (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949); and *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959). Two smaller, bilingual volumes did appear in 1958, both translated and introduced by Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback: *The Question of Being* (New York: Twayne, 1958); and *What is Philosophy?* (New Haven: College and University Press Publishers, 1958).

By the time that Barrett included selections from Heidegger in the multi-volume sourcebook *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, which he edited with Henry Aiken for Random House, Heidegger was more readily available in English (Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of *Being and Time* appeared the same year).[46] By then, curiosity had been piqued—so much so, in fact, that Sidney Hook's review of the English transition of *Sein und Zeit* warranted ample line-space in the *New York Times*. Of course, a lengthy review in the *Times* is not the end all and be all of cultural reception, and it did not mean that the philosophers and the general reading public were at last on the same page. In fact, Hook complained that the *Times* had rejected an even longer version of his piece for "being too heavy."[47] But still, his review was a significant event nonetheless.

Being and Time's success in America, like that of Heidegger's work in general, is all the more remarkable given the obstacles that existed in its international transference. Indeed, in addition to being deemed "virtually untranslatable" by more than one critic (in this case, the émigré philosopher F.H. Heinemann), Heidegger's work faced other barriers.[48] First and foremost among these was certainly Heidegger's disastrous support of the Nazi regime. But equally problematic was, paradoxically, the publishing success

---

[46] William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, eds., *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, Volume Three (New York: Random House, 1962).

[47] Sidney Hook, "The Map was Redrawn to Make Man's Agony a Part of the Geography," *New York Times* November 11, 1962. A letter from Mel Arnold to David L. Edwards of SCM Press from October 19, 1962, explains that Hook actually wrote a much more detailed review, "but that the Times had turned it down as being too heavy," so he rewrote it. The letter is included in the correspondence related to *Being and Time* at the offices of HarperCollins in San Francisco.

[48] The quote comes from an early Harper & Row memo to Hugh Van Dusen from Mel Arnold. While in Oxford, Arnold spoke with the refugee scholar F. H. Heinemann about the feasibility of translating *Sein und Zeit*. In addition to being "virtually untranslatable," Arnold relayed that Heinemann considered "Heidegger's mentality," in the end, to be too "different from the Anglo-American mentality." "Heidegger/Sein Und Zeit," Oxford 10/12/58, correspondence related to Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, offices of HarperCollins in San Francisco. Heinemann, a refugee scholar, was the author of *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953). It has been suggested that he was actually the first to coin the term "existentialism." For more on this, see Walter Kaufmann, "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States," 72-73.

of *Being and Time* itself. How so? Well, the Harper & Row files are chock full of letters requesting permission to reprint sections of Heidegger's work for various anthologies and collections and textbooks—the very kinds of books that created and proliferated in the new paperback market, where large numbers of readers could gain access to the formerly restricted confines of philosophical debate, and inexpensively at that. In almost every case such requests were denied, and for the very simple reason—though it was stated in more polite terms—that Harper & Row wanted people to buy their book instead. Harper & Row's monopoly on Heidegger translations carried on for many years, essentially bearing out Glenn Gray's fears of becoming "some sort of bottleneck on Heidegger in English."[49]

Regarding Heidegger's reception in the United States today, a metaphor more appropriate to the current situation is not the bottleneck but the floodgate—and it stands wide open. Intellectual historian Bruce Kuklick is entirely right to suggest that there now exists in American philosophy a "whole industry of Heidegger monographs."[50] But these are monographs—sophisticated academic texts aimed primarily at specialists. They are not the kinds of books that shaped and defined paperback existentialism. In fact, they stand in stark contrast to them. And yet, in many ways, this newer, more specialized literature would not have existed were it not for its more popular, less abstruse forbearers. Paperback existentialism, in other words, made postmodern theorizing possible.

---

[49] Gray to Arendt, November 12, 1965, General Correspondence, Hannah Arendt Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Almost all of the Hannah Arendt papers have been digitized and are available on the web at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/arendthtml/about.html.
[50] Bruce Kuklick, "French Letters," *Modern Intellectual History* 1:2 (August 2004): 286.

Conclusion: "What a Great Philosopher"

To some extant, Kunkel's Wilmerding is anachronistic. Slacker intellectuals today do not read Heidegger (also known as Knittel). They read Judith Butler or Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, or even, more radically, Carl Schmitt. Heidegger, depending on whom you ask, has become either too popular (witness the explosion of the Heidegger for Dummies literature) or too abstract (as with the "monograph industry"). His cultural cachet comes from the seminar room primarily, and even there it is somewhat ambiguous, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Heidegger's mid-century cultural reception, evidence of which could be found lingering everywhere from the analyst's couch to the counter-culture, the underground to the Cineplex, took his work into some pretty strange places, including even the Heidegger-inspired jargon of California self-help guru Werner Erhard (Jack Rosenberg)—strange places, indeed, but not unthinkable.[51] Heidegger, after all, did not appear out of nowhere. Whether via the new paperback market and the existentialist passion it both fed on and fueled, contemporary aesthetics, or even works of satirical fiction, he made his way into a popular frame of reference in increments that are noticeable to any trained historian. Nevertheless, even if this wider, cultural reception helped to pave they way for Heidegger to be taken seriously in this country, it did not occur in isolation from the academic philosophical reception, to which we now turn.

---

[51] On the influence of translated existentialism upon psychotherapy, see Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constituting America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 242. On Erhard and EST, see Mark Landler, "EST Leaders Recharge the Batteries of a New Clientele," *New York Times* March 13, 1988; and Anthony Gottlieb, "Heidegger for Fun and Profit," *New York Times* January 7, 1990.

CHAPTER 5
The Continental Divide: Heidegger between the Analytic and Continental Traditions in American Philosophy

But neither faction of the philosophical divide—Anglo-American or continental—can claim to be on the side of the angels.

—Richard Kearney [1]

Philosophers have never been immune to name-calling. Occasionally, however, their domestic disputes have relevance beyond the seminar room and the department lounge. In these instances, the quarrels of professional thinkers are windows onto much larger intellectual and cultural phenomena; they reveal that philosophy, far from being removed from the world in which it is pursued, in fact stems from it. Even when philosophers conceive of their work in the most abstract and (politically) neutral terms, their ties to the larger world around them occasionally catch and reflect the historical spotlight, like fishing-strings suspending talent-show angels in mid-flight. At first glance philosophers seem to float free of the world entirely, but look again and you might glimpse the tethers that keep them in place.

Heidegger was a polarizing philosopher in the twentieth century. His legacy divided the profession into two antagonistic camps, so-called analytic and continental philosophies, respectively. A good many of the profession's quarrels, consequently, had to do with him and his work. And such disputes show no sign of abating. Recently, full-page advertisements in the *New York Review of Books* announced the publication of *Heidegger's Confusions*, a slim volume of reprinted essays that, as its author, Paul Edwards, professed, would slay the Heideggerian ghost once and for all. It is high time,

---

[1] Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984), 1.

Edwards writes of Heidegger's continuing influence, "to stem this tide of unreason."[2] Edwards, who has little patience for the kind of mysticism in which the later Heidegger seemed to indulge, has made a career out of confusion-hunting; among his other works in this vein is a prominent critique of Tillich entitled "Professor Tillich's Confusions," which he published in *Mind* in 1965.[3] By and large, Edwards likes to proceed by way of linguistic analysis, which presents him with any number of opportunities for wit and sarcasm, opportunities he does not hesitate to exploit. Heidegger, his acolytes, and especially his translators, all come in for abuse when they begin waxing poetic about Being and Nothing and the rest. Unlike the work of philosophers like Immanuel Kant or Bertrand Russell, Heidegger's concepts, and the language in which he describes them, seem to outstretch the possibility of verification. This, for Edwards, is the root of Heidegger's confusions, and it is the main reason why he finds Heidegger's widespread influence in the United States so troubling.

Little of Edwards's broadside is entirely new. As the most recent addition to the "Heidegger for Dummies" literature—Mark Wrathall's *How to Read Heidegger*—points out, this critique of Heidegger's penchant for, as Marjorie Grene called them, "tongue-twisting" terminology and "mystifying dogmata" was evident to even the earliest American commentators.[4] Perhaps the most famous attack of this kind, though, especially considering its transformative effect upon the development of American philosophy, was a critique leveled by the German philosopher Rudolf Carnap in his essay "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache" ["Overcoming of

---

[2] Paul Edwards, *Heidegger's Confusions* (Amherst: New York: Prometheus Books, 2004), 9.
[3] Paul Edwards, "Professor Tillich's Confusions," *Mind* 74:294 (April, 1965): 192-214.
[4] Mark Wrathall, *How to Read Heidegger* (London: Granta Books, 2005). This book is part of a series edited by New School for Social Research philosopher, and noted continental thinker, Simon Critchley, and is due to be published in the United States soon.

Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language"], which he first drafted in 1930, presented at various Universities in Europe over the course of the next two years, revised, and subsequently published in the journal *Erkenntnis* in 1932, not long before he immigrated to the United States for political reasons.[5] Although it did not appear in English until 1959, as part of an influential volume edited by A.J. Ayer (and prefaced by none other than Paul Edwards) and under the slightly altered title "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," the essay had an immediate impact on the philosophical world.[6] In only about twenty pages, Carnap's text managed to divide, neatly and completely, the contemporary philosophical profession in two. Contemporary philosophy, as Carnap presented it, fell into two camps: that of progressive and rigorous empirical, logical, science on the one hand; and backward-looking metaphysical mumbo-jumbo on the other.

In "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," Carnap attempted to show that metaphysics was, quite literally, nonsense. The metaphysician, he suggested, "produces a structure which achieves nothing for knowledge." It was high time that philosophy abandon the intricate systems of scholasticism and address the more pressing issues of science. "Metaphysicians," he argued, "are musicians without the musical ability," they play with things they do not know how to use.[7] Carnap had a particular philosopher in mind when he was penning these lines: Heidegger. No doubt the significance—politically and culturally, as well as

---

[5] Rudolf Carnap, "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache" *Erkenntnis* II (1932): 219-241. On the genesis and evolution of this essay, see Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2000), 9.
[6] Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," trans. Arthur Pap, in A.J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959).
[7] Ibid., 80.

philosophically—of choosing Heidegger as his foil was not lost on contemporary audiences, especially among his fellow exiles and émigrés, who, when the essay was first published in German, where already contemplating or preparing to leave totalitarian Europe.

* * *

Philosophically speaking, there was not one intellectual emigration from totalitarian Europe, but two. Alongside the American reception of existentialism and phenomenology, which many of Heidegger's children and stepchildren oversaw, and which formed the basis of continental philosophy, was the enthusiastic espousal of various philosophical currents that eventually coalesced under the moniker of analytic philosophy.[8] The most binding ingredient in this mixture, which included, among other things, the austere work of Bertrand Russell and Alfred Whitehead in the realms of logic and mathematics, and so-called ordinary language philosophy, both of which came from England, was logical empiricism, a school of thought that emerged in Vienna amidst the slow collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, was brought to the United States by émigré philosophers, and, after successfully shedding its *Mitteleuropa* skin, eventually came to dominate academic philosophy in this country. If for American existentialists and phenomenologists Heidegger was an indispensable and inescapable point of

[8] On the phenomenological origins of continental philosophy, see the introduction to *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader*, edited by Walter Brogan and James Risser (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000), 2.

reference, for philosophers schooled in the logical and empirically tinged philosophy of the Vienna Circle—as the group was commonly called—he was the perfect foil.

The American universities where logical empiricism eventually found a home—places like UCLA, Minnesota, Princeton, and Iowa—were as far from the cultural world of interwar Vienna as one could get. Like a dying star, Vienna sent forth its brightest lights before darkness set in. Figures as disparate as Carnap, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Karl Popper all matured in this creative, if chaotic environment.[9] Caught between a decaying liberal bourgeois order on the one side and a rising political extremism—that of the anti-Semitic politician Karl Lueger, who so impressed the young Adolf Hitler—on the other, early twentieth-century Vienna was in its own fashion a place of extremes.[10] In this context, the path-breaking work of Freud, Klimt, and Mahler straddled two very different worlds: one of decay and one of radical rebirth.[11] The logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle, though of a slightly younger generation, was part of this intellectual-cultural milieu. It represented, most of all, a radical break with the past—at least within philosophy. Many of its primary participants, philosophers such as Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, Herbert Feigl, and Friedrich Waismann, thought that modern science might provide the tools and the methods for a total reconstruction of the discipline itself.

Like Freud, the Vienna Circle undertook a kind of taboo-breaking. Logical empiricism was to be an exercise in demystification in the realm of philosophy. It would simultaneously dismantle the metaphysics of the last century and prepare a rigorous, new

---

[9] See, respectively, Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson); and Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper: The Formative Years, 1902-1945; Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).
[10] See Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, trans. Thomas Thornton (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).
[11] See the classic work by Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

philosophical language appropriate for the world that modern science was already creating. Sometimes referred to as logical positivists, the members of the Vienna Circle, despite their differences, generally saw themselves as contributing to a positivist, scientific program, one which would purify philosophical lexicons of the ambiguous language and concepts that had beguiled traditional academic philosophy from the beginning.[12]

In the interwar context, logical empiricism's project of philosophical demystification also had immediate and readily apparent political overtones. As a kind of positivism, logical empiricism was part of a larger Enlightenment project of gradual demystification and rationalization. Through the application of modern mathematical and natural sciences, not only philosophy but the world at large would be rationalized along universalist, politically progressive lines.[13] Logical empiricism was, to put it plainly, anti-fascist from the start; the critique of metaphysics was part and parcel of a larger critique of irrational extremism. Because metaphysics was not subject to logical or empirical verification, indeed, because it could never be verified by experimental or logical means, it left the door open for mysticism and (political) fanaticism. After 1933 especially, Heidegger came to be seen as the apotheosis of this tendency. First published a year prior to Heidegger's public embrace of Nazism, Carnap's critique of Heidegger

---

[12] On the origins of the Vienna Circle, see Friedrich Stadler, "What is the Vienna Circle? Some Methodological and Historiographical Answers," in Friedrich Stadler, ed., *The Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism: Re-evaluation and Future Perspectives*, Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook 10 [2002] (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), xi-xxiii. See also Ronald N. Giere and Alan W. Richardson, eds., *Origins of Logical Empiricism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). For more on Carnap specifically, see Alan W. Richardson, *Carnap's Construction of the World: The* Aufbau *and The Emergence of Logical Empiricism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998).

[13] See Peter Galison, "Constructing Modernism: The Cultural Location of *Aufbau*," in Giere and Richardson, eds., *Origins of Logical Empiricism*, 17-44. See also Hans Joachim Dahms, "*Neue Sachlichkeit* in the Architecture and Philosophy of the 1920s," in Steve Awodey and Carsten Klein, eds., *Carnap Brought Home: The View from Jena* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2004), 357-375.

became a symbolic fork in the road for twentieth-century thought, one that had as much to do with politics as it did philosophy.

Carnap's Critique

Nowhere in "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language" does Carnap claim that Heidegger is wrong. If Heidegger were, he would be easy to refute. Far from being merely incorrect, though, his philosophy, as Carnap describes it, is completely meaningless; it is beyond the reach of emendation or correction. In Carnap's judgment, "it is only meaningful sentences that are even divisible into (theoretically) fruitful and sterile, true and false," and Heidegger's works simply cannot be included in this classification.[14] But if "meaningful metaphysical statements are," as Carnap argues, "impossible," then why should Heidegger's work prove so appealing?[15]

To explain how it is that a philosophical statement can be meaningless yet still seem to lay claim to philosophical truth, Carnap, like both Günther Anders and Herbert Marcuse, émigrés of a different stripe, introduced the notion of pseudo-statements. In the same way that Anders and Marcuse exposed what they referred to as Heidegger's pseudo-concreteness, Carnap, at least in "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," describes Heidegger as a master of deception: his propositions appear meaningful, but they mask an emptiness beneath. Insofar as they lure thinkers into a realm beyond the verifiability of logic, pseudo-statements are for

[14] Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," 61.
[15] Ibid., 76.

Carnap even more pernicious than nonsense. We are unconcerned with the incoherent mutterings of a drunkard, and try as we might to decipher an infant's babble, we will rarely be persuaded by it. But pseudo-statements are another thing altogether. They have the power to lure and to sway, and the metaphysician who has mastered their use is capable of masking emptiness, ulterior motives, or even propaganda with them. Under the guise of pseudo-statements, the work of Heidegger and others presented itself as meaningful when in actuality it was hollow right down to its philosophical core.

The task of the philosopher, as Carnap explains it, is to employ the method of logical analysis towards a full-fledged refutation of metaphysics. As a tool, "logical analysis reveals the alleged statements of metaphysics to be pseudo-statements."[16] Purified in this manner, philosophy can then proceed to address the "practical tasks which confront active men every day in their lives."[17] Like Anders and Marcuse, Carnap ultimately sought to ground philosophy in the realm of concrete, lived existence. Unlike them, however, he looked not to Marxism but to scientific empiricism (although privately he felt that Marxism made political sense).[18] In his hands, logic was as much a methodology of quantifiable verification as it was a collection of formal rules and laws. Logic was open to experimental corroboration in a manner that Heidegger's oracular pronouncements were not. Many of Heidegger's most egregious linguistic puzzles—such as the infamous claim, from his 1929 inaugural lecture at Freiburg University, that "the nothing nothings," which Flannery O'Connor, though no logical positivist, later

---

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 60.
[18] As Carnap later remembered it: "All of us in the Circle were strongly interested in social and political progress. Most of us, including myself, were socialists." There was some discussion of Marx, which was led by Neurath, but the Circle generally separated Marxism's social message from its logical structure, which they found suspect. Rudolf Carnap, "Intellectual Autobiography," in Paul Arthur Schlipp, ed., *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap,* Library of Living Philosophers Volume XI (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1963), 23, 24.

lampooned—were recounted by a bewildered Carnap as proof of metaphysic's spurious claims to truth. "The nothing itself nothings," he wrote, is nothing but "a logical defect of language."[19]

The specific critique of pseudo-concreteness, recast by Carnap as pseudo-statements, was, as we have seen, a position commonly found in the writings of émigré philosophers. Anders, Marcuse, and Jonas all turned it against their former mentor. Given the historical context of the emigration, it is easy to see why. In light of the rise of totalitarianism, which made prolific use of propaganda de rigueur in politics, this line of critique took on a special urgency: fighting pseudo-statements was equivalent to fighting totalitarianism. From Victor Klemperer's careful philological dissection of Nazi-speak to the Frankfurt School's analyses of the "authoritarian personality," those caught on the wrong side of the regime made it their business to expose the ways in which language was made to mask horrendous barbarities.[20]

Carnap and the Vienna Circle thought that a rigorous empiricism would cut through the mystification of the regime's rhetoric; by purifying the way people spoke they might help in the fight against fanaticism and fascism. This outlook informed just about everything that the members of the Vienna Circle did until at least 1945. Even an essay on something as prosaic as the philosophy of history could be transformed into an anti-fascist program. An occasional contributor to the group, Carl G. Hempel, did precisely that in his widely read and debated 1942 essay entitled "The Function of General Laws in History," which he wrote while teaching at Queens College.[21] In the

---

[19] Ibid., 69.
[20] See Victor Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperrii: A Philologist's Notebook*, trans. Martin Brady (London: Athlone Press, 2000).
[21] Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," *Journal of Philosophy* 39 (1942): 35-48.

essay, Hempel introduced the notion of historical "pseudo-explanations" to describe the ways in which grand historical theories drifted from empirical, verifiable hypotheses and constructed, in their stead, elaborate narratives prone to political manipulation. Such thinking tried to suggest that "the historical destination of a certain race," for example, could be treated as a scientific truth, even though, as Hempel pointed out, it was no more than a "pseudo-explanation."[22]

The Davos Divide

Carnap was not alone in going after Heidegger's supposed pseudo-statements and his critique was not written out of ignorance.[23] Just the opposite. Like most young philosophers in Europe during the late twenties and early thirties, Carnap diligently made his way through *Being and Time*.[24] It was, after all, the talk of the philosophical world at the time. But this fact has generally been overlooked by partisans on either side of the continental/analytic divide in American philosophy. Only recently have historically-minded philosophers and philosophically-minded historians attempted to go back and unearth the origins of Carnap's critique. What they have found casts an entirely different light on the recent history of American philosophy. Far from being inherently antithetical, the continental and analytic traditions are in fact close cousins of each other.

---

[22] Ibid., 43, 42.
[23] This is not to say that his seminal essay is free of misrepresentation. Supporters of Heidegger have for many years questioned its one-sided portrayal of Heidegger. See, most recently, John McCumber's rejoinder, "Analytical and Continental: Heidegger versus Carnap," in his *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2001), 76-81.
[24] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 8.

Both consider themselves to be grave-diggers of scholasticism, they only differ in how they wish to undertake this business.

These days, when philosophers signal their intellectual allegiances by the books they do not read, it is hard to imagine any overlap between Carnap and Heidegger. But overlap there once was. There was a time, in fact, when philosophers did actually read books published by figures on the other side of the divide—mainly because the divide had yet to set in. Gilbert Ryle, for instance, reviewed *Sein und Zeit* when it was first published. Although he was critical of the book, and of the larger phenomenological project from which he thought it stemmed, Ryle, who was one of the premiere Oxford philosophers, offered his assessment "with humility." His suspicions, as he admitted, were raised by the potential for disaster in Heidegger's work, but he conceded that others might very well glean from it something positive and useful.[25] And there were indeed others who found it useful. Even Wittgenstein tipped his hat to Heidegger. It seems that he introduced a direct discussion of Heidegger to the Vienna Circle in 1929. Although the existing record of the event is only fragmentary, it suggests that, even early on, Wittgenstein found something worthwhile in Heidegger's work.[26]

---

[25] Gilbert Ryle, "Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*," reprinted in Michael Murray, ed., *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978), 64. The review was originally published in *Mind* 38 (1929): 355-370. For more on Ryle's relation to Heidegger, see Murray's essay in the same volume, "Heidegger and Ryle: Two Versions of Phenomenology," 271-290.

[26] The only existing fragment—"On Heidegger on Being and Dread"—describing the event comes from the notebooks of Friedrich Waismann. It has been reprinted in Murray, ed., *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, 80-83. Murray puts it into context by saying that "in this conversation, in the midst of the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein claims to have understood and even agreed with that [i.e. Heidegger's] thought. In all probability, Wittgenstein was referring to Heidegger's well-known inaugural lecture 'What is Metaphysics?' (1929). But ever since Carnap's equally famous paper on 'The Overcoming of Metaphysics' (1931) became the canonical refutation, Heidegger's lecture has provided many analytical philosophers with a supposed paradigm of the worst. Perhaps this was sufficient reason for someone to sanitize the Wittgenstein text before publication. In any case, Wittgenstein's affinity for the Heidegger text would be less surprising if we did not have the incomplete and one-sided account of Wittgenstein's work given by some Anglo-American interpreters" (81-82).

Aside from Wittgenstein, most of what the members of the Vienna Circle knew about Heidegger they got from Carnap, but they were not always aware of how much Carnap actually had in common with Heidegger. Although the program of logical empiricism that Carnap elaborated in his first book, *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928), does not seem at first glance to have anything in common with *Sein und Zeit* (1927), in fact, both are attempts at the same thing: namely, the overcoming of metaphysics.[27] What they each meant by the "overcoming of metaphysics"—and how it was to be accomplished—was distinct of course, but the problematic was shared. Indeed, Carnap had to single out Heidegger as an opponent—and hurl the metaphysical insult his way—because he was as much too similar as too different.

The problem of metaphysics was by and large a Kantian one for early twentieth century German-language philosophy. As Michael Friedman has shown in his book, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*, Neokantianism was the common root from which both logical empiricism and phenomenology sprouted.[28] But if Kant, in his so-called Copernican revolution, brought together the rationalism of Descartes and the skeptical empiricism of Hume with the famous declaration that "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind," debates within the Neokantian tradition, insofar as it was split between the Marburg and Southwest factions (and any number of thinkers in between), threatened to undo Kant's delicate realignment of

---

[27] Rudolf Carnap, *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* (Berlin: Weltkreis, 1928), translated into English as *The Logical Structure of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[28] Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2000), see especially chapter three, "The Neo-Kantian Background," 25-37. For a different attempt at recovering the obscured common root of analytic and continental thought, see Michael Dummett's *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1994).

modern philosophy altogether.[29] While the Marburg School tended to emphasis the more scientific, mathematical side of Kant's corpus, the Southwest School, far from embracing the logicization of Kant that this implied, reverted to a kind of idealism. Emerging as they did from these respective traditions, Carnap (Marburg) and Heidegger (Southwest) were like feuding family members.[30]

The ultimate showdown between these two sides occurred at a famous international philosophical colloquium held in Davos, Switzerland, in March, 1929.[31] The centerpiece of the week-long conference, whose attendees included everybody from Carnap to Emmanuel Levinas, was a showdown between Heidegger, the young, radical, philosophical upstart, and Ernst Cassirer, the older and more established representative of liberal, Marburg-tinged Neokantianism.[32] To contemporary observers, the disputation recalled Thomas's Mann's fictional face-off between a humanist and a Jesuit in *The Magic Mountain*, which had been published but a few years earlier.[33] Intellectual historians, however, are of two minds when it comes to the significance of the event. For Friedman, "the encounter involved all the drama of a generational transition."[34] And all the evidence seems to suggest that those who participated in the event saw it as such. But, more recently, intellectual historians such as Peter Eli Gordon have downplayed the cultural component of Davos, preferring instead to resurrect the strictly philosophical content of the debates. Arguing that Davos has been reduced to a symbolic event, whose

---

[29] On Kant's Copernican revolution, see Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, trans. Marshall Farrier (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 35-38, 55.
[30] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 149.
[31] For a brief overview of the event, see Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998), 183-188.
[32] Carnap was at Davos, and, as Friedman points out keep detailed notes of it. See *A Parting of the Ways*, 1.
[33] Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 185.
[34] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 3.

real philosophical repercussions have been buried beneath layers of "anti-intellectual," overly historicist commentary, Gordon sees the event not so much in terms of the continental/analytic divide (and the political divide that accompanied it), but in terms of the evolution of certain philosophical problems—in terms, that is, of a kind of *Problemgeschichte*.[35]

The truth of course is—as it always is—somewhere in the middle. No matter how philosophically important the issues discussed at Davos—and there were many that went straight to the heart of both Cassirer's and Heidegger's projects—may or may not still be, the fact remains that the historical repercussions of the event are important in their own right. Surely, participants of the colloquium may not all have appreciated the subtle philosophical intricacies of the debates, but their recognition of a distinct intellectual and cultural shift was not, as a result, incorrect; their perceptions and recollections of Davos as representing an explicitly cultural watershed should not be dismissed out of hand as unimportant. As much as it was a philosophical exchange, Davos *was* a cultural break, and Heidegger, eager to make his name and establish his reputation as a dangerous outsider—a Socrates in snowshoes perhaps, as he, in a conscious display of showmanship, arrived to the formal discussions still wearing his ski-clothes—saw it as

---

[35] Peter Eli Gordon, "Continental Divide: Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger at Davos, 1929—An Allegory of Intellectual History," *Modern Intellectual History* 1:2 (August 2004): 219-248. Gordon sees the discipline of intellectual history as being torn between historicism and transcendentalism, topics which were in fact heavily discussed by Heidegger and Carnap at Davos. Historicist attempts to situate ideas strictly in relation to their political, cultural, or social contexts run the risk, he thinks, of turning intellectual history into a potentially "anti-intellectual" enterprise insofar as they deny philosophical motivations pride of place in the history of ideas, before other such "practical" concerns as politics. The other approach, which would be more open to the transcendental dimension of intellectual history, is of course—though Gordon does not say this—the history of philosophy. Writing the history of ideas as if it were no more than the history of philosophy, and thus ignoring the larger and multiple contexts in which actual, living people think, write, discuss, and otherwise wrestle with meaning, seems to me to needlessly limit the scope of what historians interested in ideas can and should do in their research and writing. Yes, we need to take the ideas seriously on their own terms, but we cannot leave it at that. On this point, see pages 244-248 of Gordon's essay.

such. The whole event, in other words, was high drama; and although the ideas that were discussed may be still worth revisiting, the repercussions in other spheres are what interest us here.

Davos was the beginning of a veritable PR campaign for Heidegger, who had just taken up Husserl's chair at Freiburg. It was a chance for him to make his name known, and he did not hesitate to make full use of the platform with which the event provided him. Most of all, it gave him an opportunity to call into question what he took to be the excessive "rationalism" of the Neokantian tradition (something that, it goes without saying, was not a problem for Carnap). Heidegger was thus able to present his enquiries into Being as a more originary, and subsequently more important, project than anything his contemporaries in the profession were contemplating—even and including the work of his own mentor, Husserl, who remained committed to a certain kind of rationalism that Heidegger found suspect.[36] Heidegger stood all alone, atop the heap—at least that is the way he sold it.

There was a significant philosophical gulf that separated Cassirer and Heidegger, one that had much to do with Heidegger's unique and creative re-reading of Kant (like all of the historical figures Heidegger interpreted, Kant ended up sounding suspiciously like a forerunner of Heidegger), but it was the general philosophical attitudes of the two men that really displayed the growing rift.[37] The styles of their philosophizing set them apart as much as anything else. Whereas Cassirer was the model of the scientific and professional philosopher, Heidegger was more enigmatic, more captivating and

---

[36] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 3.

[37] See Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997); and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Fifth Edition, Enlarged, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997); which contains appendices related to the Davos debates.

mysterious. At Davos it was the philosopher as scientist versus the philosopher as seer. No matter what the actual debates did or did not resolve, this stylistic difference had a lasting effect on philosophical research for the rest of the century.

Coming to America

The Nazi seizure of power in 1933, although it could not have been predicted in 1929, effectively finished off what the Davos dispute had started.[38] The Neokantian task of overcoming metaphysics, as pursued by scientifically-oriented and (post-) phenomenologically oriented camps, respectively, would move forward along two different tracks that, for political reasons as much as philosophical ones, would no longer recognize each other. Scientific philosophy came to America, where it was greeted with "considerable interest" according to Carnap, and Heidegger stayed; each convinced of the other's fundamental flaws.[39] This is not merely a retroactive assessment. At the time, the participants drew such conclusions themselves. In the original draft of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, for instance, Heidegger, in a swipe at Carnap and Nuerath and the entire Vienna circle (one made all the more offensive given the context of their emigration), said that it was not surprising that their scientific version of philosophy would celebrate its triumph in America. They were responsible, Heidegger argued at the time, for

---

[38] Not everybody, especially at the time, recognized the political events as a determining factor. In the early fifties Frankfurt School scholar Franz Neumann maintained that the "ascent in the United States of the Viennese School of logical positivism seems also to have occurred independently of the political changes in Germany and Austria." Whatever the reason for its transatlantic migration, however, Neumann nevertheless found its prominent presence in America anything but positive, especially insofar as it strengthened "the a- (or even anti-) historical and anti-theoretical trends in American social sciences." Franz Neumann, "The Social Sciences," in *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America*, The Benjamin Franklin lectures, introduction by W. Rex Crawford (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), 23.

[39] Carnap, "Intellectual Autobiography," *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, 34.

denigrating the notion of truth itself, for reducing it to the mere category of certainty, which fit perfectly with soulless Americanism:

> The supposed "philosophical" tendency of mathematical-physical positivism wishes to supply the grounding of this position. It is no accident that this kind of "philosophy" wishes to supply the foundations of modern physics, in which all relations to nature are in fact destroyed. It is also no accident that this kind of "philosophy" stands in internal and external connection with Russian communism. And it is no accident, moreover, that this kind of thinking celebrates its triumph in America.[40]

As this remark reveals, the political context of the post-Davos years was important as a determining factor in the history of the split between continental and analytic philosophy. It turned what may very well have remained an internal philosophical dispute into a much bigger affair, with far more lasting consequences. Friedman is right, in this regard, to place such importance on Davos. "The thoroughgoing intellectual estrangement of these two traditions, their almost total lack of mutual comprehension," he argues, "is a product of the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933 and the resulting intellectual migration." Before this, the Neokantian framework united thinkers as vastly different as Cassirer, Husserl, Heidegger, and Carnap. But "the period of National Socialism, however, saw the death of Husserl and the emigration of both Carnap and Cassirer:

> "Scientific philosophy" as such had left the German-speaking world entirely, whereupon it resettled eventually in the United States. Here it merged with other major trends within English-language philosophical thought (primarily from Britain) to create what we now call the analytic tradition. In Europe, by contrast, the only truly major philosopher left was Heidegger himself, and it is no wonder, then, that what we now call the continental tradition invariably takes its starting point from him. And it was only at this particular point that the two traditions first became thoroughly estranged, to the point of almost mutual incomprehension, linguistically, geographically, and conceptually.[41]

---

[40] Quoted in Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 22.
[41] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 156-157.

In the context of the Second World War, the shared Neokantian background of Carnap's and Heidegger's work was obscured by larger social and political issues. Gradually, logical positivism became, with the help of American allies like W.V. Quine, who tirelessly promoted Carnap's views, the dominant philosophical discourse in the United States.[42] It was a scientific discourse that stood in opposition to all things even remotely Heideggerian.[43]

How analytic philosophy displaced pragmatism and all other rivals and became the dominant philosophical tradition in the United States in the years after World War II is, like the meaning of Davos, the subject of some debate.[44] What is not contested is the fact that it supplanted pre-existing realist, naturalist, and pragmatist traditions with astonishing alacrity. But whether analytic philosophy's institutional success was predicated on the broader success "of the hard sciences," after which it modeled itself, or something else is unclear.[45] American philosopher John McCumber recently caused a stir, for example, by suggesting that analytic philosophy's American success was the result of certain political circumstances more than institutional settings.

In *Time and the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era*, McCumber suggests that the scientistic work of the positivists took hold because, with its extremely narrow reduction of philosophy to mere linguistic and logical analysis, it could not be accused of harboring any dangerous political connotations. In the McCarthy era, this

---

[42] I am necessarily going very quickly over terrain that contains more details than I have space to dwell upon. For a far richer exposition of the American reception of logical positivism and the origins of analytic philosophy, see, most recently, Joel Isaac, "W.V. Quine and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy in the United States," *Modern Intellectual History* 2:2 (August 2005): 205-234.

[43] Hans Reichenbach's *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951) was emblematic of this approach, which, to put it crudely, simply traded metaphysics for physics.

[44] See, for example, the Winter, 2003 issue of *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* XXXIX:1.

[45] Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720—2000*, 234.

proved to be a valuable asset in McCumber's estimation, which is why he thinks analytic philosophy's "*dominance*" is an "artifact" of the period.[46] Insofar as they could portray themselves as scientists who conducted value-neutral research in the same fashion as physicists and mathematicians, analytic philosophers were able to sequester themselves from the messy world of political and cultural debate, and, consequently, largely avoid Senator McCarthy's searchlight. Philosophy in America became predominantly analytic, McCumber argues, because it refrained from interacting with the world that existed beyond its classrooms. Philosophy saved itself from the political chopping block by renouncing its former purview. But choosing the path of science over the path of wisdom was equivalent to performing an intellectual self-amputation. It "may have allowed" philosophy to "survive", but "only as a reduced and reticent discipline."[47] Both the scope and imagination of American philosophy were seriously stunted as a result.

McCumber, who describes himself as a "Heidegger-inspired philosopher," offers up an intriguing thesis in *Time in the Ditch*.[48] If nothing else, his pleas on behalf of historical research—and on behalf of research into the historical evolution of American philosophy specifically—warrant applause, especially from intellectual and cultural historians.[49] Nevertheless McCumber overstates his case, and in some instances his sweeping thesis simply does not hold.

First, the trend toward isolationist professionalism was not unique to philosophy. In fact, academic culture at large retreated from the public sphere during this time, and

---

[46] John McCumber, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2001), 50. An earlier version of McCumber's argument appeared as "Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era," in *Diacritics* 26 (Spring 1996): 33-49.
[47] Ibid., 57.
[48] Ibid., 71.
[49] Ibid., see pages xix, 63, 90, 114-115, 137.

not always because of anti-communism. In the postwar years "academics sought some distance from civics" for a variety of reasons, not all of which can be reduced to the simple logics of a conspiracy theory.[50] To be sure, McCarthyism did in some instances determine the shape of Academic discourse; Freud did replace Marx and the notion of class "war" was replaced with the idea of class "stratification," but HUAC alone was not to blame for the retreat from public discussion. The internal logics of the disciplines themselves also pushed academics toward an increasingly antiseptic professionalism.[51]

Another problem with McCumber's thesis is its reliance upon a narrative of persecution. His tale is not so much about the persecution of philosophy as a discipline, but about the persecution of a certain kind of philosophy, namely that of the continental persuasion. No doubt some of his tone comes from years of abuse at the hands of his more prevalent analytic colleagues (and it is significant that McCumber's current appointment is via the German department and not the philosophy department at Northwestern), but casting the story of analytic philosophy's rise to prominence in this manner only reinforces the misconception that non-analytic European thought was wholly banished from American philosophical discourse—and banished for political reasons. Although suggestive, this simply was not true in each and every case.

In fact, *pace* McCumber, some of the most prominent anti-communist philosophers were harsh critics of analytic thought. They found especially distasteful its withdrawal from worldly affairs—the very thing McCumber thinks made it so successful—at the moment when the ideological showdown between the cold war

---

[50] Thomas Bender, "Politics, Intellect, and the American University, 1945—1995," in *American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines*, edited with an introduction by Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske, foreword by Stephen R. Graubard (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998), 22.
[51] Ibid., 29. See also Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).

superpowers was taking shape. William Barrett, whom McCumber acknowledges as a "prominent" supporter of the witch-hunts, devoted the concluding appendix of *Irrational Man* to the topic of "Existence and Analytic Philosophers."[52] Polemically, he concluded his widely read book with the following swipe at Carnap's cohort: "So far as he logicizes, man tends to forget existence. It happens, however, that he must also exist in order to logicize."[53] No scientist, he.

If anti-communism forced American philosophy to become more scientific so as to avoid the scrutiny of McCarthyite thugs, then how come so many anti-communists were also so critical of analytic thought? From Sidney Hook to Harvard philosopher John Wild, and for so many figures in between, there was strong antipathy towards the logicization of philosophy in the United States. Nietzsche translator Walter Kaufmann, for instance, thought it was a case of one man's gold being another man's trash. He found it curious that the work of the Vienna Circle was largely ignored in Europe even while it spread in the United States. "The stone which the builders rejected," he once wrote, "has become the chief cornerstone."[54] Hannah Arendt was similarly surprised by the stateside success of logical empiricism. Not long after immigrating to the United States she asked Barrett why "second-rate European positivists" like "Carnap and Hempel" were taken seriously by American philosophers. In Europe, she explained, they "were jokes."[55]

---

[52] McCumber, *Time in the Ditch*, 28. Barrett's anti-Communism dates back to 1946, when he penned an influential anti-Stalinist editorial for *Partisan Review* entitled "The Liberal Fifth Column." See Barrett, *The Truants: Adventures Among the Intellectuals* (Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982), 75ff.

[53] William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (1958; New York: Anchor, 1990), 305.

[54] Walter Kaufmann, "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States," *Salmagundi* numbers 10-11 (Fall 1969-Winter 1970), special issue on "The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals," page 96.

[55] William Barrett, *The Truants*, 104. On the prominence of logical positivism, see also 125.

.

The Wild Years of American Philosophy

John Wild was, like Barrett, an American philosopher who balanced a strident anti-communism with a thoroughgoing interest in existentialism, phenomenology, and other such continental currents.[56] In fact, it was hardly a balancing act at all since, for him, existentialism and anti-communism went virtually hand in hand (especially once Sartre's later, Marxist works had been cut out of the existentialist canon). Already as early as his 1955 *The Challenge of Existentialism*, which was based on a series of lectures he had delivered two years earlier, Wild placed the American reception of existentialism squarely in the middle of the cold war struggle, or what he called "an ideological war against a formidable enemy." The enemy was none other than "dialectical materialism."[57] He hoped that a thoughtful confrontation with European existentialism might make philosophy relevant again by presenting a powerful alternative to this pernicious theory of state and society. Logical empiricism and analysis simply were not up to the task. Whatever its faults, and Wild conceded that it did have its faults, existentialism at the very least ensured that philosophy remained a pursuit of wisdom, an inquiry into "first principles and the basic structure of the world" and not just a conglomeration of so many "empirical facts."[58] Wild hoped, because of this, that a

[56] On the anti-Communist commitments of Barrett and Wild, see George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003), 143-147.
[57] John Wild, *The Challenge of Existentialism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955), 5.
[58] Ibid., 4.

thoughtful discussion of existentialism might disabuse his colleagues of "the provincialism of Anglo-American analysis" and open up new philosophical pathways.[59]

The Harvard and Chicago-educated Wild was not destined to be the godfather of continental philosophy in the United States, but after works like *The Challenge of Existentialism*, that is precisely what he became. Without him, Heidegger's work may very well have languished in the oblivion to which Carnap's critique had supposedly sent it. It was Wild who provided some of the first academic expositions of Heidegger's thought. More importantly, however, it was Wild who orchestrated the institutional development of continental philosophy in the United States.[60] In addition to being on the editorial board of Marvin Farber's *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Wild, after leaving Harvard to take up the chairmanship of Northwestern's philosophy department, headed up the committee which founded the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy in 1962 (a fateful year for Heidegger scholarship in the United States). SPEP, as it is commonly known, remains the largest and most recognizable forum for non-analytic philosophical discussion in the United States. In fact, it is "the second largest philosophy organization in North America," smaller only than the national association to which all philosophers belong, the American Philosophical Association.[61] Wild also established at Northwestern a publication series that would go on to disseminate, often via translation, some of the most important works in continental thought.

---

[59] Ibid., 7.
[60] For biographical information on Wild, see the preface in James M. Edie, Francis H. Parker, and Calvin O. Schrag, *Patterns of the Life-World: Essays in Honor of John Wild* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1970), ix-xi.
[61] Walter Brogan and James Risser, "Introduction," *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader*, 5.

As we saw in chapter one, Wild spent the 1930-31 academic year on fellowship in Freiburg, but this initial exposure to Heidegger seems have to have left little impression on this thinking. Upon his return to the United States, Wild proceeded to carry out research which bore no obvious stamp of Heidegger's influence, publishing books such as *Plato's Theory of Man* (1946), *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy* (1948), and *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* (1953), the latter of which, as its title indicates, reflected his involvement in the ideological wars of the emerging cold war.[62] For the most part, he remained committed to promoting philosophical realism, a program that sought to navigate the contested territory between traditional metaphysics and Anglo-American philosophy's "culturally demoralizing" evasion of normative questions.[63] But Wild's ecumenical approach to philosophy predisposed him to give Heidegger a second chance, and by the time of *The Challenge of Existentialism* he was commenting more and more upon the importance of Heidegger's work—even as critics like Sidney Hook were trying to dismiss it as nothing more than misplaced psychology (at its best) or "a pagan and Teutonic rendering of" of theological themes (at its worst).[64]

Wild devoted some space in *The Challenge* to Heidegger specifically, but by and large the Freiburg philosopher was lumped in with other figures—including Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Sartre, Marcel—and other topics, such as phenomenology, ontology, ethics, and

---

[62] John Wild, *Plato's Theory of Man: An Introduction to the Realistic Philosophy of Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1946); and *An Introduction to Realistic Philosophy* (New York: Harper, 1948). In *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1953), Wild attempted to defend Plato from critics like Popper who, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge, 1945) made Plato into a proponent of proto-totalitarian tyranny.

[63] See Wild's preface to the volume he edited, *The Return of Reason: Essays in Realistic Philosophy* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), v-vii. See also the "Platform of the Association for Realistic Philosophy," which is included in the same volume, 357-363.

[64] Sidney Hook, "The Quest for Being," *The Quest for Being and Other Studies in Naturalism and Humanism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 150. Hook's essay originally appeared in the *Journal of Philosophy* 50:24 (November 1953): 709-731.

philosophical anthropology. But the groundwork for a more thoroughgoing interpretation of Heidegger was already being prepared. In a June 21, 1956, letter to Harper & Row editor Melvin Arnold, who was busily surveying the prospects for having *Sein und Zeit* translated into English, Wild explained that he and three of his students had produced a "mimeographed translation of more than half" of *Sein und Zeit*, which he had been using in some of his Harvard courses. He gave up on translating the rest of the book, he explained, because he had heard that the official translation rights had been granted to somebody else.[65]

The common lore has it that it was only after a second visit to Europe in 1957 that Wild became convinced of Heidegger's importance; that following his European excursion he returned to Harvard and shocked his students by demanding that they drop their Aquinas and Aristotle readings and immediately immerse themselves in the tasks of translating Heidegger and reading the still un-translated works of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[66] This 1956 letter seems to prove otherwise. Ultimately, however, it matters little if Wild jumped headlong into Heidegger in 1956 or 1958. Either way, when it comes to Heidegger's American reception, he started the ball rolling—and it has not come to a stop since.[67]

---

[65] John Wild to Melvin Arnold, June 21, 1956, correspondence related to *Being and Time*, office of HarperCollins in San Francisco.

[66] See James M. Edie, "Phenomenology in the United States (1974)," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 5:3 (October 1974), 200.

[67] In lectures that Wild delivered as part of Duke Univeristy's "Research Program in Christianity and Politics," Heidegger is a positive point of reference. In one note, *Sein und Zeit* is described as "so far the most penetrating study of the human *Lebenswelt*." See Wild, *Human Freedom and Social Order: An Essay on Christian Philosophy* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke UP, 1959), 224. It is worth pointing out here that, beginning in 1954, Wild had contact with Harvard's Divinity School. This fact, taken together with *Human Freedom and Social Order*'s main argument (not to mention its liberal use of Kierkegarrd, Heidegger and Bultmann) only goes to show how entwined nascent continental thought in America was with theology.

Continental Thought as Catholic or catholic?

By the early sixties Heidegger had become a definite topic of interest within the philosophical profession. Interest in him may not yet have been on par with Carnap and the rest of the positivists, whose institutional success was as stunning for its speed as for its breadth, but it was getting there. There were signs that a breakthrough was imminent. For example, Heidegger's name could be overheard often enough at the annual philosophical conventions. In a letter to SCM Press editor Rev. David L. Edwards on December 30, 1960, Melvin Arnold said he been told by his sources that "most of the discussion at the conferences centered on Heidegger." This seemed like certain proof, he wrote, "that the appearance of BEING AND TIME will create a sensation."[68]

Even outside observers began to notice an increased interest in Heidegger. They noticed that, as one report put it, the attempt to explain "what Heidegger's philosophy is about has been quite vigorously undertaken" in the United States.[69] Evidence of this was to be found in monographs like Thomas Langan's *The Meaning of Heidegger*, which was published in 1959. Although Langan lamented the continued unavailability of Heidegger's work in English, studies like his in fact ensured that this would not remain the case for long.[70] When *Being and Time* finally did appear in 1962, it was a sensation indeed, and it opened the translation floodgates.

---

[68] Melvin Arnold to The Rev. David L. Edwards, December 30, 1960, correspondence related to *Being and Time*, office of HarperCollins in San Francisco.
[69] John Passmore, "Philosophical Scholarship in the United States, 1930-1960," in Roderick M. Chisolm, Herbert Feigl, William K. Frankena, John Passmore, Manley Thompson, *Philosophy*, *The Princeton Studies: Humanistic Scholarship in America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964), 111.
[70] Thomas Langan, *The Meaning of Heidegger: A Critical Study of An Existentialist Phenomenology* (New York: Columbia UP, 1959), 3-4.

The early sixties were a watershed for nascent continental thought. Wild's departure from Harvard and his subsequent activities at Northwestern, and then, a few years later, at Yale—where, as historian Bruce Kuklick has written, "many academics rebelled against technique in the name of vision"—gave shape to a growing opposition to the dominance of analytic philosophy.[71] In addition to the founding of SPEP, a number of "circles" were created during this time, each devoted to further exploring the works of a key figure in the phenomenological firmament. Within a decade there were established forums for research on Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, respectively.[72] The Heidegger circle, which originated—in 1964—out of the Drew University conference where Hans Jonas launched his famous critique, was well established by the end of the decade, holding annual meetings at various institutions not yet or no longer under the control of analytic thought, places such as the Catholic universities of Duquesne in Pittsburgh, and DePaul and Loyola in Chicago, as well as public institutions like Penn State.[73]

The religious, and often expressly Catholic, underpinnings of these new forums were, as we have seen, evident from the beginning, and they contributed to a slow de-secularizing of American academic philosophy. Langan's *The Meaning of Heidegger* was, for example, a kind of Catholic critique of Heidegger's later works. It took its cue from the work of the Belgian philosopher Alphonse De Waelhens, who taught at the

---

[71] Bruce Kuklick, "Philosophy at Yale in the Century After Darwin," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21:3 (July 2004), 327.
[72] See Hugh J. Silverman, John Sallis, and Thomas Seebohm, eds., *Continental Philosophy in America* (Pittsburgh, Duquesne UP, 1983).
[73] For a capsule history of the Heidegger Circle, see its current website at http://staff.xu.edu/~polt/heidegger/history.html. A complete account of Heidegger's American reception will be impossible until the papers of the Heidegger Circle are made available for historical research. The collection, which will no doubt be a compelling resource, has been promised to the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center at Duquesne, but has yet to be deposited there.

Catholic University in Louvain, and whose 1942 treatise *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger* was in fact quite critical. In the end, Langan's study merely seconded this book; it demonstrated that "De Waelhens's basic criticisms of Heidegger's phenomenology are justified."[74]

De Waelhens, as Langan pointed out, was especially ill-disposed towards Heidegger's later thought, which seemed to abandon the early, more phenomenological work of *Being and Time* for more mystical-sounding meditations on the poetry of Hölderlin, meditations which "stood on the chasm of nihilism."[75] But there were others who were more appreciative of this work. Among them was an American, a young Jesuit priest named William Richardson, who, under De Waelhens's direction, wrote a thesis on precisely this subject. The set-up should have made for an uncomfortable fit, but actually proved quite constructive. It was, as Richardson has written, "a tribute to his own profound intellectual integrity" that De Waelhens supported a dissertation that so contradicted his own interpretations. Although he was skeptical till the very end, De Waelhens never insisted that his own "personal position" be the final word.[76]

What Richardson produced in his dissertation was nothing less than a complete account of the development of Heidegger's thought from its phenomenological beginnings to its post-phenomenological meditations on poetry. Working with "no other instruments than the texts of Heidegger himself," Richardson, while living "in quasi-isolation as chaplain to a group of Benedictine nuns in a removed Black Forest-cloister built on a place of worship that dated back to Roman times," worked on his manuscript

---

[74] Langan, *The Meaning of Heidegger*, 14. Cf. De Waelhens, *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1942).
[75] Ibid., 13.
[76] William J. Richardson, "An Unpurloined Autobiography," in *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers*, edited with photography by James R. Watson (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), 147.

for a year and a half.[77] When it was finally complete, he managed to land an interview with Heidegger himself, in which he hoped to solicit some advice and criticism regarding his thesis. The four-hour conversation that ensued was one of his most memorable intellectual experiences.[78] And apparently he left quite an impression on Heidegger, too. Richardson later heard through the Freiburg grapevine that the living subject of his work approved of his interpretation: apparently, as he was told, Heidegger was shocked to discover that, "after so many misreadings" of his wok at the hands of others, it was possible for "an *American*" to get it right.[79]

After defending it as a dissertation, Richardson began transforming his research into a book, which was eventually published, in 1963, as *Martin Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*.[80] Its central thesis had to do with what was a hot topic in the fifties, namely Heidegger's supposed *Kehre*, or turning, from his early, *Being and Time*-era work, which was more phenomenologically oriented, to his later philosophy, which, after the Second World War, progressed in other directions. The timing and nature of Heidegger's *Kehre*, or if one even took place at all, was much discussed. Richardson's position was that, philosophically, there were really two Heidegger's: an early, pre-*Kehre* philosopher, and a later, post-*Kehre* thinker. He thus introduced into the secondary literature on Heidegger the notion of, as he put it, a Heidegger I and a Heidegger II. At its most basic level, his book told the story of how Heidegger I became Heidegger II.

---

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 147-148.
[79] Ibid., 148. Richardson repeats this story in the preface to the U.S. edition of his Heidegger book. See note 67 below.
[80] William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* Fourth Edition (1963; New York: Fordham UP, 2003).

That Heidegger appreciated and approved of Richardson's thesis only goes to show how invested he was in propagating the myth that his postwar work was free of the anthropological and voluntarist—and, by extension, political—taint that so marred it in the eyes of his critics. Even if he continued to ask essentially the same question—namely the question of Being—in all his work, he nevertheless acknowledged the fact that throughout his career he asked it in very different ways. Amazingly, Heidegger agreed to provide Richardson with a preface for his book, in which he explained that the notion of there being a Heidegger I and a Heidegger II was valid only insofar as it placed his work on a single continuum and did not divide it into two antithetical positions.

With Heidegger's explicit stamp of approval, what Richardson's book was able to do was provide—for the first time in English—a unified presentation of Heidegger's work, one that could then take its place alongside other significant bodies of thought in the history of philosophy.[81] Now, for the first time, Heidegger was on par with other heavyweights like Kant, Hegel, and Husserl. Prior to the publication of *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Heidegger was discussed by American philosophers only in relation to other contemporary thinkers and topics—phenomenology, existentialism, theology—and rarely on his own terms or from a broader, more historically-informed perspective. In this sense, Richardson affirmed the originality and cohesiveness of Heidegger's work. It was a short step from here towards the creation of a certain Heideggerian canon that became the heart and soul of philosophy programs that styled themselves in opposition to analysis.

[81] Charles Scott made a point akin to this one at a SPEP panel celebrating the 40th anniversary of the publication of Richardson's book in 2003.

Heidegger proved to be an important resource within the continental canon. The later Heidegger, especially, as somebody who stressed the poetic dimensions of language and truth, was a key ally in the fight against analysis' reduction of language to so many syntactical and grammatical problems and puzzles. But by promoting this work it was sometimes unclear if the opponents of analytic philosophy were making room for a more ecumenical philosophical discussion, one which made room for phenomenology, hermeneutics, and poststructuralism, say, or if they were just preparing the ground for a Heidegger cult.[82]

As more and more Americans made their way to Freiburg in the postwar years, Heidegger's post- or anti-existential writings, which seemed to overturn all of the "nihilistic" stuff that so worried earlier generations of critics, were granted a fuller hearing. Philosophers like David Krell and Joan Stambaugh, who would emerge as primary translators of Heidegger, emphasized the integrity of Heidegger's reflections on the nature of language, on the essence of technology, and on the excesses of humanism.[83] This was important work, for it broadened the vocabulary of American philosophers.[84]

---

[82] Even Richardson himself grew wary of the cultist Heideggerians. His faith in God, among other things, prevented him from believing that the only thing important in life was the "ontological difference." At least that is what he said during the 2003 SPEP panel celebrating his work. Another figure who has consistently questioned the pieties of the Heidegger cult is Thomas Sheehan, who studied with Richardson. See his "Caveat Lector: The New Heidegger," *New York Review of Books* 27:19 (December 4, 1980). It is worth mentioning, I think, that the response that this article elicited came not from within the Heidegger cult, whose members did not deign to respond, but from outsiders like Dreyfus, Haugeland, Rorty, Cavell, Hoy, and Harries. See their joint response in the same issue, and Sheehan's reply in 28:5 (April 2, 1981).

[83] Stambaugh has written of the "cult of foreign students, many of them American," which formed around Heidegger in Freiburg during the sixties. Although she found this clique "repellent," she nonetheless pursued personal contact with Heidegger and was eventually awarded the chance to translate some of his works, eventually producing, decades later, an entirely new translation of *Being and Time*, published by SUNY Press in 1996. For her remarks about American students in Freiburg, see her "Andenken and Compassion," in *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers*, 205. An example of Stambaugh's early approach to Heidegger, "A Heidegger Primer," has been reprinted in her *Thoughts on Heidegger* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1991), 3-14.

[84] For a lengthy bibliography of English-language (and primarily American) secondary literature on Heidegger during this time, see H. Miles Groth, "Heidegger: Secondary Literature in English, 1929-1977,"

Nonetheless, a hidden danger lurked within it. As pioneers trying to clear a space for a properly philosophical engagement with Heidegger on his own terms, and not those of Carnap's infamous critique, they ran the risk of slipping into the role of hagiographers, or, as Paul Edwards would call them, in his mocking tone, the "shepherds and shepherdesses of Being."[85]

Marjorie Grene, who had kept a watchful eye on Heidegger since the early thirties, highlighted this danger. In the mid seventies she argued that, outside of the initial postwar enthusiasm for the "existential Heidegger," there existed two trends in American Heidegger scholarship. On the one hand "there are the simple adorers of Heidegger," for whom she had little patience.[86] On the other hand, however, there where original thinkers who, instead of simply relaying the Heideggerian prophecy to American audiences, actively applied Heidegger towards "the development of their own reflections." Among these latter voices was one Hubert Dreyfus.[87]

Dreydegger

Perhaps more than any other figure in American academic philosophy, Hubert L. Dreyfus has done the most to carve out a secure space for Heidegger's work. As one of John Wild's Harvard students who aroused interest in Heidegger's work with their own

---

in Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and The Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981), 293-347.

[85] Reviewing the English translation of Walter Biemel's *Martin Heidegger: An Illustrated Study* [trans. J.L. Mehta (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976)], which had its own hagiographic moments, David Krell acknowledged this problem directly. See his review in the *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 9:3 (October 1978): 199-201.

[86] Marjorie Grene, "Philosophy In and Out of Europe: The Reception of Continental Philosophy in America," *Philosophy In and Out of Europe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 30.

[87] Ibid., 33.

early forays into *Sein und Zeit*, his efforts on Heidegger's behalf began early, and centered upon the task of translation.[88] As Richard Rorty has attested, Dreyfus's "underground, unauthorized, mimeographed translation was the basis for most teaching of Heidegger in the United States prior to the publication, in 1962, of the Macquarrie and Robinson translation. People whose German was weak but who knew Dreyfus had a big head start."[89]

Throughout his long and prolific career, Dreyfus has been an influential mediator between American academic philosophy and various strands of European thinking, despite, or perhaps because of, his distance from the orthodoxy of the continental current in American philosophy. He has introduced everyone from Heidegger and Habermas to Foucault and Derrida to audiences in the United States. For this reason alone, Rorty thinks that Dreyfus's place in intellectual history is assured. "When intellectual historians track the gradual flow of postwar French and German philosophical thought into the United States," he has written, "Dreyfus's archive will be one of their principal sources."[90] Until such a task becomes possible, a provisional glimpse of his career will have to do.

The contours of his interpretation of Heidegger, already apparent in the mimeographed translations he began under Wild's tutelage, suggest that Dreyfus, like his

---

[88] In the preface to his *Existence and the World of Freedom* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963), Wild thanks his graduate students at both Harvard and Northwestern for—via "their pointed questions and exacting criticism"—helping to keep his "thinking on the move." The only student whom Wild mentions by name is Dreyfus (viii). Another prominent American philosopher whose interest in Heidegger can be traced back to Wild is Calvin O. Schrag. He has acknowledged Wild's efforts "to stem the rising tide of neopositivism by offering courses in existential philosophy, giving particular attention to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger." See Schrag's "My Dialogue with Twentieth-Century Continental Philosophy," in *Portraits of American Continental Philosophy*, 169.

[89] Richard Rorty, "Foreword," in Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, *Volume 1* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), ix-x.

[90] Ibid., x.

mentor Wild, saw in Heidegger's work a welcome antidote to the increasingly scientistic views of analytic philosophy. He traveled to Freiburg during the 1953-54 academic year, during which time he even interviewed Heidegger directly.[91] Return trips to Europe exposed him to the legacy of Husserl, about which he wrote his dissertation. While working on his dissertation, Dreyfus began teaching at MIT. Through contacts there he eventually became a consultant for the RAND Corporation, and penned reports on artificial intelligence research. In those days, AI research was the bread and butter of MIT, but Dreyfus was not impressed by it. His familiarity with the phenomenology of Husserl and the existential analysis of Heidegger predisposed him towards skepticism when it came to the hubristic claims of AI proponents, who predicted that computers would someday soon entirely replicate and mimic—if not surpass—human consciousness.

While his analytic colleagues were busy translating philosophy into nothing more than a commentary on scientific research (turning philosophy into no more than the philosophy of science), Dreyfus applied the insights of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty toward a thoroughgoing critique of scientism. He liberally applied Heidegger's critique of Cartesian rationality to any number of debates in the philosophy of mind and epistemology. Insofar as AI technologies rested upon such simplistic theories, he speculated early on that they would inevitably falter—not because the technology was too far from being advanced enough, but because it could never be.[92]

---

[91] Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas, "Introduction," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*, 1. The following sketch of Dreyfus's career follows this source.

[92] See Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), or, in its updated version, *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992). In the 1972 edition of this book, Dreyfus put it this way: "In Heideggerian terms this is to say that if Western metaphysics reaches its culmination in cybernetics, the recent difficulties in artificial intelligence, rather than reflecting technological limitations, may reveal the

Artificial intelligence would never be able to produce a consciousness that could disclose worlds of meaning. This was simply something that computation, not matter how complex, could never achieve. AI could process information, but it could never replicate commonsense, the holistic background knowledge that humans always have and continually implement.[93]

Early on, the radical nature of Heidegger's understanding of world and existence and meaning animated Dreyfus's work, as is evident in a 1963 exchange he had with his former mentor Wild, who was then teaching at Yale.[94] Heidegger's discussion of the "worldhood of the world" in the early sections of *Being and Time* represented a powerful rejoinder to the simplistic epistemological foundations of AI research and the philosophy of mind, which continued to work under the assumptions of a Cartesian split between subject and object.[95] Dreyfus, like Heidegger, was more inclined towards a kind of holism. For Heidegger, the world was not, as Wild tried to argue, a realist object outside of consciousness, but, as Dreyfus argued, a space of meaning that, phenomenologically

---

limitations of technology" (139). See also Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, with Tom Athanasiou, *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

[93] Interestingly, in response to Dreyfus's work, a new movement in AI research even began to adopt a patently Heideggerian approach—otherwise known as "Heideggerian AI." See Dreyfus, "Introduction to the MIT Press Edition," *What Computers Still Can't Do*, xxx-xxxi. See also, more generally, Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 2* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000).

[94] See John Wild, "The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger," *Journal of Philosophy* 60:22 (October 24, 1963): 664-677; and, in the same issue, Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Wild on Heidegger: Comments": 677-680.

[95] See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Division I, Part 3, 78-148. Here Heidegger tried to show that the world is not something outside of human action and meaning, but is in fact coterminous with it. The world is a space of meaning: "The phenomenal content of these 'Relations' and "Relata'—the 'in-order-to', the 'for-the-sake-of', and the 'with-which' of an involvement—is such that they resist any sort of mathematical functionalization; nor are they merely something thought, first posited as an 'act of thinking'. They are rather relationships in which concernful circumspection as such already dwells. This 'system of Relations', as something constitutive for worldhood, is so far from volatizing the Being of the ready-to-hand within-the-world, that the worldhood of the world provides the basis on which such entities can for the first time be discovered as they are 'substantively' 'in themselves'." This quote is from pages 121-122.

speaking, was bound up with human existence.[96] This proved to be a captivating insight, one that resonated with philosophers, like Stanley Cavell, who were beginning to work outside of the dominant analytic tradition. Cavell admitted in 1969, in a lengthy footnote, that this idea influenced him deeply.[97] And it also seems to have influenced one of his brightest students as well.

Terrence Malick, who took over Dreyfus's teaching duties at MIT while he was on leave in Europe, had graduated from Harvard in 1965, with an honors thesis directed by Cavell. He then went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and, so the story goes, proposed a dissertation on the concept of world in Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, only to be told—by none other than Gilbert Ryle—that he should settle upon a more "philosophical" topic.[98] Whether or not Ryle's remark was what convinced Malick of the fruitlessness of a career in philosophy, he nevertheless changed course and enrolled soon thereafter in film school. The bilingual edition of Heidegger's *The Essence of Reasons*

---

[96] The idea of humans as "world-disclosing" beings is the hallmark of Dreyfus's interpretation of Heidegger. It has even been put forward in a kind of self-help book. See Charles Spinosa, Fernando Flores, Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Disclosing New Worlds: Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action, and the Cultivation of Solidarity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997). This book promises to teach its readers "to appreciate and engage in the ontological skill of disclosing new ways of being" (1). It is worth mentioning that one of its co-authors, Fernando Flores, started a Silicon Valley consulting firm which utilized these supposedly Heideggerian principles. See Anthony Gottlieb, "Heidegger for Fun and Profit," *New York Times* January 7, 1990.

[97] Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of King Lear," *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), 325n. Cavell's interpretation of Heidegger deserves fuller treatment in another venue. His reading of Heidegger alongside figures such as Emerson and Thoreau is a fascinating, if curious, intellectual concoction. See, for example, his "Aversive Thinking: Emersonian Representations in Heidegger and Nietzsche," *New Literary History* 22:1 (Winter 1991): 129-160; and "Thoreau Thinks of Ponds, Heidegger of Rivers," in *Philosophy the Day After Tomorrow* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2005), 213-235. See also "Existentialism and Analytical Philosophy," in *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1984), 195-234. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that Cavell has even described his book on Thoreau, *The Senses of Walden* (New York: Viking, 1972) as, in its own way, entrenched in Heidegger: "*Walden* for me is a combination of Heidegger and Hölderlin. It's as if Thoreau, reincarnated in Hölderlin, were writing Heidegger, trying to answer him, combining the world of both—as if Thoreau were playing Hölderlin to his own Heidegger." Cavell, "An Apology for Skepticism," in Giovanna Borradori, *The American Philosopher: Conversations with Quine, Davidson, Putnam, Nozick, Danto, Rorty, Cavell, MacIntyre, and Kuhn*, trans. Rosanna Crocitto (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1994), 130.

[98] See Simon Critchley, "Calm: On Terrence Malick's 'The Thin Red Line'," *Film-Philosophy* 6:38 (December 2002), available online at www.film-philosophy.com/vol6-2002/n48critchley.

that he prepared in 1969 (for Wild's Northwestern series phenomenology and existential philosophy) marked a substantial contribution to American Heidegger scholarship, but, in the end, Malick's decision to become a filmmaker proved to be an inscrutably wise decision.[99] He has been able to carry forward his meditation on the concept of world in a much more interesting and profound manner than any Heideggerian philosopher working today. Malick's application of Heidegger to filmmaking, assuming such a thing even takes place in his work, is perhaps as creative a reading as one can get.[100]

About the time that Malick was abandoning a career in philosophy for filmmaking, the largely positivist research program that had gripped American academic scholarship in the postwar decades came under severe attack. The boundless forward march envisioned by the Vienna Circle exiles slowed to a crawl as critiques from within and without piled up against it.[101] Quine, who had championed Carnap's work in the thirties and forties, published a seminal essay in the early fifties, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," which expressed serious doubts about the continued prospects for logical empiricism.[102] A decade later Thomas Kuhn published his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which cast even further doubt upon the notion that scientific progress was both cumulative and inevitable.[103] Arguing that advancements in science were the result

---

[99] Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons*, trans. Terrence Malick (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1969).
[100] In each of his films—*Badlands* (1973), *Days of Heaven* (1978), *The Thin Read Line* (1998), and, most recently, *The New World* (2005)—Malick has juxtaposed the world of nature with the that of human activity, often showing how the latter disrupts and degrades the former. Obviously, this is a topic to which I cannot do justice in this limited space, but it is one that should nonetheless be mentioned.
[101] The pragmatist philosopher Joseph Margolis argues that "the record of the last century is, philosophically, largely a record of the dawning exhaustion of an impressive vision (scientism) and the incompletely developed, still somewhat inchoate, possibilities of a promising alternative philosophy (pragmatism)." Margolis, *The Unraveling of Scientism: American Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003), xii.
[102] W.V. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1953), 20-46.
[103] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Third Edition (1962; Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996).

of abrupt "paradigm changes" and not any gradual, progressive accumulation of knowledge, Kuhn effectively killed the notion that "the scientific conception of the world"—as the Vienna Circle's 1929 famous manifesto, signed by Carnap, Neurath, and Hans Hahn, was entitled—was the only conception that mattered.[104]

In the space that opened up after the demise of logical positivism, Dreyfus, who eventually settled into a position at UC Berkeley, was able to present Heidegger as a figure who pointed beyond narrow scientism.[105] Although he thought that Heidegger's work was increasingly relevant, he did not highlight, like his continental colleagues, its connections to Kant and Hegel and the rest of the philosophical tradition. Dreyfus has proven little interested in exploring Heidegger's work in this fashion. Instead, he has focused most of all on applying Heidegger.[106] In this regard, his version of Heidegger is peculiar to him, to his own interests and preoccupations, which date back to his days at Harvard and MIT. As his Berkeley colleague John Searle once put it, Dreyfus works not so much on Heidegger, but "Dreydegger."[107]

Dreydegger is a philosophical Frankenstein. Composed of pieces borrowed from the philosophy of mind, existentialism, pragmatism, and both the analytic and continental traditions, it somehow manages to lumber forward on its own two feet. If originally it was concocted to show how AI research rested on faulty philosophical premises, it

---

[104] On the idea that Quine's and Kuhn's critiques entailed the demise of logical positivism, see Issac, "W.V. Quine and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy in the United States"; Alan W. Richardson, "Introduction: Origins of Logical Positivism," in *Origins of Logical Positivism*, 2; the essays by Alexander Nehamas and Hilary Putnam in Bender and Schorske, eds., *American Academic Culture in Transformation*; and David J. Stump's "Afterword," to *The Disunity of Science: Boundaries, Contexts, and Power* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 443-450.

[105] Another west-coast figure who has attempted to do this is the UC San Diego philosopher Frederick A. Olafson. See his *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987); and *What is Human Being? A Heideggerian View* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

[106] See, for example, the volume he edited with Michael Zimmerman, *Applied Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1991).

[107] This anecdote is available on www.dreydegger.org, a website maintained by Dreyfus's wife.

eventually developed a mind of its own and followed its own path. Commentators are divided about the implications that Dreydegger has for Heidegger research. Proponents hail it as a creative step forward while critics find it intellectually irresponsible. Either way, what cannot be denied is the fact that Dreyfus's reading of Heidegger is, through and through, a partial one.

Perhaps the single most obvious example of Dreyfus's selective approach to Heidegger is his commentary on *Being and Time*, which, although published as a book in 1991, is based on lecture notes he has used since at least 1968.[108] The book, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, Division I, is interesting as much for what it contains between its covers as for what it does not. As its title suggests, it refrains from offering an overall guide to Heidegger's thought; it does not even deign to cover all of *Being and Time*. Instead, Dreyfus focuses only on the first part, and, within that, only upon the notion of "being-in-the-world," which he finds interesting primarily as a "critique of traditional ontology and epistemology."[109] In other words, Dreyfus works only within the so-called existential analytic, and he is interested in this only insofar as it overturns Cartesian presuppositions within contemporary philosophy. Beyond these concerns, Heidegger's thought is given little consideration as a whole, and its historical context and development even less.[110]

By focusing almost exclusively on selected portions of *Being and Time*, Dreyfus offers what is essentially a pre-Davos interpretation of Heidegger. His work recalls a

---

[108] Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, Division I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991).
[109] Ibid., vii.
[110] This assessment, which for years summed up the opposition to Dreyfus's interpretation of Heidegger, may soon have to be revised in light of the very recent scholarship Dreyfus has sponsored in works like the multivolume *Heidegger Reexamined* (New York: Routlegde, 2002), which he edited with one of his former students, Mark Wrathall. For now, I leave this as—from the historian's perspective—an open question.

time when philosophers were not divided into rival camps, when philosophers of various epistemological persuasions could still speak the same language to each other. But this achievement comes at a cost. Insofar as he reads the lingering metaphysical components out of Heidegger, and refuses to confront in any serious way his later body of work (aside from the question of technology that is), the work that originally spurred Carnap's critique, Dreyfus's version of Heidegger is massively distorted—it is like a biblical exegesis that refuses to discuss the gospels.[111] But it is an original interpretation nonetheless, one that has made it possible for philosophers of various backgrounds—from pragmatism to ordinary language philosophy—to find common ground in Heidegger's work; something that, during the heyday of logical positivism and analytic philosophy, would have been unthinkable. In this way, perhaps, Dreydegger really has overcome metaphysics.

Conclusion: Crossing the Divide

Heidegger is a little like the Rockies, which divides east- and west-flowing rivers in the United States. For the longest time, philosophical readers of Heidegger in this country proceeded in only one of two possible directions—towards so-called continental thought, or, alternatively, towards analytic thought. From the mountain-top that is Heidegger's philosophy, these seemed the only options. The result was a philosophical

[111] For a critique, see, for example, Carleton B. Christensen, "Getting Heidegger off the West Coast," *Inquiry* 41:1 (March 1998):65-87.

profession that was fractured and driven towards animosity. But now it seems that pluralism may finally be replacing partisanship.[112]

As continental philosophy more and more began to exhibit postmodern tendencies in the eighties, that is, as it began to trade Husserl and Heidegger in for Derrida and Foucault, and as it migrated into literary studies, Dreyfus reached out evermore to his analytic colleagues. Rorty, for one, has testified to the huge influence that a number of summer seminars Dreyfus organized (along with David and Jocelyn Hoy) throughout the eighties and nineties had on transforming the discourse of the profession.[113] From the start, these west-coast gatherings, which brought together analytic and continental thinkers of various stripes, as well as pragmatists and other outsiders, were committed to undermining, as a report from the 1980 meeting put it, "the shallow analytic/continental opposition by focusing attention instead" on the shared problem of meaning.[114] That project continues today and it is the students of Dreydegger who are doing the most to heal wounds within the profession by sticking to it.[115] But not everybody Dreyfus has influenced remains convinced that the profession even needs saving. Richard Rorty, for one, thinks otherwise.

---

[112] For a sense of just how many competing versions of Heidegger can be found in American philosophy, see the informative essay by David Kolb, "Heidegger at 100, in America," *Journal of the History of Ideas* LII: 1 (January-March 1991): 140-151. Kolb treats in greater detail some of the intricate philosophical disputes regarding Heidegger than I am able to do here.

[113] Rorty, "Foreword," in Wrathall and Malpas, eds, *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*, xi.

[114] Hubert Dreyfus and John Haugeland, "Continental and Analytic Perspectives in the Philosophy Curriculum," *Phenomenology and Existentialism: Continental and Analytic Perspectives on Intentionality in the Philosophy Curriculum* (San Francisco: The Council for Philosophical Studies, 1981), 3.

[115] I am thinking specifically of works like William Blattner's *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) and Taylor Carman's *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in* Being and Time (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). (Both of these works are mentioned as suggested titles for furthering reading in Wrathall's *How to Read Heidegger*, which might lead one to wonder if a dominant Dreyfus clique is forming). More generally, I am also thinking of the work of figures such as John Haugeland, who in turn has influenced Robert Brandom. See the essays on Heidegger republished in Brandom's *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2002). On this point I am indebted to Eduardo Mendieta's unpublished manuscript "The Meaning of Being is the Being of Meaning: Brandom's Heidegger."

CHAPTER 6
Richard Rorty and the Riddle of the Book that Never Was

I have spent 40 years looking for a coherent and convincing way of formulating my worries about what, if anything, philosophy is good for.

—Richard Rorty[1]

It is impossible to chart the reception of Heidegger in America without mentioning Richard Rorty. Arguably this country's most prominent philosopher, Rorty has devoted a good amount of time to explicating and reshaping the work of the Freiburg sage. In doing so, he, like Hubert Dreyfus, has helped to disabuse American philosophy of its oft-bemoaned provincialism, putting it in dialogue with everything from hermeneutics to Habermas. A voracious reader with wide-ranging intellectual interests, Rorty punctured analytic philosophy's isolationist bubble with the publication of his massively influential and equally controversial *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979 and has not looked back since.[2]

Heidegger's shadow looms large over *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Years later, Rorty would even describe the book as his attempt at telling "a quasi-Heideggerian story about the tensions within Platonism."[3] His shorthand for any philosophy which seeks ultimate foundations or timeless certainty, any kind of metaphysics in other words, Platonism is the philosophical dragon that Rorty has been trying to slay his entire career. In the name of this crusade, Rorty has taken on not only Plato, but Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Russell, Carnap, and just about anybody else

[1] Richard Rorty, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids," *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 11.
[2] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1979).
[3] "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids," 12.

in the philosophical tradition who thought that they, at long last, had finally put human thought on the right path. Ultimately, Rorty finds the pretense inherent in this kind of thinking to be a hindrance. Platonism has, in his words, "outlived its usefulness."[4] But does this mean that philosophy has as well?

* * *

To bolster his critique of the western philosophical tradition, particularly the way in which it is beholden to certain Platonic notions such as truth, mind, and knowledge, Rorty has turned to some prominent philosophical debunkers and muckrakers over the years. Along with Heidegger, Rorty has employed the work of John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Heidegger's French disciple, Jacques Derrida. Together, these figures make for an unlikely and seemingly contradictory mix. But the American pragmatist, Dewey, the Austrian-born philosopher of language, Wittgenstein, and the French founder of deconstruction, Derrida, all share with Heidegger and Rorty a skeptical appraisal of western philosophy. In short, they are all anti-philosophy philosophers. But how does a philosopher become an anti-philosopher?

Rorty was trained as a philosopher and still, for the most part, functions as one, despite the fact that he has not taught in a philosophy department for over twenty years. He received a degree at the University of Chicago before going on to Yale, where he studied under the metaphysician Paul Weiss, who, as we have seen, had studied with

---

[4] Richard Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy," *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), xiv.

Heidegger in Germany, if only briefly. After a stint at Wellesley, Rorty eventually ended up at Princeton, in a heavily analytic department. Such departments dominated the American philosophical scene at the time, and still do today. At Princeton Rorty grew restless. His suspicions that analytic philosophy, so dominant in America, might merely be reproducing all of the problems of the Platonism it sought to overcome, especially insofar as it simply shifted Platonism's timeless questions into another equally timeless domain—that of logic—led him to edit *The Linguistic Turn*.[5] This collection of essays shook the profession by suggesting that the logical analysis of language may in fact be a philosophical dead end. In the following years, Rorty teased out many of the themes that animated *The Linguistic Turn*. Eventually, after ten years of work, he produced a book that, in the words of historian Bruce Kuklick, "would attempt to hoist analytic philosophy on its own petard.[6] This appraisal of the book has some truth to it. As an analytic philosopher, Rorty did turn the tools of his trade on his colleagues. But his argument owed just as much to figures outside this tradition, namely, Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, as it did to figures within it. "When I began to think that analytic philosophy, of the sort practiced by my Princeton colleagues, was not as wonderful as I had first imagined" he later recalled, "I began to teach Nietzsche and Heidegger."[7] Rorty was thinking outside the box as much as in it.

Rorty's turn away from analytic philosophy was a slow one. Though it was published only after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* had caused such a ruckus

---

[5] Richard Rorty, ed., *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
[6] Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720-2000* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 276.
[7] Richard Rorty, "Biography and Philosophy: Interview with Andrezej Szahaj," in Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty*, edited with an introduction by Eduardo Mendieta (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006), 150.

amongst philosophers, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, a collection of some of Rorty's earlier essays, shows how the ideas originally sewn in *The Linguistic Turn* were only reaped many years later in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.[8] And it appears that Rorty thought a great deal about Heidegger during this period of gestation.

The essays that comprise *Consequences of Pragmatism* are not all devoted to Heidegger, but they are, in some sense, resolutely Heideggerian, both in theme and content. Admittedly, Dewey is the hero of the collection, for he is the measuring stick that Rorty uses to size up all of the other figures discussed, whether historical or contemporary. But Rorty's Dewey is one that has as much in common with Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Derrida as he does his fellow pragmatists, such as C.S. Peirce or William James—a fact explained, perhaps, by the chronology of his philosophical evolution: Rorty may have started referring to pragmatism approvingly as early as 1961, but it was not until after *The Linguistic Turn* that he undertook a direct engagement with Dewey.[9] At that point he had already drifted Derrida's way.

Neo-pragmatism: Old Jug, New Wine

Rorty's neo-pragmatism, which we can see taking shape in *Consequences of Pragmatism* and which he still holds to today, combines a reading of the founding pragmatists—well, just Dewey really—with stars of continental philosophy like Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Derrida. He readily admits that his rediscovery of Dewey

---

[8] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).
[9] See Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 194-197.

coincided with his first encounters with both Derrida and Heidegger.[10] Even a cursory glance at his corpus demonstrates that he has combined equal parts of each in his works. The resulting intellectual mixture, however, as intellectual historians such as James Kloppenberg have been at pains to explain, departs rather dramatically at times from classical pragmatism.[11] Certainly Derrida and Dewey make for curious bedfellows. But whatever the historical accuracy of postmodern neo-pragmatism, it is the hallmark of Rorty's work, and is largely responsible—for better or worse—for the current revival of pragmatism today.[12]

Neo-pragmatism's postmodern rediscovery of Dewey might seem less arbitrary if we compare Rorty's relation to Dewey to that of Derrida's to Heidegger. All four are philosophers of the end of philosophy, with a distinct generational gap dividing them. The younger generation continues the critical project of the older—namely, the overcoming of the western, Cartesian, Platonist tradition—while simultaneously critiquing its predecessors for slipping back into precisely the metaphysics which they were attempting to overcome.[13] Dewey, according to Rorty, slips back into metaphysics. Heidegger, according to Derrida, never escapes it.[14] But there is more to Rorty's project than simply staying one step ahead of your predecessors.

---

[10] "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids," *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 12.
[11] See James T. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?" *Journal of American History* 83 (June 1996), 100-138. This influential essay has been reprinted in John Pettegrew, ed., *A Pragmatist's Progress? Richard Rorty and American Intellectual History* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 19-60.
[12] See Louis Menand, ed., *Pragmatism: A Reader* (New York: Vintage, 1997), xxv.
[13] Rorty, as Kloppenberg notes, is highly critical of Dewey's reliance upon the concept of "experience," which Rorty sees as a residue of a Platonist or metaphysical—i.e. pre-linguistic turn—discourse. See Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking," 28.
[14] See, for example, Derrida's "*Ousia* and *Grammē: Note on a Note from* Being and Time," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans., with additional notes by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 29-67. Near the end of this text Derrida claims, in a rare moment of directness, that "the extraordinary trembling to which classical ontology is subjected in *Sein und Zeit* still remains within the grammar and lexicon of metaphysics" (63).

What, exactly, does Rorty's Heidegger-infused neo-pragmatism entail? We get a few initial clues from the essay "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey," which was originally written in 1974 for a conference in San Diego that brought together some of the biggest names in Heidegger research at the time, people like Dreyfus, Grene, Gray, and even Habermas. At first glance, the essay seems conventional enough. In his usual fashion, Rorty offers a pretty sober, if cursory, comparison of his two subjects. Both Heidegger and Dewey, according to Rorty, are critics of the western tradition of philosophy. They both want to overcome it—Dewey, by blurring the distinctions it is founded upon, and Heidegger, by making way for and awaiting the next epoch of Being.[15] Both are critics of the scientization of philosophy, be it Cartesian, Husserlian, or positivist.[16] Most importantly, both agree on the "need for a 'destruction of the history of Western ontology,'" even though they had distinctly different notions of what should succeed it.[17] As Rorty describes them, Heidegger and Dewey offer similar critiques of the tradition, yet point their readers in vastly different philosophical directions. Depending on whose model one adopted, overturning the tradition resulted in seemingly contradictory ends. Whereas the end of metaphysics, for Dewey, leaves behind a vacant space "to be filled with concrete attention to beings," to questions of social justice, for Heidegger this space is non other than the "clearing for Being."[18]

When it comes right down to it, Heidegger remains attached to philosophy with a capital 'p'. Though he talks a great deal about the end of philosophy, he ends up merely replacing "philosophy" with "thinking," the term he later used to describe his post-

---

[15] "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey," *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 51.
[16] Ibid., 45.
[17] Ibid., 42.
[18] Ibid., 49.

philosophical kind of philosophizing. It is clear that Rorty prefers Dewey's position, which simply disposes of capital 'p' philosophy as obsolete, and turns our attention instead to the alleviation of social ills. Whereas Dewey turns to the concrete, Heidegger merely holds out hope for the saving grace of thought. It is this residue of capital 'p' philosophy in Heidegger that Rorty, in a surprisingly critical passage, lambastes near the conclusion of the essay. Rorty shows very well how Heidegger is still attached to the tradition he has done so much to overturn. It is worth quoting him at length:

> Heidegger's hope is just what is was worst in the tradition—the quest for the holy which turns us away from the relations between beings and beings (the relations, for example, between the ghastly apparatus of modern technology and the people whose children will die of hunger unless that apparatus spreads over the rest of the planet). *Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique*. The politics which one can imagine stemming from Heidegger's notion of technology's relation to man are more awful than the apparatus of technology itself, and for neither Dewey nor Heidegger is there a way to separate that sort of relation to politics from "philosophical truth." Heidegger's attachment to the notion of "philosophy"—the pathetic notion that even after metaphysics goes, something called "Thought" might remain—is simply the sign of Heidegger's own fatal attachment to the tradition: the last infirmity of the greatest of the German professors. It amounts to saying that even though everybody who has previously counted as a paradigm of philosophy—Plato, Thomas, Descartes, Nietzsche—turned out to be a step on a path towards chaos, we must still try to be philosophers. For "philosophy" is a name for that activity which is essential to our humanity. No matter how much Heidegger seems to have overcome our professional urge to compete with the great dead philosophers on their own ground, no matter how much he may try to distance himself from the tradition (not to mention his fellow professors), he is still insistent that the tradition offered us "words of Being." He still thinks that the place where philosophy was is the place to be."[19]

The quote from Peguy—"Everything begins in the mystical and ends in the political"—anchors a harsh critique of the political implications of Heidegger's work. The end of philosophy points Dewey in the direction of democratic social action, but it points

[19] Ibid., 52.

Heidegger in the opposite direction, away from any concern for his fellow beings and toward contemplative, mystical, capital 't' "Thought," which is anything but democratic.[20] Heidegger is simply not radical enough in his critique of the tradition. As a result, he remains wedded to what he is trying to overcome. Rorty continues:

> Heidegger's weakness was that he could not escape the notion that philosophers' difficulties are more than *just* philosophers' difficulties—the notion that if philosophy goes down, so will the West… If he is to be criticized, it is for helping keep us under the spell of Plato's notion that there is something special called "philosophy" which it is our duty to undertake. One may say of Heidegger what he himself says of Nietzsche: misled by a superficial understanding of the Platonic ideas, he tried to replace them, but instead only transformed Platonism into a newer jargon. By offering us "openness to Being" to replace "philosophical argument," Heidegger helps preserve all that was worst in the tradition which he hoped to overcome.[21]

Taken together, these passages present as critical a view of Heidegger as Rorty would ever present again. So harsh were these words from 1974 in fact that he would eventually disown them. In the preface to *Consequences of Pragmatism*, which was written in 1982, Rorty explains, retrospectively, the origins of the various essays collected in the volume, essays which span almost an entire decade (1972-1980). Though he still agreed—in 1982—with the general trajectory of them, a trajectory leading to *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, he does admit to finding some fault with their details. Still, it is only his reading of Heidegger in "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey" that he singles out as being truly unrepresentative of his more mature positions. In his words: "I now think that my view of Heidegger in the concluding pages of that essay was unduly unsympathetic."[22] He goes on to say that he is at work on "a more balanced and useful interpretation" in a book devoted entirely to

---

[20] Ibid., 53.
[21] Ibid., 54.
[22] *Consequences of Pragmatism*, ix.

Heidegger. Clearly, Rorty's reading of the German thinker had undergone substantial changes between 1974 and 1982. And between 1982 and the present much more has changed as well.

Reading Heidegger

In a 2001 lecture at Stanford, Rorty suggested that his understanding of Heidegger has undergone three distinct shifts or phases.[23] In the first of these phases, Rorty appropriated Heidegger via Hubert Dreyfus's interpretations of the German philosopher. As we have seen, this is the Heidegger of the early sections of *Being and Time*, the Heidegger of the existential analytic. It is the Heidegger who abandons rationalist epistemology and calls positivism into question. It is also the Heidegger who highlights the importance of pragmatic dealings with the world for our understanding of human consciousness.[24] This reading goes back to the late fifties, when Rorty was still at Wellesley and Dreyfus was at Harvard.[25] It was during this time that Rorty used and benefited from the early translations and summaries of *Sein und Zeit* that Dreyfus had prepared. Shorn as it is of Heidegger's more 'metaphysical' or 'transcendental' edges, and especially his grand historical narratives of the history of western philosophy, Dreyfus's interpretation (or Dreydegger), as we have seen, has proven to be an important link between the continental and analytic traditions of philosophy in America. Rorty's

---

[23] Richard Rorty, "Heidegger's Story about Western Philosophy," presented at the Bay Area Heidegger Colloquium, April 19 and 20, 2001. I thank Eduardo Mendieta for the following reconstruction of Rorty's remarks.

[24] See Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time*, Division I* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991).

[25] See Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself*, 38-39.

early exposure to it proved decisive. If nothing else, it prompted a career-long confrontation with Heidegger's thought.

The second phase of Rorty's reading of Heidegger, wherein the Heidegger of the existential analytic is replaced by the Heidegger of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, saw Rorty more drawn to Heidegger's interpretations of the history of the western tradition and his attempts to "overcome metaphysics" than his description of human existence.[26] Here he took on the subjects that Dreyfus downplayed. In this stage, Heidegger is both the historian of the western tradition of philosophy, and its most trenchant critic. His critical and historical awareness goes a long way toward puncturing—Rorty thought at the time—the hubris of so-called scientific philosophy. Heidegger here deconstructs and ultimately dissolves the dilemmas of the philosophical tradition, be they metaphysical or positivistic. As a radical critic of philosophy, Heidegger, along with Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Derrida, emerged, in this stage, as one of Rorty's philosophical antiheroes, as an anti-Philosophical (capital 'p') philosopher. These are the philosophers of the end of philosophy.

This reading of Heidegger dominated Rorty's work up through the 1980s. Eventually however, he found Heidegger's historical narrative of the decline of western thought since the Presocratics too bleak and apocalyptic for his own optimistic and upbeat tastes. Heidegger, Rorty eventually began to believe, had mistakenly equated the history of philosophy with the history of the world itself, and described both in terms of decline and decay. Rorty came to see the Freiburg philosopher's work as a veritable

---

[26] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959).

Verfallsgeschichte in the spirit of Gibbon or Spengler.[27] He began, in other words, to view Heidegger as no more than a cultural pessimist, albeit one who knew a great deal about philosophy. Rather than leading him to abandon Heidegger, however, this realization forced Rorty to use him in other ways.

The last phase, one which dates roughly from the late 1980s to the present, has Rorty adopting Heidegger as an example of self-creation. Here Heidegger's later writings on art and poetry are more useful for Rorty's focus on edification as opposed to system-building, or foundational, philosophy. But this shift in focus also mirrors a major shift in Rorty's conception of the use-value of philosophy itself.[28] It coincides with his sharp and impenetrable distinction between the realm of the public and that of the private, which was the centerpiece of his oft-cited work from 1989, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*.[29] Philosophy, even humble small 'p' philosophy seemed in that book at least like it could only contribute something positive in the private realm. Far from contributing to the public good, philosophy was best kept under wraps back at home. Needless to say, it is a surprising and troubling position for a philosopher who follows in Dewey's footsteps to adopt.

The three phases are of course permeable to each other, and residues of each interpretation can be found in the others. Nevertheless, this chronological sketch helps us notice a curious sort of wavering regarding Heidegger's importance for Rorty's overall project. Like most of Heidegger's American interlocutors, Rorty has been fundamentally ambivalent about Heidegger's final worth. On the one hand, the philosophical debt Rorty

---

[27] See "Heidegger, Contingency, and Pragmatism," *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 49.
[28] It also coincides with Rorty's own self-transformation from, as Louis Menand has put it, "a philosopher into an intellectual." Menand, "An Introduction to Pragmatism," in *Pragmatism: A Reader*, xxxiii.
[29] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

owes him is enormous, and this he freely admits. But on the other, he acknowledges that Heidegger's path of thought leads one, at the end of the day, in all the wrong directions, especially if one is, as Rorty likes to describe himself, a North American, bourgeois, liberal ironist. Heidegger was a beacon for Rorty while he composed *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, a voice from outside the tradition that he could call upon to critique it, but as he increasingly came to relegate all philosophy to the private sphere, so to did Heidegger become just another possible tool for individual self-fashioning. To some extent, Rorty gave up on philosophy at about the same time that he gave up on Heidegger.

At the heart of Rorty's abandonment of philosophy was a book planned, but never completed. It was to be a book on Heidegger. As we have seen, Rorty, in 1982, made mention of a book on which he was working, one that was to represent "a more balanced and useful interpretation" of Heidegger than the one we got in "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey." In an interview originally published in *Radical Philosophy* the same year, Rorty said that he was "trying to write a book called *Heidegger Against the Pragmatists*," which would vindicate his—i.e. Heidegger's—later philosophy.[30] But the book never appeared. All that eventually reached the light of publication were some essays on Heidegger thrown in amongst other pieces in the second volume of his philosophical papers, essays that Rorty described as "the fruits of an

[30] Wayne Hudson and Wim van Reijen, "From Philosophy to Post-Philosophy," *Radical Philosophy* 32 (Autumn 1982): 1-4. The interview has been reprinted in Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself*, 18-27, quote on page 19.

abortive, abandoned attempt to write a book about him."[31] All of the papers were written during the 1980s, that is, after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.

In the same way that the failed book project was at the heart of Rorty's turn away from the idea that philosophy could be publicly useful; Rorty's wavering regarding Heidegger's usefulness was at the heart of the failed book project. If, early on, in 1974, Rorty was quite critical of him, it was only so that Dewey could take center stage in *Consequences of Pragmatism*—especially insofar as the book represented a kind of rehabilitation of Dewey after years of postwar neglect by positivist and analytic philosophers.[32] It was not long before he overcame his initial skepticism and began employing Heidegger to his own ends. In the introduction to the book, "Pragmatism and Philosophy," Dewey and Heidegger stand united in an attack upon the philosophical tradition. Together, they would purge philosophy of its transcendental tendencies. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, a landmark in the transnational cross-fertilization of ideas, accomplished this task with regard to the analytic tradition, but similar transcendental or Platonist pretensions persisted, Rorty thought, in the continental tradition as well. These would be addressed in the planned book on Heidegger, which, we learn, was to be published in the Cambridge University Press *Modern European Philosophy* series.[33] The mysterious book that never was, was originally be to the companion piece, a follow-up to *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. But why was it abandoned?

---

[31] Richard Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and post-Nietzschean philosophy," *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 1.
[32] In this regard, the essay "Professionalized Philosophy and Transcendentalist Culture" is quite instructive. See *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 60-71.
[33] "Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy," *Consequences of Pragmatism*, xviii, and xliv n.4.

Though the trajectory of the essays in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, those very essays leading up to *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, might lead us to think that Dewey should be the hero of the latter book, he actually shares the spotlight with Heidegger, and with Heidegger's student, Hans Georg Gadamer. As the culmination of his attacks on the philosophical tradition, Rorty claimed that *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* represented his attempt "to undermine the reader's confidence in 'the mind' as something about which one should have a philosophical view, in 'knowledge' as something about which there ought to be a 'theory' and which has 'foundations,' and in 'philosophy' as it has been conceived since Kant."[34] It is from "the three most important philosophers of our century—Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey"—that the book took its cue.[35] And because the "common message" of the three "is a historicist one," Rorty's book takes on the style of a historical narrative, a kind of critical history of certain strands of thought in philosophy. It is in this sense that it is a Heideggerian project, and it is in this sense that Heidegger is so important an influence. For while someone like Wittgenstein is pretty good at "deconstructing captivating pictures," it is Heidegger's sense of history that provides the most devastating blow to the mirror-imagery of transcendentalist philosophy, imagery which suggests that knowledge is an accurate reflection of something either internal or external, and which, by extension, is attainable. "Heidegger's greatest contribution" is, as Rorty puts it, "an awareness of the source of all this mirror-imagery." It was as a kind of historian that he proved most useful:

> Heidegger's way of recounting the history of philosophy lets us se the beginnings of the Cartesian imagery during the last three centuries. He thus lets us "distance" ourselves from the tradition.[36]

---

[34] *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 7.
[35] Ibid., 5.
[36] Ibid., 12.

Heidegger had of course set himself "*The Task of Destroying the History of Ontology*," to quote from an important section title in *Being and Time*, so such a reading is certainly justified.[37] And insofar as Rorty set himself the task of destroying not just ontology, but Platonism in general he was indeed telling a "quasi-Heideggerian story about the tensions within Platonism" in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. But why stop here, with analytic philosophy?

The planned follow-up to *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, as we have seen, never came.[38] It is not idle speculation to suggest that it would offer a softer and more appreciative portrait of Heidegger. Why the kinder, gentler approach never produced the promised book on Heidegger, though, is difficult to say. But there are clues in the fragments that survived that "abortive, abandoned" endeavor—as well as elsewhere—that might help us understand just why he failed to follow through with the project.

In the introduction to the first volume of his collected papers, which appeared in 1991, Rorty suggests that Dewey is "the figure who, in the decade since I wrote *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, has, in my imagination, gradually eclipsed Wittgenstein and Heidegger."[39] Marking what seems like a shift back to the early assessment of the "Overcoming the Tradition" essay of 1974, Rorty jettisons the Heideggerian project of the late 1970s and early 1980s in favor of Dewey's more pragmatic and democratic concerns for social justice. Already by 1983, Rorty was criticizing Heidegger on these grounds. What Rorty described as Heidegger's

---

[37] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 41.
[38] A book that did appear on the subject of Heidegger and pragmatism was Mark Okrent's *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988). Like Rorty's, Okrent's interpretation of Heidegger was heavily influenced by Dreyfus.
[39] Richard Rorty, "Antirepresentationalism, ethnocentrism, and liberalism," *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Collected Philosophical Papers Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991),16.

"inhumanism" was enough to give pause.[40] As if that were not reason enough, Rorty explains in the introduction that over the course of the eighties he grew more and more skeptical of the historical narrative that Heidegger as offered. It was simply too reminiscent of Platonism.

It was also during this time that Rorty increasingly tried to relinquish philosophy to the private realm, arguing that, in the end, it had little to say about politics or democracy.[41] We can see as much in the fragments of the never completed Heidegger book project. Approvingly building on Dewey, Rorty ends the first essay, "Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, as Politics," in the following manner:

> If we ever have the courage to drop the scientistic model of philosophy without falling back into a desire for holiness (as Heidegger did), then, no matter how dark the time, we shall no longer turn to the philosophers for rescue the way our ancestors turned to the priests. We shall turn instead to the poets and the engineers, the people who produce startling new projects for achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[42]

Though he owes a great deal to Heidegger's historicism, and to his end-of-philosophy perspective, Rorty ultimately finds Heidegger's nostalgia for Being too much to bear as a pragmatist. While he labors to argue in "Heidegger, Contingency, and Pragmatism," another essay that drifted to the surface from the wreckage of the Heidegger project, that Heidegger can be read as a pragmatist, a defender, fundamentally, of contingency, he ultimately concedes that Heidegger would have scoffed at such a suggestion. For Heidegger, in his Platonist nostalgia, thought that his post-philosophical perspective of the history of philosophy was somehow a fated one. Rorty, a proponent, like Dewey, of radical historical contingency, could never support such a transcendentally tinged

---

[40] "Pragmatism without Method," *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 74.
[41] See "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 175-196.
[42] "Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, as Politics," *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 26.

position. Critiquing Heidegger's apocalyptic *Verfallsgeschichte* of the western tradition, Rorty gives Dewey the last word:

> Pragmatists like Dewey hope that things may turn out well in the end, but their sense of contingency does not permit them to write dramatic narratives about upward or downward escalators. They exemplify a virtue which Heidegger preached, but was not himself able to practice.[43]

The next essay to emerge from the ashes of the Heidegger project, by far Rorty's best on Heidegger, is a comparison of Wittgenstein and Heidegger on language. Like two ships passing in the night, Rorty sees Heidegger and Wittgenstein as both slipping back into the very problems they had sought to overcome, but at opposite points in their careers. "Although the younger Heidegger," in Rorty's judgment, "worked hard to free himself from the notion of the philosopher as a spectator of time and eternity, from the wish to see the world from above 'as a limited whole,' the older Heidegger slipped back into a very similar idea."[44] Wittgenstein made a similar mistake, only in reverse. He sought early on to keep philosophy pure by placing it on its proper footing. Seen this way, "Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* can be read as a heroic attempt to save philosophy from naturalism."[45] The early Wittgenstein and the later Heidegger both sought a way to keep philosophy pure, and in doing so they slipped back into precisely that kind of Platonism they were trying so desperately to escape.[46] They fell prey to an age-old philosophical temptation: to find something deeper in language than contingent social practices. In this regard, Wittgenstein and Heidegger "passed each other in mid-career, going in opposite directions."[47] Rorty, following Dewey, will make no such mistake: trading contingency

---

[43] "Heidegger, Contingency, Pragmatism," *Essays on Heidegger on Others*, 49.
[44] "Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the reification of language," *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 51.
[45] Ibid., 55.
[46] Ibid., 60-61.
[47] Ibid., 52.

for transcendence never works. He is especially critical of Heidegger's slip back into metaphysics near the end of the essay:

> But the reification of language in the later Heidegger is simply a stage in the hypostatization of Heidegger himself—in the transfiguration of Martin Heidegger from one more creature of his time, one more self constituted by the social practices of his day, one more reactor to the work of others, into a world-historical figure, the first postmetaphysical thinker. The hope for such transfiguration is the hope that there is still the possibility of something called "thinking" after the end of philosophy.[48]

He concludes the essay by pithily declaring "that Heideggerese is only Heidegger's gift to us, not Being's gift to Heidegger."[49]

In the last fragment of the aborted Heidegger book, "Heidegger, Kundera, and Dickens," Rorty enters the last stage of his reading of Heidegger. From here on out, Heidegger, as a historicizer of the western tradition, is referred to only disparagingly. Heidegger simply becomes a kind of shorthand notation in Rorty's repertoire for certain apocalyptic and pessimistic strands of so-called postmodern thought. This is how Rorty uses Heidegger today, as his little book from 1998, *Achieving Our Country*, makes clear. There he speaks repeatedly of a Heidegger-inspired "cultural pessimism" that has the Left in America by the throat and which will not let go.[50] In the "Heidegger, Kundera, Dickens" essay, he tackles this sort of pessimism head on:

---

[48] Ibid., 65.
[49] Ibid.
[50] See Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998). See also Rorty's "De Man and the American Cultural Left," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others*," 129-139. In a 2002 interview, Rorty summed it up this way: "in the old days an American professor would have thought of himself as a leftist if he were marching on picket lines, or doing something recognizable such as attempting to influence national public opinion, trying to get his fellow citizens to prefer one candidate or policy over another. At a later period, you got the impression that some English professors thought that if you could replace followers of Cleanth Brooks with followers of Paul de Man you had somehow struck a blow for human freedom—as though that replacement itself should count as leftist political activity. There's an essay by the American intellectual historian David Hollinger, called 'I Gave at the Office,' which is about this. He says that in the old days you could get the professoriate to turn out for demonstrations, but now, when you try to do that they say, 'I've just finished my latest book on cultural studies—I gave at the office.'" Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself*, 132.

> I want to protest the tendency to take Heidegger's account of the West for granted. There is, it seems to me, a growing willingness to read Heidegger as the West's final message to the world. This message consists largely of the claim that the West has, to use one of Heidegger's favorite phrases, "exhausted its possibilities." Heidegger was one of the great synoptic imaginations of our century, but his extraordinary gifts make his message sound more plausible than I think it is.[51]

Repeating, almost verbatim, some of his early judgments of Heidegger, even the one from 1974 that he later tried to disown, Rorty makes plain the limits of Heidegger's thought for a pragmatic, liberal democratic community. To put it simply, Heidegger lapses wholly and inextricably into Platonism, the very thing that Rorty once thought Heidegger might help him excise from philosophy. Far from helping, however, Heidegger in the end proves harmful:

> He is opting out of the struggles of his fellow humans by making his mind its own place, his own story the only story that counts, making himself the redeemer of his time precisely by his abstention from action. Like Hegel, Heidegger historicizes the Platonic divided line, tipping it over on its side. The Heideggerian counterpart of Plato's world of appearances as seen from above is the West as seen from beyond metaphysics. Whereas Plato looks down, Heidegger looks back. But both are hoping to distance themselves from, cleanse themselves of, what they are looking at.[52]

Though it begs the question of Heidegger's Nazism, which Heidegger viewed in world-historical terms, this is a forceful critique nonetheless. What is particularly interesting about these comments is that they seem to return full circle to the harsh assessments Rorty made of Heidegger in "Overcoming the Tradition." So total is the critique of Heidegger's residual Platonism in "Heidegger, Kundera, Dickens," that the essay finally puts forth literature as a better alternative for expressing and fostering "tolerance" and

---

[51] "Heidegger, Kundera, Dickens," *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 67.
[52] Ibid., 70

"togetherness" than philosophy, for philosophy too often falls into the Heideggerian-Platonic trap.[53]

Reading Literature

"Heidegger, Kundera, Dickens" was delivered at a conference in 1989, the same year that Rorty's next major work after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* was published. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* is by no means the book on Heidegger that Rorty had promised back in 1982. In the intervening seven years Rorty grew increasingly wary of Heidegger, and the traces of Platonism that he detected in his historical account of the western tradition especially. A good amount of self-skepticism was probably involved as well. It should be remembered that, for all its animus against professional philosophy, and despite the fact that Rorty left the philosophy department at Princeton for a chair in humanities at Virginia soon after it was published, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* still contained an upbeat philosophical ending. Based on a reading of Gadamer's hermeneutics, Rorty in that book suggested that philosophy could survive so long as it focused more on edifying and creating than constructing and discovering. That is, a philosophy reconceived could simultaneously avoid the pitfalls of Platonism and prove useful for society. In this sense, the book can be read as a wake-up call to his fellow philosophers, a plea that shook the very foundations of their discipline. Walter Benjamin once wrote that "in every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest the tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it."[54] *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* was just such an attempt. Its primary aim was not to shelve

[53] Ibid., 81.
[54] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 255.

philosophy for good, but to place it in a more prominent position, closer, we might say, to the social register.

With the publication, ten years, later, of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, however, we get a very different picture of philosophy's public use-value. Here Rorty's recognition of what he calls "a general turn against theory and toward narrative" is firmly rooted in his own abandonment of philosophy in favor of literature, something he hinted at in the "Heidegger, Kundera, Dickens" essay.[55] The trajectory of the book follows Rorty's attempt to keep separate and incommensurable the realms of the public (solidarity) and the private (irony). Convinced that any attempt to fuse the two smacks of Platonism, he casts only a very wary eye toward philosophy, which has been in the business of such bridgework since the days of Plato's *Republic*. In the end, he actually ends up inverting the age old prejudice and places literature at the service of the public sphere, as a means of creating and fostering solidarity, and he relegates philosophy to the private sphere, as a tool for self-fashioning.

The distinct and separate tasks of private irony and liberal hope, endeavors of equal worth that cannot be fused into any single plan or vision, are dual allegiances for Rorty in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. In "Self-creation and Affiliation: Proust, Nietzsche, and Heidegger," one of its most famous essays, he concerns himself with the former task. No longer does Rorty feel compelled to rake Heidegger over the coals for his apocalyptic pessimism, or for his Platonist relapses. Rather, he is content to relegate Heidegger to the private sphere, to the realm of self-edification and self-fashioning that remains distinct from public political or social debates. In his words:

---

[55] *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*, xvi.

> When we read Heidegger as a philosophy professor who managed to transcend his own condition by using the names and the words of great dead metaphysicians as elements of a personal litany, he is an immensely sympathetic figure. But as a philosopher of our public life, as a commentator on twentieth-century technology and politics, he is a resentful, petty, squint-eyed, obsessive—and, at his occasional worst (as in his praise of Hitler after the Jews had been kicked out of the universities), cruel.[56]

It seems an easy solution to a problem—what to do with Heidegger?—so passionately raised all the way back in 1974. By simply relegating questionable or problematic works to the private sphere, and by subsequently maintaining the spheres' fundamental incommensurability, Rorty too quickly avoids a lot of sticky issues, not the least of which is Heidegger's Nazism. It is no coincidence that this third stage of his reading of Heidegger witnesses Rorty's least critical appraisal of him.[57] Relegated as he is to the private realm, along with most other philosophers, Heidegger poses no threat. What then, is he good for? Private edification. What is philosophy good for? Pretty much the same thing.

Conclusion: What is Heidegger Good For?

Curiously, just as Rorty was relegating Heidegger to the realm of private edification, he began to compulsively deny that ideas have any repercussions on

---

[56] "Self-creation and affiliation: Proust, Nietzsche, and Heidegger," *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 120.

[57] See, for example, Rorty's disastrously bad exploration in counter-factual (and anti-historical!) analysis, where he asks us to imagine a world where Heidegger falls in love with a Jewish girl (shades of Hannah Arendt?), divorces his wife, Elfride, then flees Germany with his Jewish second wife, settles in America like the rest of the émigrés, even composes "stirring anti-Nazi" radio broadcasts, and eventually goes on philosophizing, all this far away from the stain of Hitler and his brownshirts: "On Heidegger's Nazism," in *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 190-197.

biography and vice versa.[58] If intellectual history revolves around the interplay of lives and ideas, then Rorty has stressed again and again that he is no intellectual historian, merely an intellectual handyman whose toolbox holds implements borrowed—or stolen—from any number of worksites.[59] What originally animated his critical engagement with Heidegger, namely Heidegger's relation to factical life, is now dismissed as unimportant.

Can we link this total abandonment of philosophy to the failure of the Heidegger book? Does the aborted project somehow represent Rorty's failed final attempt at providing a positive conception of philosophy? Or is it merely a coincidence that Rorty gives up on Heidegger and philosophy at about the same time? Behind these questions is the problem of ethics, and how philosophy can or should inform public moral debate. As we will see in the next chapter, Heidegger's influence in such matters—as Rorty recognized, despite himself—is an ambiguous one.

---

[58] See, for example, Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself*, 108.

[59] Rorty uses the metaphor of the toolbox in "On Heidegger's Nazism": "So for us Heidegger's writings are not a conduit through which we can hear the voice of Being. Rather, they are a toolbox. They are a receptacle in which Heidegger deposited the tools he invented at various times to accomplish one or another project" (191).

CHAPTER 7
Ethics, Architecture, and Heidegger: "Building Dwelling Thinking" in an American Context

In what follows we shall try to think about dwelling and building.
—Martin Heidegger[1]

The Pruitt-Igoe housing projects in St. Louis were razed on July 15th, 1972, less than twenty years after they had been erected. In the wake of Watts and Newark, places like Pruitt-Igoe embodied the very worst in inner-city decay: crime, poverty, vandalism, and fear. By the time of Pruitt-Igoe's destruction, its tenants were few and its critics legion. Some condemned the modernist towers on practical grounds, others for more sweeping, philosophical reasons. For the latter, the failure of Pruitt-Igoe was not so much a question of cheap construction, economic injustice, racial segregation, or haphazard federal housing policy-making. Instead, Pruitt-Igoe represented the failure of modernity—of unbridled Enlightenment faith in reason, technology, and progress—itself.[2]

Minoru Yamasaki, architect of the Pruitt-Igoe high-rises as well as, more famously, the World Trade Center, began designing the housing complexes in the early fifties. His vision for the project was heavily indebted to Le Corbusier, the Swiss-born

---

An earlier version of this chapter first appeared in *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 7:1 (April 2003): 23-44.

[1] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 145.

[2] The critic Charles Jencks, in his *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977), first put forth this line of interpretation regarding the end of modernism and the beginning of postmodernism. See also David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1990), 39 ff. For less grandiose critiques of Pruitt-Igoe, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 228. To see what has become of the area once occupied by the housing projects, see the City of St. Louis' Development Activity website at http://stlcin.missouri.org/devprojects/projinfo.cfm?DevProjectID=161&isComGov=1.

paragon of architectural modernism who liked to describe houses, tellingly, as 'machines to live in.' Le Corbusier's "International Style," as carried out by such Bauhaus-era German exiles as Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, had found—like the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle, with which it had so much in common—a new home in postwar America. Its signature austerity was perhaps best represented by the glass-encased skyscrapers it produced in cities across the country. But even at its most triumphant, the International Style's stark modernism could not win the hearts of an American public already ambivalent about the merits of the big city. The allure of the suburbs was hard to resist, especially since inner cities—or so it was thought by white citizens and cold war era pundits—seemed easy targets for Soviet nuclear warheads.[3]

Dissatisfaction with overly rationalized urban renewal eventually found expression in a growing theoretical critique of modernist architecture, one based largely on ethical grounds. If the trajectory of modern architecture was to lead to the soulless and inhumane prison-like complexes of a Pruitt-Igoe, then the project of modern architecture had to be radically reevaluated, and not just on the basis of form or style. Without entering the perennial debate concerning theory versus practice, we should note that this flurry of theoretical revisionism, which would eventually be subsumed, for better or worse, under the rubric of postmodernism (more on this later), followed on the heels of a distinctly grass-roots activism. Best represented by the classic work of Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), this activism cut through the pretensions of modernist utopianism, defending the vitality of everyday, lived space against the rationalized, routinized, grid-enclosed ideals of urban planners like Robert

[3] See Peter Galison, "War Against the Center," *Grey Room* 4 (Summer, 2001), 7-33.

Moses, then Public Works Commissioner of New York City.[4] While Jacobs was busy organizing to save her own Greenwich Village neighborhood from the chopping blocks of Moses's urban renewal measures, the architectural avant-garde in America took it upon itself to save architecture—and all those who had to live in and with it—from Le Corbusier's technocratic modernism.[5]

The irony, of course, was that architectural modernism, "The International Style" of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, arose of a revolutionary, progressive spirit. Emerging from the war-torn landscape of the First World War, the war that effectively invalidated the world of the nineteenth century, the Bauhaus—again like the Vienna Circle—represented an attempt to start over, to wipe the architectural and social slate clean of the hypocritical sanctities of the bourgeois world which lay in ruins at the Somme and Verdun.[6] Its commitment to workers' housing, to the social betterment of the population through rational planning and building, thus had revolutionary aims. Such aims found expression, however, not only in Bauhaus workshops but in the radical political experiments of the thirties as well, and the legacy of these—Italian fascism, Soviet communism, and German Nazism—effectively delegitimized this utopian drive. The Bauhaus arrived in the United States a chastened exile, an émigré movement which shed its revolutionary aspirations and eventually became, in the fifties and sixties, the capitalist style *par excellance*.[7] Modernism was thus susceptible to attack on two fronts by the

---

[4] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
[5] On the technological essence of modernism, see Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (MIT Press, 1961).
[6] See also Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989) and Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999).
[7] On this, see the epilogue, "The Bauhaus in America," of Elaine S. Hochman's *Bauhaus: Crucible of Modernism* (New York: Fromm, 1997). Hochman's history of the Bauhaus is an indispensable account of the varied political and cultural contexts of the Bauhaus movement, showing that the Bauhaus was more

late sixties and early seventies: its original social utopianism was suspect, reminiscent as it was of European radicalism; and its later capitalist incarnation was questionable insofar as it became a handmaiden to the status quo.

The sleek skyscrapers of the International Style had become, in the 1950s, one of many symbols of America's growing world hegemony. Architectural modernism embodied all that the American juggernaut was predicated upon, from technological advancement and rationalization to mass production and commodification, but also the free flow of international capital itself. Eventually, the International Style became synonymous with the Americanization of the world. Modernism became a marketable style which expressed the merits of technology, progress, and the American way, the answer to the Soviets and their own attempts to export, or at least defend, the communist experiment (though they would never call it such a thing). Technology and freedom went hand in hand, and American democracy was their great defender.[8]

In both its social revolutionary and capitalist guises, modernism was the embodiment of the virtues of rationalism and technological advancement. Years later, postmodern theorists would see the underside of this, just as Jane Jacobs had documented the high costs of Moses' urban renewal projects. As Mary McLeod has argued, postmodernism grew out of this disillusionment with the "social vision" of modernism:

> The unprecedented brutality of Nazi Germany, the purges of Stalinist Russia, the advent of the atom bomb, and the increasing dominance of multinational capitalism all undermined hopes of architecture's redemptive power. But just as significant to this loss of faith were the

---

politically ambiguous than is commonly admitted. For more on the Bauhaus in exile, see the essays collected in *Exiles and Émigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997).

[8] See Joan Ockman, ed., with the collaboration of Edward Eigen, *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia Books of Architecture / Rizzoli, 1993), 238.

> manifestations of modernism itself. By the late 1960s architects and social critics no longer saw the revolutionary zeal of the modern movement as productive, but as destructive; they cited the desolate mass-housing projects, the wasteland of urban renewal, the alienation resulting from an architectural language that now seemed arcane, mute, and of little appeal outside a narrow cultural elite.[9]

* * *

It was only as the cold war turned hot that architects began looking elsewhere for inspiration. A key component of the postmodernist critique of "routinized corporate modernism" was the work of Heidegger.[10] It is important to keep the historical context of this reception in mind while trying to make sense of just how and why it was that a philosopher as hermetic and seemingly removed from these architectural debates as Heidegger became such an important point of reference. In the late sixties and early seventies, the American drive toward world hegemony stalled and faltered in Southeast Asia, and the postwar capitalist boom of the fifties itself began to slow as it headed toward an eventual bust in the seventies. Indeed, as McLeod has even suggested, perhaps we can account for the widespread turn to theory in the architectural world during this time with the fact that commissions had dropped severely during the economic

---

[9] Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage* 8 (1989), 26. On the confluence of modernism and Americanism, see the provocative study by Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003). See also Thomas Haskell's review of it, "Modernization on Trial," *Modern Intellectual History* 2:2 (August 2005): 235-263.

[10] Ibid., 27. For more on postmodernism in architecture, see Jürgen Habermas, "Modern and Postmodern Architecture," *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, edited and translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, introduction by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989); David Harvey, "Postmodernism in the City: Architecture and Urban Design," *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1990); and Frederic Jameson, "The Brick and the Balloon: Architecture, Idealism, and Land Speculation," *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (New York: Verso, 1998).

slowdown. Architecture is, after all, tied to the economy.[11] In any case, as the Americanization of the globe came into question, as the cold war's technological buildup came to a crescendo in Cuba (with the Missile Crisis), in outer space, and eventually on the moon (or the Mojave desert as some would have it), modernism came under attack.[12] Had western civilization taken a wrong turn? Was progress a sham? Technology, a bane? To these questions and more, Heidegger seemed to have answers.

Dwelling Poetically

On August 5, 1951, around the time Yamasaki was designing the Pruitt-Igoe towers, Heidegger delivered, in Darmstadt, Germany, a public lecture entitled "Building Dwelling Thinking." The essay, one of Heidegger's most influential, bears the imprint of its own historical setting in more ways than one.[13] A philosophical exploration of the essence of architecture, of building and dwelling in a modern, technological age, the lecture was born of a carpet-bombed German landscape. Heidegger situated his remarks firmly in this context. Given what modern technology was capable of, what did it mean to build and to dwell in this postwar—this cold war—age?

The housing shortage Germany faced after the war added a sense of urgency and relevancy to Heidegger's remarks, but so too did something else. For Heidegger, this was an important occasion. Still officially banned from teaching by a denazification committee because he had served as the Nazi rector of the University of Freiburg in

---

[11] Ibid., 27.
[12] For more on this, see Joan Ockman's introduction to *Architecture Culture,* 21.
[13] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 143-161.

1933-1934, such public lectures, to clubs and organizations in various German cities, provided Heidegger with an opportunity to step out from under the shadow of suspicion and criticism that had hung over him since the end of the war, and in some circles, even earlier. These public lectures were a vital link in the dissemination of Heidegger's ideas during this time of censure.[14]

When they were applied to the crisis of modernism in the mid-seventies, Heidegger's remarks concerning architecture and space became influential reference points for precisely those American architectural critics and theorists who were coming to terms with the legacy of Pruitt-Igoe. To be sure, Heidegger was not the only source of inspiration for this ethical critique of modern urbanism. American critics were skeptical of high modernism in architecture and city planning as early as the interwar years. Already in 1928, Lewis Mumford, one of the founders of the Regional Planning Association, pitted the more humane architecture of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright against the more rationalist and technological style of Le Corbusier and Gropius, suggesting that, "in their desire to plan and design on modern lines for the *modern* man, some of the continental designers have already caricatured the possibilities of our present mode of existence, and in providing for the modern, have forgotten the man."[15] Heidegger would not have expressed his concerns in such a fashion, but the sentiment certainly would have been shared, even this early on. We can see as much in his disparaging remarks, no doubt directed at Le Corbusier, from a 1929-1930 lecture course where he ridicules the notion of "the house as a machine for living" as an "absurdity" that

---

[14] See Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 390 ff.

[15] Quoted in Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 219.

only signals the utter "groundlessness that dominates today's thinking and understanding."[16]

The technological frenzy that accompanied cold war buildup only heightened the concerns of thinkers like Mumford and Heidegger, who, each in his own way worried for the fate of human existence. In journals like the newly-founded *Oppositions*, Heidegger was employed to combat the overweening hubris of modernism, blind faith in technology, the "utilitarian tyranny of technique" as Kenneth Frampton, one of the founding editors of *Oppositions* and one of this country's most influential architectural critics, put it.[17] Self-styled avant-garde journals like *Oppositions*, committed as they were to theoretical examinations of architecture and design in an international perspective, were sites of some of the earliest Heidegger reception in America outside of philosophy departments.[18] Here, and in places like *Perspecta: The Yale Architecture Journal*, Heidegger's writings found an appreciative, if selective, audience. For not only did this new audience have to confront Heidegger's anachronistic peasant provincialism and his staunch anti-Americanism, they also had to come to terms with his own lingering totalitarian tendencies. In order to foster an ethical critique of architecture, they had to confront a thinker who, infamously, never wrote an ethics—at least not in any traditional sense.

---

[16] Quoted in Mark Wigley, "Heidegger's House: The Violence of the Domestic," *Columbia Documents of Architecture and Theory: D*, Volume 1 (1992), 99.

[17] Kenneth Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," *Oppositions* 4 (October 1974); reprinted in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 445. Frampton is English, but has lived and taught in the United States since 1964.

[18] For more on *Oppositions*, see the *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984*, edited, with and introduction by K. Michael Hays (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998). See also, the very informative essay by Joan Ockman, "Resurrecting the Avant-Garde: The History and Program of Oppositions," in Beatriz Colomina and Joan Ockman, eds., *Architectureproduction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 180-199.

Heidegger's now classic "Letter on Humanism," a text written in response to the queries of the French philosopher Jean Beaufret in 1946 and later expanded for publication in 1947, reveals Heidegger's ambiguous relation to ethics most clearly. Near the end of the text, in response to a specific remark of Beaufret's, Heidegger writes, "Soon after *Being and Time* appeared a young friend asked me, 'When are you going to write an ethics?'."[19] Heidegger had always maintained, especially in *Being and Time*, that his philosophical work was *prior* to ethics, that one could only confront the question of ethics after properly settling the question of Being.[20] But, after World War II, after Nazism, after Auschwitz, surely the question of ethics, though perhaps not a priority in Heidegger's philosophical schematic from the start, was anything but idle or irrelevant. And Heidegger seems to acknowledge this when he writes that "The greatest care must be fostered upon the ethical bond at a time when technological man, delivered over to mass society, can be kept reliably on call only by gathering and ordering all his plans and activities in a way that corresponds to technology." "Who can disregard our predicament?," he writes. "Should we not safeguard and secure the existing bonds even if they hold human beings together ever so tenuously and merely for the present? Certainly."[21] Would the Nazi rector of Freiburg University, the philosopher with revolutionary aspirations back in 1933, have said such a thing? Certainly not. But here, after the war, in French-occupied southwest Germany, Heidegger is no revolutionary. Instead, he tries hard to portray himself, at least in this passage, as a defender of those

---

[19] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, in collaboration with J. Glenn Gray and David Farrell Krell, in *Basic Writings*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Edited by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 255.
[20] See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1962), 37.
[21] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 255.

fragile (ethical) bonds which keep humanity from the brink of extinction.[22] Nevertheless, he goes on to maintain that this provisional ethics, perhaps a necessity in an age of technological frenzy and mass destruction, does not grant access to the essence of either "ethics" or "Being." Both are covered over by the simple legislating of actions and conduct.

If we were to think through the question of ethics philosophically, and not just as a matter of practical or provisionally morality, then we would have to go back, according to Heidegger, to the original Greek, to *ēthos*. In the original Greek, *ēthos* "means abode, dwelling place."[23] Thus, a proper understanding of ethics would hinge upon an understanding of dwelling on the earth, and this is how Heidegger links the question of ethics to the question of Being (ontology). Far from being a set of rules and regulations for right conduct, ethics "ponders the abode of man."[24] In this sense, ethics actually collapses into ontology, for to think the "abode of man" is to examine how human beings exist on the earth, to examine their being. But as Heidegger is quick to point out, ethics and ontology are both derivative constructs, that is, they abstract from the actual existing and dwelling of human beings and thus only obstruct any understanding of Being, of that which allows for existence. Heidegger hopes that what he calls "thinking" will avoid the pitfalls of the abstract categories of ethics and ontology, that it will provide access to

---

[22] This is in keeping with the tactics of self-exoneration that permeate the entire essay. Not only does "The Letter on Humanism" find a way of absolving Heidegger of his Nazism by attributing the phenomenon to the fateful destiny of the West and technology in the abstract (thus acquitting any perpetrators of immediate guilt), it also attempts to ingratiate the author with the French philosophical public, a public which might possibly come to his defense during the denazification process in French-occupied, postwar Freiburg. For more on this, see the excellent essays by Anson Rabinbach, "Heidegger's 'Letter on Humanism' as Text and Event," in *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 97-128; and Jürgen Habermas, "Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective," in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, edited and translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, introduction by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 140-142.

[23] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 256.

[24] Ibid., 258.

Being on a more immediate and primordial level.[25] The question of ethics thus remained secondary for Heidegger, but what are we to make of his increased interest in dwelling?

After the war, Heidegger wrote more and more about what he saw as the technological fate of western civilization and its detrimental influence on dwelling. He had touched on the topic in some of his earlier writings, but it was only in the late forties and through the fifties, while still officially banned from teaching, that it became a guiding concern.[26] In this sense, the lecture that would later become so influential for architects around the globe, "Building Dwelling Thinking," is not a deviation from Heidegger's path of thought. In no sense can it be dismissed as an extraneous afterthought or add-on.

The central argument of "Building Dwelling Thinking" is transposed directly from "The Letter on Humanism" and can be found in the odd grammar of the title itself: the lack of commas connotes that the three terms are not distinct, but are instead intimately related.[27] To understand building, we have to first acknowledge that it is really a function of dwelling, and that even thinking itself is rooted in dwelling. Here

---

[25] "The Letter on Humanism" also marks the culmination of Heidegger's so-called *Kehre*, or turning, from his earlier philosophical work, now deemed too anthropocentric, and thus a hindrance to thinking Being. Heidegger scholars now tend to agree—if they accept that such a turning even took place—that this process began as early as the late twenties or early thirties. The critique of the subjectivist legacy of modernity (Descartes), which Heidegger thinks obscures any proper understanding of Being because it places man first, is at the heart of his concerted efforts in the text to distance himself from Sartre's existentialism, which was of course based upon the French philosopher's (mis)reading of *Being and Time*. The concept of the "fourfold" (see below), was but one of Heidegger's many attempts to think Being without privileging human existence.

[26] Recent scholarship, which I do not have the space to go into here, has convincingly outlined Heidegger's growing interest in questions of spatiality and place more generally after the publication of *Being in Time* in 1927. Indeed, as Edward Casey has argued, Heidegger's work from the thirties on reveals a constant struggle to overcome the "temporocentrism" (245) of his early work. See his "Proceeding to Place by Indirection: Heidegger" in *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 243-284. On Heidegger and place, see also Stuart Elden, *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault, and the Project of a Spatial History* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

[27] Albert Hofstadter, "Introduction," in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translations and introduction by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xiii-xiv.

Heidegger fleshes out what was only enigmatically introduced at the end of "The Letter on Humanism." "Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth," he argues.[28] But this is only the beginning. Heidegger goes on to introduce a mystical-sounding concept that increasingly found its way into his later philosophy, and that is the so-called "*fourfold*" [*Geviert*].[29] The fourfold, in Heidegger's later philosophical cosmology, is comprised of the earth, the sky, divinities, and mortals. Mortals in fact dwell within the fourfold by preserving it: "Mortals *are* in the fourfold by *dwelling*. But the basic character of dwelling is to spare, to preserve. Mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing."[30]

If Heidegger's subliminal mysticism is not enough of a clue, it becomes clear further on in the essay that Heidegger is not talking about what we normally consider to be building—planning, construction, etc. Heidegger's conception of dwelling within the fourfold, that region which allows for the presencing of the earth, the sky, the gods, and mortals themselves, is something quite at odds with the practical, everyday understanding of architecture. Beneath the technical application of design and construction lay a more fundamental experience of dwelling. In Heidegger's words, "the nature of the erecting of buildings cannot be understood adequately in terms either of architecture or of engineering construction, nor in terms of a mere combination of the two. The erecting of buildings would not be suitably defined *even if* we were to think of it in the sense of the

---

[28] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 148.
[29] For more on the etymology of this concept within Heidegger's oeuvre, see Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 50-52.
[30] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 150.

original Greek *techne* as *solely* a letting-appear, which brings something made, as something present, among the things that are already present."[31] He continues:

> *Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build*. Let us think for awhile of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth, heaven, divinities and mortals enter *in simple oneness* into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the "tree of the dead"—for that is what they call a coffin there: the *Totenbaum*—and in this way it designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time.[32]

Heidegger goes on to argue that "Our reference to the Black Forest farm in no way means we should or could go back to building such houses; rather, it illustrates by a dwelling that *has been* how *it* was able to build."[33] The peasant farmhouse is an example of how building reflects dwelling, the existence of human beings on the earth in relation to the comings and goings of the fourfold. Before we can understand the nature and function of building, we have to be clear on what it means to dwell on the earth. "Dwelling," in Heidegger's words, "is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist."[34] The task of thinking itself is even dependant upon our understanding of dwelling in this sense.

Although Heidegger's remarks seem far removed from the practical concerns of the day, in this instance, the challenge of rebuilding a war-torn Europe quite literally from the ground up, he turns to this context explicitly at the end of the essay, if only to show

---

[31] Ibid., 159.
[32] Ibid., 160.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

that the philosophical problem of dwelling lay deeper than this. Just as ethics was anything but a practical concern for him in "The Letter on Humanism," here the question of rebuilding and dwelling leads to a more essential examination of human existence. To quote Heidegger at length one more time:

> what is the state of dwelling in our precarious age? On all sides we hear talk about the housing shortage, and with good reason. Nor is there just talk; there is action too. We try to fill the need by providing houses, by promoting the building of houses, planning the whole architectural enterprise. However hard and bitter, however hampering and threatening the lack of houses remains, the *real plight of dwelling* does not lie merely in a lack of houses. The real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars and their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*. What if man's homelessness consisted in this, that man still does not even think of the *real* plight of dwelling as *the* plight? Yet as soon as man *gives thought* to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that *calls* mortals into their dwelling.[35]

Heidegger's penchant for turning practical concerns—in this case, for shelter—into matters of world-historical proportions is in full force here. But by no means was Heidegger the only thinker to have gone to such excessive interpretative or rhetorical extremes after the war. For a generation of thinkers coming to terms with what many—on both the right and the left, politically—saw as the frightful and fateful trajectory of modernity in the postwar years, it became almost de rigueur to invoke this grand, reverse teleology, which saw in Auschwitz the culmination of western, calculative reason (much like the way in which Pruitt-Igoe came to represent the failures of Enlightenment-based positivism for a later generation of architectural critics). A comparison with Theodor Adorno is particularly instructive in this regard.

---

[35] Ibid., 161.

Adorno, part of the Frankfurt School, was of course forced to flee Germany after Hitler's rise to power. Thus when he discusses the topic of homelessness, as he did often in his work, there is a very tangible, experiential immediacy in his remarks. In a text cotemporaneous with Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking" lecture, *Minima Moralia*, Adorno expresses many of the same sentiments as his fellow German philosopher. In section 18, aptly titled "Refuge for the homeless," Adorno, too, bemoans the dreadful fate of dwelling in the modern world.[36] For him, "dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible."[37] Recent history had only confirmed what was already festering in the western world:

> The house is past. The bombings of European cities, as well as the labour and concentration camps, merely proceed as executors, with what the immanent development of technology had long decided was to be the fate of houses. These are now good only to be thrown away like old food cans.[38]

In the modern world, for Adorno, like Heidegger, one is homeless even—and perhaps especially—when at home.[39] Latter-day technophiles, such as Reyner Banham, would eventually embrace rather than bemoan this development. But his sci-fi fantasies of mobile, self-contained living modules and bubbles only seem to confirm Heidegger's and Adorno's deepest suspicions.[40] For them, the material inadequacy of housing in the

---

[36] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1974), 39. This is not the only topic where one finds a profound similarity—especially in tone—in the work of these two very different thinkers, Adorno and Heidegger. For more on the comparison, see the work of Herman Mörchen—*Macht und Herrschaft im Denken von Heidegger und Adorno* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980) and *Adorno und Heidegger: Untersuchung einer philosophischen Kommunikationsverweigerung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981)—and Fred Dallmayr, *Between Freiburg and Frankfurt: Toward a Critical Ontology* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991).
[37] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 38.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Reyner Banham, "A Home is not a House," *Art in America*, April 1965, 109-118; reprinted in Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, 371-378.

modern world was but a sign of a deeper metaphysical crisis, a crisis no amount of technological innovation could remedy; in fact, it would only make matters worse.

For Heidegger, it was the forgetting of the question of Being that animated humanity's homelessness. This failure to understand what Being itself is was ushered in by the age of technology and calculative reason, but the path homeward, as it were, still existed via thinking. A thinking of Being would deliver us from our homelessness, would restore us to our roots. Adorno never held out such a possibility, in part because he assiduously avoided the kind of nostalgia—*Volkisch* landscapes with Black Forest peasant huts, etc.[41]—that permeated Heidegger's writings, but also because his negative, critical philosophical perspective, with its suspicion of any attempt at reconciliation or totality, would not allow it.[42]

In another text from this same period—1951—Heidegger did outline the possibility of an alternate kind of dwelling, a kind of dwelling that did not fall prey to modern, technological excesses. Building on an interpretation of a few lines from Hölderlin, "…*Poetically Man Dwells*…" is Heidegger's attempt at exploring further the

---

[41] See, for example, in addition to "Building Dwelling Thinking," the telling "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?" from 1934, translated and collected in Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981), 27-30. The text can also be found in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 426-428. For two insightful commentaries on this text, see Mark Wigley—in "Heidegger's House," op. cit.— and Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, Edited, with a Foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi and German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989), 170-176. It is no coincidence that Heidegger's increasing interest in place coincides with his involvement with Nazism (the early thirties forward). Place and *Volk* are deeply intertwined in Heidegger's philosophizing during this time, and the dubious connection between the two has only recently come under careful scrutiny. In addition to Edward Casey's "Proceeding to Place by Indirection: Heidegger," op. cit., see James Hillis Miller's "Slipping Vaulting Crossing: Heidegger," in *Topographies* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995), 216-254; and Theodore Kisiel's "Heidegger's Philosophical Geopolitics in the Third Reich," in Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger's* Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), 226-249.

[42] See, for example, Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973). For his take on Heidegger, see *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Kurt Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973).

relation of building to dwelling, and dwelling to thinking. He ultimately concludes that "the poetic is the basic capacity for human dwelling."[43] Again, Heidegger invokes the current context only to go beyond it: he talks of the housing shortage as well the distractions of the "entertainment and recreation industry" and the harassment of work.[44] But dwelling poetically is far removed from these mundane distractions. Dwelling poetically denotes a certain type of existence, one which allows for the space of presencing, which is somehow more originary, more thoughtful and authentic, than everyday living. Poetry, according to Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, is best thought of as a kind of "measure-taking" that stakes out the space of existence within the fourfold, that mystical unity of mortals, gods, sky, and earth, which Heidegger spoke of in "Building Dwelling Thinking."[45] The relation of poetry to building is thus a necessary one. Both are ways of establishing lived space, but poetry is clearly the more primary mode for Heidegger:

> Man does not dwell in that he merely establishes his stay on the earth beneath the sky, by raising growing things and simultaneously raising buildings. Man is capable of such building only if he already builds in the sense of the poetic taking of measure. Authentic building occurs so far as there are poets, such poets as take the measure for architecture, the structure of dwelling.[46]

"Building Dwelling Thinking" and "…*Poetically Man Dwells*…" are but two of the most forthright discussions of dwelling in Heidegger's postwar oeuvre. A more

---

[43] Martin Heidegger, "…*Poetically Man Dwells*…," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 228. Here Heidegger's work should be read alongside that of Gaston Bachelard. See *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, with a new Foreword by John R. Stilgoe (1964; Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). See also the discussion of Heidegger and Bachelard in Eduard Führ's "Einleitung: Zur Rezeption von "Bauen Wohnen Denken" in der Architektur" in Eduard Führ, ed., *Bauen und Wohnen: Martin Heideggers Grundlegung einer Phänomenologie der Architektur / Building and Dwelling: Martin Heidegger's Foundation of a Phenomenology of Architecture* (Münster: Waxmann, 2000), 12 ff.
[44] Ibid., 213.
[45] Ibid., 221.
[46] Ibid., 227.

detailed discussion of this theme, which we do not have the space to explore here, would necessarily have to include, at the very least, works like "Hebel—Friend of the House," and "The Origin of the Work of Art." But without delving into these, we can already make out a few of the themes that became so influential in Heidegger's later reception amongst the architectural avant-garde in the seventies and beyond: namely, the pernicious—but fated—influence of technology in the western world, something developed at length in Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" from 1955; a concern for ecology, insofar as dwelling calls for a respectful relation to the fourfold; and the more general questions posed by any analysis of modern, consumer society, i.e., the commodification of everyday life.[47] When all of this gets picked up later, as architecture takes a theoretical turn more generally, the postwar contexts of Heidegger's works are gradually effaced by the cold war contexts of their reception. This was particularly true in the United States, where out of work architects awakened in the seventies not only to the horrors of urban renewal but to Vietnam, to their nation's imperial presence around the globe and its role in the dispersal of technology and power over the earth. A certain degree of intellectual slippage resulted, wherein, as we have already seen, criticisms of certain buildings or building practices were discussed in terms of epochal or world-historical relevance, which is precisely how Pruitt-Igoe came to be seen as the destined horror of Enlightenment reason. But even when such grandiose claims were not made,

---

[47] It is worth pointing out here that one of the founders of the deep ecology movement, Arne Naess, has been profoundly influenced by Heidegger. See *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, translated and revised by David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988). For more on the links between Continental philosophy and the modern ecology movement, including its sometimes ambiguous political pedigree, see Michael E. Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). For those of us who grew up with Sierra Club patches on our knapsacks it perhaps comes as a surprise—a dirty secret if you will—that environmentalism has not always been the sole domain of the political left. See Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 33.

Heidegger's critiques of technology, of modernism, and of urbanism more generally, still found a home amongst the political left. Once architectural modernism shed its revolutionary aspirations for its new capitalist skin, it was susceptible to attack from the anti-capitalist left—Communists, Marxists, even Situationists. As we have seen with Adorno, the critique of technology and modernism was never solely a right-wing possession, but in the case of Heidegger, such residues were certainly evident, and erstwhile leftist Heideggerians had to scrub them away, or at least cover them up, before they could begin discussing the troubled plight of dwelling in the late twentieth century.

Oppositions to Modernism

One might think, given his frequent references to peasant huts and forest paths, that a Heideggerian architecture would consist of idyllic country landscapes, of log cabins, ski huts, and rustic peasant decors. Close your eyes and you might even envision a "Heidegger's Village" theme-park not unlike Disney's Frontier Land. But for all their pastoral biases, Heidegger's writings on building and dwelling have appealed first and foremost to the architectural avant-garde. Here in America, the influence of Heidegger in the architectural world has to be traced back at least to Kenneth Frampton's, "On Reading Heidegger," an editorial that appeared in the fourth issue of *Oppositions*, in October of 1974.[48] Frampton has been for many years this country's most recognizable architectural critic and theorist within the academy. His consistent suspicion of both high modernism and facile postmodernism has made him a frequently-cited source in many an

[48] Kenneth Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," *Oppositions* 4 (October 1974), reprinted in Kate Nesbitt, ed., *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 442-446.

architectural debate over the last few decades. As a recent reviewer of his latest collection of essays has put it, Frampton's "career as a teacher and writer on architectural theory coincides with and illustrates the postmodern crisis."[49]

With the kind of rhetorical bravado that has come to define most architectural theory in the throes of the "postmodern crisis", Frampton shows his hand early in "On Reading Heidegger." "As the utopian hallucinations of the Enlightenment fade," he writes, it has become more and more apparent that architects and their critics alike have failed to make a "distinction between architecture and building."[50] Heidegger, according to Frampton, allows us to distinguish between the two insofar as he casts doubt upon modernism's "pathological capacity for abstraction."[51] Glossing a distinction that Heidegger makes in "Building Dwelling Thinking" between 'space' (from the Latin, *spatium*), which connotes an abstract emptiness, and 'place' (or the Germanic *Raum*), which is supposedly more reminiscent of tradition and community, of lived experience, Frampton goes on to bemoan "our present all but total incapacity to create places."[52] We have been so concerned with space, with formalism and rationalism, that we have forgotten, overlooked, underestimated the importance of place. The "*tabula rasa* fantasies of the Enlightenment" have obliterated the specific contexts of lived experience.[53] Taking the Heideggerian argument farther than Heidegger would have dreamed of, Frampton calls for a rigorous place-making in architecture that is not a cover for romantic nostalgia and backwardness, but rather, that acknowledges the very process

---

[49] Jules Lubbock, "No Place like Home," *Times Literary Supplement* November 1, 2002. This includes a review of Frampton's just-published *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design* (London: Phaidon, 2002).
[50] Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," 442.
[51] Ibid., 443.
[52] Ibid. For Heidegger's distinction between *Spatium* and *Raum*, see "Building Dwelling Thinking," 154-155.
[53] Ibid., 444.

of production itself: "One has to recognize the dialectical opposition of place and production and not confuse the one with the other, that is, ends with means. For where *place* is essentially qualitative and in and of itself concrete and static, *production* tends to stress quantity and to be in and of itself dynamic and abstract."[54] Only "through a profound consciousness of history and through a rigorous socio-political analysis of the present, seen as the continuing fulfillment of the past," can current theorists and architects hope to redress the excessive abstraction and inhuman systemization, the complete disregard for social and historical context, that had come to define the modernist urban utopia, something for which Pruitt-Igoe would become but a synecdochical example. If there is anything obviously motivating Frampton's criticism, it is a profoundly sensitive ethical sensitivity.

In "On Reading Heidegger," Frampton brings a Marxian awareness of history to bear on Heidegger's suspicions of modern building practices. The two streams of intellectual influence mix in the tumultuous rapids of Frampton's criticism of modernist abstraction and formalism, what he eventually calls "the utilitarian tyranny of technique."[55] Frampton, like Heidegger, finds modern architecture lacking of any real human context, of even any natural context for that matter. He thus follows Heidegger in calling for a more "rooted ecological" perspective on building and designing in the face of the current "manifest impoverishment of the environment."[56] He also calls for an architecture that creates a place for community, for "the public sphere" as he calls it at one point.[57] There are hints of an Arendtian concern for the space of politics displayed

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 445.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 444.

here, a topic Frampton would return to in the years to come, as he developed more extensively his suggestions for an architecture of place-making.[58] But as early as 1974, Frampton knew who the enemies of place-making were, and he did not hesitate in pointing them out:

> Certainly the creation of place, in both an ontological and political sense, is generally ill-served by our persistent policies of laissez-faire dispersal, and what is true for the essence of the *res publica* also applies with equal force to the "catchment" limits of public transportation. All discourse on the built environment that does not make at least a reference to these kinds of basic contradictions, between the so-called short and long term interests in the society, tends towards a mystification of the historical circumstances in which we work.[59]

The suburbanizing modern metropolis, already in decline across America by 1974, was a kind of fantastical non-place, which paid as little attention to its denizens and the natural environment as it did the process of production. Frampton was only exposing the cracks already apparent in its endless pavement, cracks which even some postmodern critics, in their rush to valorize a supposedly liberating vernacular architecture of parking lots and strip malls, tended to overlook.[60]

"On Reading Heidegger" predates the more widely read and influential manifesto, "Towards a Critical Regionalism," wherein Frampton develops more thoroughly this notion of place-making in architecture. The essay, which "has proven immensely influential on practitioners" according to at least one commentator, has taken many forms

---

[58] See "The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects: A Reading of the Human Condition," in *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present / Architectural Design Profile* (1982), 6-19. Arendt's book was of course a rereading of Heidegger.
[59] Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," 445.
[60] See Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots or Learning from Las Vegas," *Architectural Forum* 128 No. 2 (March 1968), 36-43. Frampton was, needless to say, very critical of Venturi and Scott Brown, and carried on a lengthy printed exchange with them. See Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 308-309.

over the years.[61] The idea of critical regionalism was first introduced in an essay from 1982 entitled "The Isms of Contemporary Architecture."[62] Many of the basic premises of critical regionalism are already outlined here—chief among them being that regionalism in architecture is "antipathetic to internationalism and to the cult of the 'star'.[63] Regionalism operates with and out of specific local traditions and cultures. At its most fundamental level, Frampton suggests that regionalism rests on a single principle, "it is surely committed to *place* rather than *space*; or in the Heideggerian terminology, to *raum* rather than *spatium in extensio.*"[64] Critical regionalism is thus founded on a distinction Heidegger originally outlined in "Building Dwelling Thinking" in 1951. But just as he did in "On Reading Heidegger" some eight years earlier, Frampton goes beyond Heidegger, infusing this distinction between abstract space and local place with a Marxian, critical force. "The universal Megalopolis," as he ends the essay,

> intends, in fact, the reduction of the environment to nothing but pure commodity. As an abacus of development it consists of little more than a hallucinatory landscape in which nature fuses into instrument and vice versa. Regionalism would seem to offer the sole possibility of resisting the rapacity of this tendency. Its salient cultural precept is 'place' creation; its general model is the 'enclave'—that is, the bounded urban fragment against which the inundation of the place-less, consumerist environment will find itself momentarily checked.[65]

This passage concludes, almost verbatim, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," the next incarnation of the essay, which appeared in *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural*

---

[61] Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 468. A condensed version of the essay can also be found in Frampton's *Modern Architecture*. See note 62 below.
[62] Kenneth Frampton, "The Isms of Contemporary Architecture," *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present / Architectural Design Profile* (1982), 60-82.
[63] Ibid., 81. These are sentiments both expressed, especially against the cult of the architectural star, in the preface to the third edition of Frampton's classic *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 3rd Edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992).
[64] Ibid., 82.
[65] Ibid.

Journal in 1983.[66] The article is for the most part an expanded version of the section on regionalism in "The Isms of Contemporary Architecture" from the year before. The only substantial change Frampton made when reprinting this moving conclusion is evident in the title of the piece itself—the inclusion of 'critical' before regionalism. It is a minor change, but one which helps him distinguish between his rigorously political project and what he early on in the essay calls a "simplistic evocation of a sentimental or ironic vernacular."[67] Again, Heidegger appears only briefly here, in the second version of the Frampton's essay, and in exactly the same fashion as the first. It is only in the third and most definitive version of the work that Heidegger receives a more thoroughgoing treatment.

"Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," the most pointed and definitive expression of Frampton's agenda yet, was also published in 1983, but this time, for a much broader audience. It appeared in a volume edited by Hal Foster called *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, which included many of the leading figures of the so-called culture wars, such as Jean Baudrillard, Jürgen Habermas, and Frederic Jameson.[68] The article's manifesto-like numbering of its arguments—certainly a relic of the theoretical firefights of this era—lends itself well to Frampton's polemical style. He wastes no time situating this architectural call to arms in a broad critical tradition, one which sees in modern technology a pernicious and harmful attachment to the instrumental reason of the Enlightenment project. Indeed, he opens the

---

[66] Kenneth Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal* 20 (1983), 147-162. Reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 470-482.
[67] Ibid., 471. In only the second sentence of the text, Frampton makes it clear that "such a regionalism depends, by definition, on a connection between the political consciousness of a society and the profession."
[68] Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), 16-30.

essay with this: "Modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited."[69] But it is not only the high-tech that threatens local places. Its mirror-image, "nostalgic historicism," what Frampton also calls "the glibly decorative," is equally guilty of obscuring the processes of modern lived experience by means of the process of commodification.[70]

The thrust of Frampton's manifesto revolves around a distinction he makes early on between civilization, which "has been concerned with instrumental reason" since the time of the Enlightenment, and culture.[71] Instrumental reason, the driving force behind the product of modernization itself, had, certainly by the time of the cold war, seemingly run aground, having brought the world "to the threshold of nuclear war and the annihilation of the entire species."[72] But Frampton is skeptical of avant-gardism in the realm of culture just as well. Thus, he carefully makes every attempt to distance his doctrine of critical regionalism from the utopianism of the tradition of the avant-garde. In this sense, Frampton's idea of critical regionalism is a response to precisely that quandary in which architectural modernism in America found it itself by the mid to late seventies—as a revolutionary ideal, it had proven disastrous, as the Second World War and the Holocaust had shown; and as a handmaiden to the universalizing expansion of capital across the globe, it had proven all too successful.

Frampton uses Heidegger to outline a certain critical stance regarding modernity itself as well as a certain ecological consciousness, a rootedness in place. Heidegger's

---

[69] Ibid., 17.
[70] Ibid., 20. This, of course, is an attack on figures such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown.
[71] Ibid., 17.
[72] Ibid., 19.

writings from the fifties had of course married a critique of instrumental reason with a defense of local place, and one can see the influence of these on Frampton in passages such as the following:

> the main antagonist of rooted culture is the ubiquitous air-conditioner, applied in all times and in all places, irrespective of the local climatic conditions which have a capacity to express the specific place and the seasonal variations of its climate. Wherever they occur, the fixed window and the remote-controlled air-conditioning system are mutually indicative of domination by universal technique.[73]

But as dependent as his notion of critical regionalism is on Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking," especially for this distinction between place and space, Frampton does have his suspicions of the Freiburg philosopher. Heidegger's esoteric and seemingly mystical conception of Being, always a concern for even the most initiated of devotees, could certainly be a stumbling block. But, "when confronted with the ubiquitous placelessness of our modern environment," following Heidegger's lead "in order to create an architecture of resistance" that might stand against "the endless processal flux of the Megalopolis" is perhaps a burden worth bearing in Frampton's opinion.[74]

Interestingly enough, Frampton does not express any concern regarding Heidegger's political past. Missing is any reference to, if not Heidegger's overt Nazism, then at least his lasting and romantic attachment—evident even in "Building Dwelling Thinking"—to the very idea of the German *Volk*, a term not only drenched in racist prejudices but used to justify, in Heidegger's day, the most horrendous of crimes as well. Frampton's omission is in part understandable. The so-called Farías affair, the intellectual scandal that erupted following the publication of Victor Farías's expose of

[73] Ibid., 27.
[74] Ibid., 24, 25.

Heidegger's political past and which brought forth the most recent round of inquiry into this question, would not erupt until 1987.[75] Nevertheless, many of the details of Heidegger's political past were available to those who went looking for them, especially if they looked to Heidegger's writings devoted to questions of place. Even if Frampton had better things to do with his time, the reactionary tendencies in such texts as "Building Dwelling Thinking," reactionary tendencies more suspicious even than Heidegger's "hermetically metaphysical" concept of Being, should have been plainly evident.[76] Frampton must have thought that he had bigger fish to fry, for these issues do not concern him here, and are not mentioned. In this sense, the cause of critical regionalism makes for a tricky tight-rope act insofar as it tries to mediate between a Marxian awareness of capitalist development and a Heideggerian defense of local culture, of "nearness" in the face of placelessness.[77] This, finally, is what Frampton is most interested in rescuing. Somewhere between the modern, the antimodern, and the postmodern, his critical regionalism tires to eek out a place for the mediation of local place and international, cosmopolitan space, all while "maintaining a high level of critical self-consciousness."[78]

There are interesting parallels between Frampton's work and some of the positions staked out decades earlier by America's foremost architectural critic, Lewis Mumford. Like Frampton, Mumford felt strongly about the importance of regionalism in planning and design. As one recent commentator has explained, "Mumford believed

---

[75] Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, edited, with a foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi, German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989). The book was originally published in France in 1987.
[76] Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," 24.
[77] Ibid., 29.
[78] Ibid., 21.

strongly in a regional rather than an international basis for modern architecture."[79] This belief guided his involvement with the Regional Planning Commission in the twenties.[80] Mumford did become a supporter of the architectural modernism of the International Style, it is true, for he saw in it an attempt to provide public housing among other things. But, in part due to his belief in the importance of regionalism, he grew increasingly critical of its bland uniformity, as well as its technocratic nature. Although initially a supporter of attempts to use technology to improve the quality of life, Mumford, like Heidegger, came to see the growth of technology during the cold war as a danger, and even became an outspoken critic of military buildup. Indeed, although they were as different as two thinkers could possibly be, the intellectual trajectories of Mumford and Heidegger at times seem strikingly, even shockingly similar.[81] It seems, however, that by the time of Heidegger's initial American reception, Mumford had fallen out of favor amongst critics and theorists alike. Students were more likely to come across him reading the modish French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari than they are anywhere else.[82] Thus it was Heidegger, and not Mumford, who most inspired Frampton's notion of critical regionalism.

---

[79] Robert Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Eutopian Theories for Architecture and Urban Planning* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 91.
[80] Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community,* 215.
[81] This, of course, is a topic for another time. But, in their critiques of technology, in their defense of regionalism over and against internationalism, and in their talk of the importance of community, Mumford and Heidegger end up articulating positions more similar to each other than one would ever imagine. They both share, for example, a Spenglerian background; see Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism*, 99. Given their similar critiques of modernism, especially modern technology, it is perhaps no surprise that both Heidegger and Mumford were later rediscovered by communitarians and environmentalists alike. See Casey Blake, "Lewis Mumford," in Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg, eds., *A Companion to American Thought* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 474-476. See also, Blake, *Beloved Community*. On Heidegger and environmentalism, see note 47 above.
[82] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, preface by Michel Foucault, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 141.

Influential as it has been, Frampton's reading of Heidegger did not arise ex nihilo. It had important and recognizable precedents, such as the work of the Norwegian thinker, Christian Norberg-Schulz. It was his *Intentions in Architecture*, first published in 1963, that for all intents and purposes inaugurated the theoretical turn in architectural criticism. Drawing on the work of such noted philosophers as Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and of course Heidegger himself, Norberg-Schulz used phenomenology—as well as linguistics and even psychology—throughout his career to draw attention to the lived experience of architecture, to combat the level of abstraction inherent in modernism.[83] In "The Phenomenon of Place," from 1976, he focused on the importance of place, and used Heidegger to lament the loss of "the everyday life-world, which ought to be the real concern of man in general and planners and architects in particular," in modern, functionalist architecture.[84] Heidegger's notion of dwelling was helpful insofar as it points to the concrete, to the phenomena of lived experience—from people, plants, and animals to houses, streets, and the changing seasons. "The basic act of architecture is therefore to understand the 'vocation' of place."[85] Architects have the privileged task of establishing and preserving place, of defending the "everyday life-world" against the forces of abstraction and rationalization, that is, against the forces of architectural modernism. Recognition of the natural environment is of course part of this, but it should not take the form of a facile return-to-the-earth environmentalism. Instead, Norberg-Schulz only suggested that "man is an integral part of the environment, and that it can

[83] Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1965).
[84] Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," *Architectural Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1976), 3-10. Reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 414.
[85] Ibid., 426.

only lead to human alienation and environmental disruption if he forgets that."[86] By poetically dwelling on the earth, we can forestall this fate.

Norberg-Schulz returned to many of themes again in an essay that appeared in *Oppositions* in 1979, "Kahn, Heidegger, and the Language of Architecture."[87] Here, via a comparison with the architect Louis Kahn, Norberg-Schulz distills Heidegger's relevancy for architecture down to this key theoretical maxim: "*The creation of places is the purpose of architecture*."[88] This insight would be the cornerstone of Norberg-Schulz's most detailed reading of Heidegger, "Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture," which appeared in four years later.[89]

In a bit of intellectual synergy, Heidegger's influence on architectural theory reached a critical mass in the early eighties, what with Frampton, Norberg-Schulz, and so many others turning to the work of the German *Meister* in their criticism of modernism. Many of these commentators gleaned similar insights from their readings of Heidegger. All of them, for example, extolled the place-making task of architecture.[90] But for each thinker and critic this insight led to different conclusions. By the early eighties architectural modernism may have been in, as Norberg –Schulz called it, "a state of confusion and crisis," but by no means was there a consensus regarding what, if anything, should replace it.[91] Norberg-Schulz continued to hope for a return of the importance of dwelling in architectural design, but ultimately, this Heideggerian pining for a more

---

[86] Ibid.
[87] Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture," *Oppositions* 18 (1979), 28-47.
[88] Ibid., 46.
[89] Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture," *Perspecta; The Yale Architecture Journal* 20 (1983), 61-68. Reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 430-439.
[90] Ibid., 435.
[91] Ibid., 437.

"authentic understanding" of architecture represented but one, slightly more romantic approach.[92] Elsewhere across Europe and North America, suggestions were different.[93]

If all this seems a little foreign, a little too Continental in style and tone, it is important to remember that American writers and builders have always bemoaned the detrimental influence of imported influences in architecture—of "importation without assimilation," as Henry Steele Commager once put it—and when it came to the likes of Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe, their scorn was hardly concealed.[94] Frank Lloyd Wright, who perceived in European Modernism a threat to his kingly status in the architectural world, who felt the young Turks nipping at his ankles, was of course quite critical.[95] Mumford, though more open to European modernism than Wright, had his own reservations, which only grew with time, and which led him to spend "a good part of his later career debunking the cult of the International Style as its influence grew within the American architectural profession."[96] Later, Tom Wolfe would put his unsparing pen to the topic in *From Bauhaus to Our House*, leaving hardly a modernist or

---

[92] Ibid. See also, Christian Norberg-Schulz's *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to Figurative Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985) and his last work before his death, which is in many ways a culmination of his work, *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place*, trans. Antony Shugaar (Milan: Skira, 2000).

[93] Although it is an important part of the story I am trying to tell here about the reception of Heidegger's architectural writings in America, I unfortunately do not have the space to go in to the many nuances of Heidegger's reception amongst European intellectual circles. His receptions in Italy and France are most notable in that these national intellectual communities served as veritable way-stations of Heidegger dissemination, where the former Nazi's work was politically refitted to serve the needs of a specifically Leftist (Marxist) critique of modern capitalism. With regard to the Italian architectural reception, see the hugely influential work of the Venice School (Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, and Massimo Cacciari). In particular, see Cacciari's seminal essay "Eupalinos or Architecture," trans. Stephen Sartarelli, *Oppositions* 21 (Summer 1980); reprinted in Hays, *Architecture/Theory Since 1968*, op. cit., 392-405. For France, see the work of Henri Lefebvre, the Situationists, and Jacques Derrida. Not to be overlooked is of course the German reception itself. See the recent collection edited by Eduard Führ, *Bauen und Wohnen: Martin Heideggers Grundlegung einer Phänomenologie der Architektur / Building and Dwelling: Martin Heidegger's Foundation of a Phenomenology of Architecture* (Münster: Waxmann, 2000).

[94] Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1950), 392.

[95] See, for example, Terence Riley, *The International Style: Exhibition 15 and The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Columbia Books of Architecture / Rizzoli, 1992).

[96] Robert Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism*, 91.

post-modernist standing. Wolfe not only derided the postwar fame and celebrity of the International Style in America, but also saw the postmodern critique of it, rooted as it was in foreign philosophy and theory, as merely another example of the corruption of American innocence by degenerate European ideas, of American obsequiousness towards the continent. In this, he effectively beat Allan Bloom, whose *Closing of the American Mind* would not appear for several more years, to the punch.[97] "The twentieth century, the American century," Wolfe wrote, "was now two-thirds over—and the colonial complex was stronger than ever."[98] Following either Wolfe or Bloom down this path to decry a needlessly wide-eyed slavishness to the fashions and ideas of the old world is a tempting but ultimately unsatisfying proposition. Heidegger's influence, like that of modernism itself, has been too profound, too lasting to ignore. One cannot simply strike his name from the historical record.

Ethical Imperatives

If there is any doubt that Heidegger has seeped into the language of architecture today one need only look to a recent issue of the *Architectural Record*. At over 110 years old, it is about the closest thing you can get to an official trade magazine of the profession. And what do we find in the October, 2002 issue? An article entitled "Ethics and the Architect."[99] And whose name appears in the very first paragraph? Heidegger's.

---

[97] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). Bloom, by the way, has a lot to say about Heidegger in *The Closing of the American Mind*, none of it very flattering, as we shall see in the conclusion.

[98] Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1981), 100.

[99] John T. Matteson and Mary Z. Donovan, "Ethics and the Architect," *Architectural Record* Volume 190, no. 10 (October 2002), LexisNexis. If this were not proof enough, one can also find Heidegger mentioned

There is even, a little later on, the obligatory quotation from "Building Dwelling Thinking." The authors of the article, John T. Matteson and Mary Z. Donovan, argue that the architectural profession in the United States has become increasingly concerned with the relation between architecture and ethics in recent years, and they marshal a flurry of recent books and conferences devoted to the topic as evidence. They too suggest that modern architecture stalled in the early seventies, as Vietnam, Pruitt-Igoe, and the faltering economy halted the triumphal march of the International Style. Even closer to our own time, the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11th has thrust architects into the glare of media attention as questions of high-rise safety, rebuilding, and commemoration, to name just a few, are debated and discussed by a still-grieving public. In all of this, Matteson and Donovan detect a growing awareness of the moral responsibility that comes with designing as well as with building, an awareness exemplified by thinkers as diverse as Heidegger, Ruskin, and Aquinas, who "all advised" architects, in they put it in their article, "to create connections with community, with history, and to understand the processes of construction and science that support architecture."[100] In this there is a responsibility to the environment, to public housing, and to "the human landscape."[101]

Heidegger also makes a brief and, admittedly, not very favorable appearance in a recent monograph written by Tom Spector entitled *The Ethical Architect: The Dilemma of Contemporary Practice*.[102] To be sure, Heidegger is not all that relevant to immediate

---

in an *Architectural Record* article from November 2001, "Getting Real," by Robert Ivy, Volume 198, No. 11. LexisNexis.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Tom Spector, *The Ethical Architect: The Dilemma of Contemporary Practice* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001).

professional ethics, what we might call business ethics, and thus he does not appear in things like the American Institute of Architect's ethical code, but he does seem to find his way into just about everything else.[103] Thus, even when critics like Spector express their suspicions of Heidegger, they tend nonetheless to adopt a Heideggerian tone in condemning the over-systemization and rationalization, the excesses of pure functionalism and formalism, that marked the International Style.[104] It seems no discussion of architectural ethics is complete these days without at least a footnote to "Building Dwelling Thinking."

An interesting way to chart the absorption of Heidegger, particularly texts like "Building Dwelling Thinking," into the American architectural consciousness is to follow the work of the Yale philosopher, and Heidegger scholar, Karsten Harries, who has written extensively on "the ethical function of architecture." Originally the title of a very brief, two-page piece published in the *Journal of Architectural Education* in 1975, about a year after the publication Frampton's "On Reading Heidegger" in *Oppositions*, this phrase remained the headline of Harries's many attempts to fruitfully apply Heidegger's writings to current architectural practice. Harries used it again for a longer essay that appeared ten years later, and finally, for a book, which appeared some ten years after that. Harries has proven a careful interpreter of Heidegger's architectural writings, and his influence at Yale's school of architecture is difficult to overestimate (we need only point to the many influential articles—by Harries, by Norberg-Schulz, and others—published in the school's journal, *Perspecta*, as proof).[105] When references are now made to

---

[103] Ibid., viii.
[104] Ibid., see 208.
[105] Harries has even supervised dissertations on the subject of Heidegger and Architecture. See Gerald Lee Walker, *Heidegger and Modern Architecture*, (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993).

Heidegger, such as in the recent *Architectural Record* article, they usually include a reference to Harries' work as well. Following the evolution of his notion of the ethical function of architecture provides a useful recap of the many issues we have encountered thus far while simultaneously pointing us in new directions.

In its original formulation, "The Ethical Function of Architecture" (1975) is an elucidation of the trope of homelessness that plays a central role in Heidegger's postwar writings, as well as, you will remember, in authors like Adorno. Modern technology, from airplanes to television, has effectively negated distance, and in doing so, it has led to the "homogeneity and indifference of place."[106] Harries accepts Heidegger's description of ethics as *ēthos*, as dwelling, and argues that architecture's "*ethical function*" resides in its ability "to articulate and even to establish man's *ethos*."[107] But this task of architecture is one that has fallen by the wayside. Like Frampton and so many others, Harries traces this loss back to the Enlightenment: "since the Enlightenment we have found it difficult to take seriously the ethical function of architecture. This difficulty is a consequence of the emphasis which has been placed on reason and objectivity."[108] "Technological culture," the living legacy of Enlightenment reason, is certainly to blame insofar as "it insists not so much on dwellings as on machines for working and living."[109] Even more blame-worthy is modern disregard for the environment. Harries puts it quite simply: "The attempt to impose on nature the order of a disembodied reason has lead to an inhuman architecture."[110] It is on this pessimistic note that he concludes the essay.

---

[106] Karsten Harries, The Ethical Function of Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education* 29:1 (September 1975), 14-15; reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 395.
[107] Ibid., 395.
[108] Ibid., 396.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.

Although he maintains that architects have the power to combat homelessness (unfortunately not the real thing, just the philosophical one) in the modern world, to foster dwelling with their work, the problem goes very deep. Indeed, "the condition of our culture leaves little room for optimism."[111]

The same pessimism permeates "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture" (1983) and the second version of "The Ethical Function of Architecture" (1985), though in these instances it gets a more detailed explanation.[112] Beginning, in the latter, like so many of the thinkers we have examined thus far, with the assertion that "architecture is in a confused state," Harries goes on to expound on the theme of homelessness brought up in the first version, this time using the mobile home as an example.[113] Ultimately, he suggests that "the earth itself has become a mobile home," that "we continue to dream of a more genuine home, of an architecture strong enough to assign us our place and to rescue us from the meaningless homogeneity of space."[114] Part of the problem is a lack of community, for the relationship of the individual to the community, like that of the individual to the home, has become merely accidental and rootless.[115] Again, technology and objective reason are to blame. Stepping up the rhetoric put forth in the initial incarnation of the essay, Harries proclaims that "objective reason knows neither ethos nor

---

[111] Ibid.
[112] Karsten Harries, "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture," *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal* 20 (1983), 9-20. Reprinted in David Seamon, ed., Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 41-59. Karsten Harries, "The Ethical Function of Architecture," in Don Idhe and Hugh J. Silverman, eds., *Descriptions* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), 129-140.
[113] "The Ethical Function of Architecture," in Idhe and Silverman, *Descriptions*, 133.
[114] Ibid., 138.
[115] Ibid., 133-134, 136.

home," that reason so construed cannot know anything of the ethical function of art or architecture."[116]

Missing in both early versions of the essay is any acknowledgement of the reactionary tendencies of Heidegger's work. Whether or not it was the so-called Heidegger scandal that erupted after the publication of Victor Farías's *Heidegger and Nazism* in 1987 that prompted Harries to be more careful in marrying Heidegger to contemporary architectural theory is difficult to say. But there certainly is a noticeable shift in tone in the final, book-length version of *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (1997). The chapter devoted specifically to Heidegger, "Building and Dwelling," which is largely an exposition of "Building Dwelling Thinking," ends on a critical note, warning theorists to stay away from fast and easy appropriations of the of Freiburg philosopher. Although Harries still holds up Heidegger as a trenchant critic of modern dwelling, or the seeming impossibility thereof, he spends more time exploring the potentially romantic and reactionary consequences of Heidegger's writings on dwelling. Here mention is finally made of Nazism, of the "seductive simplicity of Heidegger's Black Forest farmhouse," and his "disastrous attempt to reappropriate the archaic in the modern age."[117]

As Harries's oft-cited book demonstrates, Heidegger has been an ambiguous source of inspiration for architectural theorists interested in the problem of ethics. Even though Harries is critical of Heidegger, he still ends up taking too much of his work at

---

[116] Ibid., 137.

[117] Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997). To be fair, Harries was among the first to instigate a debate about Heidegger's Nazism in the United States in the wake of the Farías affair. See his foreword to Günther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, introduction by Karsten Harries, trans. Lisa Harries, French portions trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Paragon House, 1990).

face value. The result is troubling, such as one passage that explains the Holocaust as just another instance in the crisis of dwelling.[118] Even if we think of *ēthos* in the broad sense as "the way human beings exist in the world," this path of thought is problematic, and explains little. It spawns a rarefied intellectual discourse that obscures as much as it reveals.[119] Even J. Glenn Gray, a philosopher who shared many of Heidegger's suspicions regarding technology and modernism, had to admit as much.[120]

Heidegger's tendency to link everyday concerns with epochal developments in the history of thought is part of his appeal as a grand thinker, but this intellectual approach has specific limitations. Totalizing condemnations of modern architecture, a phenomenon which, as we have seen, has a specific origin and development that can be traced in artistic, political, and ultimately historical registers, only obscure the concrete realities of this building practice and its eventual deployment around the world. And more, Heidegger-inspired architectural analysis often tends toward the idealized and esoteric.[121] It is the work of someone like Frampton, who mediates between theoretical and practical planes of analysis, which offers the most fruitful approach. But even Frampton slips into a rather abstract discourse extolling the vices and virtues of globe-trotting superstar architects. Even he, in the end, has trouble kicking the habit of capital "A" architecture.

---

[118] Ibid., 165.
[119] This is true of Harries's most recent work on this theme as well. See his "In Search of Home," in Eduard Führ, ed., *Bauen und Wohnen*, *op. cit.*, 101-120.
[120] See J. Glenn Gray, "The Splendor of the Simple," and "Poets and Thinkers: Their Kindred Roles in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger," *On Understanding Violence Philosophically and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970).
[121] If awards were to be handed our for the worst piece of writing devoted to the subject of Heidegger and architecture, I would nominate Rebecca Comay's "Almost Nothing—Heidegger and Mies," in Detlef Mertins, ed., *The Presence of Mies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994) for the grand prize.

Conclusion: Rebuilding the World Trade Center

When it comes to the ethics of building, we might do better to follow the example of social critics like Mike Davis, whose pioneering works on Los Angeles have done so much to re-ignite interest in the policies and politics of urban (re)development and in concrete questions of metropolitan life more generally.[122] Here in New York, the sociological work of someone like Sharon Zukin, who has herself spoken of the need for moral landscapes (though in a rather different sense than Heidegger's *ēthos*), and who has criticized the role that 'superstar' architecture has played in so-called urban renewal projects in cities across the country, provides a healthy counterbalance to overly fuzzy architectural theory.[123] Even more immediately relevant might be Mike Wallace's recent little book, *A New Deal for New York*. It is in many ways a modern-day version of E. B. White's classic *Here is New York* for a post 9/11 city, a city still recovering, architecturally and monetarily, but also emotionally.[124]

---

[122] See Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, with photographs by Robert Morrow (New York: Verso, 1990) and *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), but also works like *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City*, Revised and Expanded Edition (New York: Verso, 2001).

[123] See Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). By fuzzy, I mean, among other things, overly aestheticized portrayals of architecture such as the recent MOMA exhibit, "The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman collection," October 24, 2002 to January 6, 2003. As well as being the stuff of sketches, watercolors, and neat models, architecture is a social process.

[124] Mike Wallace, *A New Deal for New York* (New York: Gotham Center Books, 2002). E. B. White, *Here is New York*, with a new introduction by Roger Angell (New York: The Little Bookroom, 1999). Reading E.B. White after September 11th was an eerie experience. At the end of the essay, in a sudden change of tone, White remarks of "the subtlest change in New York" in the years after the Second World War, after Horishima and Nagasaki and in the midst of the warming cold war. It is a change "people don't speak much about but that is on everyone's mind. The city, for the first time in its long history, is destructible. A single flight of planes no bigger than a wedge of geese can quickly end this island fantasy, burn the towers, crumble the bridges, turn the underground passages into lethal chambers, cremate the millions. The intimation of mortality is part of New York now: in the sound of jets overhead, in the black headlines of the latest edition." Words more relevant now than ever before.

I feel no hesitation in dating the writing of this chapter, of placing it squarely in New York City, well, in Brooklyn to be exact, in the aftermath of September 11th, in the context of debates about rebuilding the World Trade Center site.[125] Questions of ethics have been raised frequently throughout the process of rebuilding. Daniel Libeskind, who, early on, spoke of "the moral obligation in rebuilding Ground Zero," is familiar with the Heideggerian conception of ethical architecture, something we will explore in greater detail in the following section.[126]

Without suggesting any ridiculous equivalence between the two, it is worth remembering amidst all of the World Trade Center redevelopment debates that the original towers were completed about the time that the Pruitt-Igoe towers were torn down. Current talk of rebuilding is thus necessarily caught up in the midst of our ongoing struggles with modernism and all that it entails, from urban renewal to the ebbs and flows of international or global capitalism (ostensibly part of the reason why the World Trade Center towers were targeted).

Amidst all the glamour of international architectural bedazzlement, we must not turn our attention away from questions of a more concrete nature, from what is good for the many communities who live, work, and play in lower Manhattan as opposed to what is simply good for business. Ultimately, such questions are the ones that an ethical—in the sense of *ēthos*—architecture simply cannot ignore. We would do well to think from the ground up—quite literally from Ground Zero—rather than the heavens down. Rather

---

[125] For a very insightful review of the context, see Martin Filler, "More than Zero," *The New Republic* September 9th, 2002. Sharon Zukin has also edited, along with Michael Sorkin, a volume of essays devoted to analyzing the attacks of September 11th and their aftermath in New York and globally. See *After the World Trade Center* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[126] Think Design, "Introduction," www.renewnyc.com/plan_des_dev/wtc_site/new_design_plans/firm-e/default.asp.

than thinking of Heidegger's fourfold and its talk of divinities, perhaps we should simply remember that, in the words Henry Steele Commager, as he assessed the American architectural scene at mid-century, "the skyscraper developed along with the slum and that cities which boasted the ability and wealth to erect the most towering buildings seemed unable to provide decent housing for the men and women who worked in them."[127]

[127] Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind*, 402. Frederic Jameson's "The Brick and the Balloon: Architecture, Idealism and Land Speculation," in *The Cultural Turn* is also useful on this note.

EXCRUSUS II
Daniel Libeskind and Post-Heideggerian Architecture

Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and the other great modernist masters argued that buildings should present a neutral face to the world, but theirs is a philosophy that feels almost quaint now. Neutral? After the political, cultural, and spiritual devastations of the twentieth century, is it possible to embrace an antiseptic reality? Do we really want to be surrounded by buildings that are soulless and dull? Or do we confront our histories, our complicated and messy realities, or unadulterated emotions, and create an architecture for the twenty-first century?

—Daniel Libeskind[1]

These days, the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site is just another local news story. But it was not so long ago that the future of Lower Manhattan was the stuff of regular front-page headlines, both here in New York City and around the globe. Never before had so many people cared so much about the ins and outs of the contemporary architectural scene. As the design competition for the future of the World Trade Center site neared its grand, media-orchestrated finale, one could hardly open The *New York Times* without being introduced to some particular aspect of the international architectural avant-garde. Some articles were insightful, giving the general public a crash course in the last twenty-five years of architectural design, others—to be found, admittedly, in the Sunday Styles section—were just plain ridiculous, such as pieces on Daniel Libeskind's footwear (cowboy boots) or Rafael Viñoly's eyewear (wild frames).[2] All in all, though, it was a heady time for architecture, and nobody seemed shy about

---

An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Daniel Libeskind: From the End of Architecture to the Space of Memory," in Gary Backhaus and John Murungi, eds., *Lived Topographies: and their Mediating Forces* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 145-160.

[1] Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground: An Immigrant's Journey from Poland to the United States*, with Sarah Crichton (New York: Riverhead, 2004), 12-13.

[2] David Colman, "These Boots Are Made for Drafting," *New York Times*, January 26, 2003; Ruth La Ferla, "Let Me Guess, You Must Be an Architect," *New York Times*, February 9, 2003.

offering up their pronouncements and predictions regarding the future of architecture after the World Trade Center.

The Polish-born Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind, a naturalized U.S. citizen, won the competition. And on February 27th, 2003, he introduced his design to the nation (those of us in New York had already seen it in the papers or at the Winter Garden). In addition to preserving the footprints of the original twin towers, Libeskind's vision for the site highlighted the so-called slurry wall, the massive bulwark that remained intact throughout the chaos and destruction of September 11th, 2001, ensuring that the waters of the Hudson would not flood Lower Manhattan in the aftermath of the attacks. Fittingly, Libeskind entitled his design "Memory Foundations."

In his presentation, Libeskind spoke of the importance of dialogue, of how architecture today must necessarily submit itself to a process of community involvement not unlike the one that defined the World Trade Center site competition, which was announced only after a series of designs, railroaded through by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation in the summer of 2002, was roundly rejected by the public. In opposition to the traditional tropes of architectural design (à la Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*), wherein the architect, like some kind of god, imposes his—always his—will on a blank space and gives it shape and form, life even, Libeskind spoke instead of "compromise" and "negotiation".[3] Lest the public deliberation of an involved community be seen as an affront to the memory of those who died on September 11th, however, Libeskind emphasized that the need for compromise would not weaken the "ethical integrity" of the project. "Compromise" was not to be thought of, as it so often

[3] For a comprehensive analysis of Rand's worldview, see Jennifer Burns, "Godless Capitalism: Ayn Rand and the Conservative Movement," *Modern Intellectual History* 1:3 (November, 2004): 359-385.

is, as a dirty word. To be sure, there was a lot of advertising savvy in this kind of talk, on the part of the LMDC but also Libeskind himself, and I will return to this (to what we might call, in Habermassian terms, the colonization of the architectural lifeworld).[4] But there is a less cynical way to look at these remarks. This could also be seen as an architectural response to the unique circumstances of architecture today, in this age of globalization as well as terror.

* * *

Libeskind, it turned out, was uniquely qualified to undertake the task of building upon a site so infused with a tragic popular memory. His first realized design was for the Jewish Museum Extension in Berlin. It was a project that confronted no less than the Holocaust, which his own parents had survived (Libeskind was born in Lodz in 1946). That project, which Libeskind called "Between the Lines," proved to be an architectural ordeal of the highest order. After a decade of political wrangling, a decade of momentous events including no less than the fall of the Berlin Wall, the project was finally completed amidst a resoundingly, if not unanimously, glowing reception. Indeed, the Jewish Museum Extension is the design upon which Libeskind's fame, prior to the World Trade Center, largely rested. But there is more to Libeskind's career than just the Jewish Museum and the World Trade Center site. In what follows, I will provide a sketch of Libeskind's intellectual development, showing how "Memory Foundations"

[4] See, for example, the materials put out by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, such as "The Public Dialogue: Innovative Design Study, February 27, 2003," released in conjunction with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

emerges from a career of theoretical and practical work both. I hope, most of all, to show how his career-long confrontation with the legacies of modernism and totalitarianism has shaped his work up until this very day, and has been mediated by certain Heideggerian concepts and premises. This task demands that we mine Libeskind's theoretical work—much of it completed long before even the Jewish Museum Extension—and that we puncture the superstar aura that has accrued around him in the wake of the World Trade Center site competition. Daniel Libeskind did not emerge out of nowhere, suddenly, as if from the head of Zeus.

The Education of an Architect

Before he was a globe-trotting architectural superstar, Libeskind was, most of all, a teacher. As a young but influential teacher—at out-of-the-way Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, where he was head of the architecture program—he lectured often about what he then referred to as the "end of architecture". Such eschatological talk can be traced back even further, though, to his own studies. As a student, both at Cooper Union in New York (under John Hejduk and Peter Eisenman) and Essex University in England, he had clearly read Heidegger. He was apparently quite taken with Heidegger's critique of modern rationality and technology, for it formed a large part of his Master's Thesis at Essex.[5] From the first lines of this early text, "Imagination and Space" (1972), Libeskind made his opposition to the objectifying tendencies of modernist architecture readily apparent:

---

[5] Libeskind's M.A. thesis at Essex, "Imagination and Space" (1972), was in large part a reading of Heidegger. See the Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:12.5.

> To one conditioned by the prevailing themes of rationality, technology and increased mechanical functionalization of all aspects of our day to day lives, any talk of imagination or the value of architecture as art or their mutual intertwining in reality, inevitably seems like an easy escape from the seriousness of necessary tasks. (And most everyone today would agree on one thing: that responsibility to 'positive' tasks is primary.)[6]

Buried beneath layers of technological sediment was architecture as art, architecture as poetry. But how to unearth it? For even the "genuine questioning" of "the relationship between technology and our lives," as Libeskind put it in "Imagination and Space," "has reached a sort of dead-end."[7] He lamented that, thanks to the dominance of rationalism, we experience the world "within an increasingly shrinking horizon."[8] In the world of architecture this was especially true. Scientific planning and technological proficiency had effectively displaced the poetic sensibility of the architect. Substance, in other words, reigned supreme. Libeskind's thesis was a plea for the architectural imagination, which was increasingly stifled, ignored, shackled.

So from very early on, Libeskind had already staked out a position opposed to the systemization and formalism of architectural design. He passed on this critical perspective—largely a distrust of Modernist architecture, which was machine-age architecture par excellence—to his students, for his lecture notes are full of it.[9] Again and again he pitted the architect as artist against the architect as technological manipulator. He talked about the invasion of the home by the factory and the machine. To him, the entire nineteenth century was a battleground for the continuous struggle between the engineer and the architect. Sounding very much like the Heidegger of "Building Dwelling Thinking," who lamented the loss of authentic and meaning-rich

---

[6] Libeskind, "Imagination and Space," 1.
[7] Libeskind, "Imagination and Space," 1.
[8] Libeskind, "Imagination and Space," 2.
[9] See Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960).

dwellings in the modern world of science and technology, Libeskind told his students that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "the engineer began to take hold of the house—starting with the warehouse and store—but in the end going on to the dwelling house itself."[10] Not content with the structures of public business, of production and exchange, the calculative mentality had invaded even the private residence.

The history of architecture Libeskind offered his first students centered upon this usurpation of architecture by engineering. "All that was once reserved for the architect," he told them, "has either disintegrated or has been drawn into the orbit of the engineer." "The Revolt of the Engineer against the Architect," he went on, "of utility against the claims (transcendental) of Art," resulted in "the total victory of the new powers." The new powers of the machine age—planning, technology, engineering—began to "act as dictator" over all realms, effectively banishing from architecture any concern for "the spiritual or emotional content" of building. What Libeskind described as architecture's "transcendental function," its ability to address just such spiritual and emotional concerns (stuff at the core of the Word Trade Center site design competition), thus fell prey to the—and his choice of words here is key—"Totalitarian tendencies" of architecture in the age of the engineer. Even before the high Modernism of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, Libeskind detected a "drive towards uniformity," a drive founded on a rationalism wherein the "factory and the machine" became the models of all design.[11]

There was, in this victory of the engineer over the architect, a homogenizing tendency at work, and this is what Libeskind described as totalitarian. This

---

[10] Daniel Libeskind, "Lecture Notebook 1, 1974," n.p., Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:10.3. See also, Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 143-161.

[11] All quotations from Libeskind, "Lecture Notebook 1, 1974," n.p.

homogenizing, totalitarian tendency reached its apogee with, in Libeskind's words, "an outburst of hate on the part of the machine-man against architecture as such." One needed to look no further than the Modernism of Corbusier to find evidence of this. Indeed, it was Corbusier, Libeskind reminded his student audiences, who demanded that "the heart of our ancient cities with their spires & cathedrals must be shattered in pieces & replaced by skyscrapers." This was the Armageddon-like end of architecture, and it merely solidified a process put in motion by the rationalism of the Enlightenment, or so Libeskind suggested, all the way back in the eighteenth century. For the greatest danger architecture could face, according to Libeskind, was "dissolving into geometry & engineering construction," which, under Modernism, it did.[12]

Libeskind's early work as a theorist was predicated on this interpretation of the history of architecture. This victory of the engineer over the architect, of the uniformity of design in the machine age over heterogeneity, spelled, for him, the end of architecture. The higher calling of architecture had been lost to mere geometry. Although Libeskind reached this position as early as the mid seventies, it was by no means a unique one. Indeed, we have to place Libeskind's reading of the history of architecture alongside a body of work—growing immensely during this time—which would later be grouped together under the rubric of postmodernism. It is of course no accident that the very term 'postmodernism' comes to us from architectural circles.[13] But without going into the history of this term's use and abuse, let it suffice to say that Libeskind's reading of the history of architecture shares postmodernism's skeptical appraisal of science and rationalism, as well as its weariness of the utopian hubris of Modernism and its addict-

[12] All quotations from Libeskind, "Lecture Notebook 1, 1974," n.p.
[13] See Charles Jencks, *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977).

like relation to technology. Bubbling beneath the surface of Libeskind's work was the kind of crisis-talk which animated the work of Heidegger and the latter-day postmodernists both. Modernism, like the western tradition itself—remember, this was in the wake of Vietnam, student protests, and amidst the cold war—had reached its end; and architecture, it too had collapsed, hollowed out by centuries of technological occupation.

While still at Cranbrook, Libeskind began sketching out an alternate path for architecture. It is worth noting how experimental this was. Throughout his career, Libeskind has continually positioned himself on the fringes of both architectural education and practice, eschewing the consumerism which permeates both. Cranbrook was by no means your ordinary architecture school. While he taught there and even when he taught elsewhere later, Libeskind emphasized a course of study which, far from encouraging students to pursue the usual course of submitting to corporate design competitions, demanded instead that students explore the theoretical and speculative dimensions of design. He urged exploration of "the hermeneutic dimension of architecture, i.e. the attempt at a recovery of meaning which is only possible at the level of the actual making of things."[14] He tried to point his students away from rational, machine-age architecture and towards "the poetic end of Architecture." His students' work was to spring "from the immediacy of meaning and not from a logical deduction or some process of calculation."[15] In a text from 1984 he lamented the collapse of architecture into the "purely instrumental." This took place "in institutions—both

[14] Daniel Libeskind, "The Poetics of Architecture: Works at Cranbrook (1981-1982)," 1, Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061.21.2.
[15] Libeskind, "The Poetics of Architecture," 2.

educational and professional—which are today dominated," in his words, "by an essentially anti-speculative, totalitarian climate; this framework has become habitual."[16]

Libeskind's work at the fringes of architectural education was not limited to his time at Cranbrook. In the late eighties he founded Architecture Intermundium in Italy, an alternative architectural studio and educational center. There, as at Cranbrook, emphasis was placed not so much on designing feasible plans for big contracts, but rather, works of art unrestrained by the practical considerations of money, materials, or style. In his "Open Letter to Architectural Educators and Students of Architecture," a kind of foundational manifesto for the school, Libeskind playfully but passionately decried the corrupt state of architectural education. "Why spend time tediously applying gold-leaf unto a pinnacle of a tower (impressive!) whose foundations are rotten?," he asked. Architecture had been debased, transformed into "into a supermarket of commodities, or worse, a whorehouse of opinions about them."[17] Why would anyone willingly partake in such a thing? No longer interested in creating works of art and meaning, architects, to Libeskind's lament, had become builders of commerce and not imagination. Modernist architecture, that paragon of reason and the machine, was but the latest stage in a long and slow decline, and Libeskind was trying to get people out before it hit bottom.

Just as Libeskind's understanding of the history of architecture was indebted to a certain Heideggerian *Verfallsgeschichte*, to this critique of the sway of instrumental reason over modern life, so to was the direction he tried to point his students in a Heideggerian direction. He urged his students to recapture some of the spiritual and

---

[16] Daniel Libeskind, "The Maladicta of Style, 1984," 3, Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections Accession no. 920061:11.8.
[17] The manifesto has been reprinted, among other places, in Daniel Libeskind, *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997), 155.

emotional content of building, to recapture architecture's transcendental mission. It was a path already laid out by Heidegger—namely, the path of poetry. Against "objectivization," against "abstraction," ultimately against "ideology"—against all this, Libeskind put forward the cause of poetry.[18] But while Heidegger turned to poetry in search of the truth of Being, as an example of the way in which language both reveals and conceals Being, Libeskind clung to it as if it were a solitary life-preserver amidst the flood of modern ultra-rationalism. The contemporary state of architecture was, in his eyes, caught up in a much larger crisis. Reason had led "to a very small cage, the cage of statistics, the cage of manipulation, and perhaps the market index."[19] Only poetry led away from this, away from the horrors of the twentieth century, away from the horrors, most of all, of totalitarianism. After Solzhenitsyn's revelations, there could be no going back to ideology, to instrumental reason.[20]

For one who buys into this Heideggerian historical narrative, the triumph of modernity and the horrors of the twentieth century are intertwined and inescapable. The French Revolution leads necessarily to totalitarianism. Glossing a lengthy quotation from Hegel, from a fragment tellingly entitled "Mythology, National Spirit and Architecture," which describes architecture as reaching its pinnacle, like a skyscraper reaching to the heavens, precisely at the point where it collapses under the strain, Libeskind, in a lecture from 1987, has this to say: "I think it's really an incredible passage, the notion that fulfillment and destruction in the modern world are intertwined, and that it is in that moment of suddenness, kind of prepared by the totality of the situation, that architecture

[18] Daniel Libeskind, "Untitled Lecture, circa 1981," pages 10, 17, 31-32, Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:11.4.
[19] Libeskind, "Untitled Lecture," 34.
[20] Libeskind, "Untitled Lecture," 32.

is revealed and destroyed at the same time."[21] The architecture of modernity, dominated by rationalism and technology, by the totalitarian drive towards uniformity, ultimately self-destructs, like the totalitarian regimes of twentieth century.

Putting architecture back on a non-utilitarian path was, above all else, an ethical duty for Libeskind. It was, as he put it, "a moral obligation illuminated by the spirit and informed by the heart."[22] Even early on (1984) Libeskind recognized that this was a path that had to avoid the pitfalls of both anti-modernism and postmodernism:

> Self-appointed and self-aggrandizing spokesmen arise as representatives of the "Public Good" on whose behalf they propagate a spectrum of reactionary doctrines of style ranging from nostalgic pre-modern conservatism to the post-modern apotheosis of Neo-conservative rubbish. It is apparent that these positions are closely and expediently aligned within the contemporary political climate, saturated as it is with the legacy of the "libido dominandi" now projected into the banality of evil.[23]

Both anti-modernism and postmodernism were symptoms of the end condition of architecture. Both failed to overcome modernism. But could one escape the end of architecture, anymore than they could the end of history?

About the time that he began work on the Jewish Museum Extension, Libeskind began to abandon this architectural *Verfallsgeschichte*. The timing, it seems to me, is not coincidental.[24] For one thing, this was when he began building in the traditional sense. Prior to the Jewish museum competition, Libeskind produced what we might call art

---

[21] Daniel Libeskind, "Architecture Intermundium, 1987," Lecture as part of the Spring Lecture Series at the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Architecture, 2, Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:11.14.

[22] Daniel Libeskind, "The Maladicta of Style, 1984," 3-4. In this, Libeskind in many ways prefigured the recent (Heideggerian) interest in the relation between ethics and architecture. See, for example, Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997).

[23] Libeskind, "The Maladicta of Style," 2.

[24] In an undated manuscript Libeskind has this to say: "I do not believe, as I once did, that there is some severe congenital defect in architecture which only an extreme intervention can repair." Daniel Libeskind, "Whims, musings, fragments and other paraphernalia culled from conversations with Jeffrey Kipnis," 1, Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:12.6.

objects, assemblages and designs but not necessarily buildings. This was deliberate of course. Part and parcel of the "end of architecture" rhetoric was an embrace of things not normally associated with architectural practice: collage, poetry, sculpture, drawing, etc. Liberated from the functional plan, the realizable design, Libeskind and his early students explored the possibility of the impossible for architecture. Architecture had collapsed under its own weight; all that was left was to explore its fragments.

The work Libeskind did prior to the Jewish Museum was influential, but it was not necessarily architecture in the traditional sense. Projects such as *Micromegas* and *Chamberworks*, some of his earliest collections of drawings, were electric, precisely because they were beyond the realm of possible construction.[25] In this he was following the path of his teacher at Cooper Union, John Hejduk. If rationality and technology had de-mystified architecture, robbed it of its very lifeblood, these early works of Libeskind were pure magic. Take, for example, his "Three Lessons in Architecture," a prize-winner at the 1985 Venice Biennale. Part sculpture and part craft, but mostly monastic mysticism realized, the project defies architectural classification. Composed of three hand-made machines (one for reading, one for remembering, and one for writing), "Three Lessons in Architecture" owed more to the work of medieval scribes than to the contemporary architectural scene. It was a hermeneutic thought-experiment, an exploration of the very idea of architecture.

Once you actually begin building habitable structures, however, calling the practice of architecture into question is much more difficult. Discussing the end of architecture while laying the foundation for your next building is a performative

---

[25] Daniel Libeskind, *Micromegas* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1980) and *Chamberworks: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus* (London: Architectural Association, 1983).

contradiction if there ever was one. No doubt there are still many in the ranks of the architectural avant-garde that view Libeskind as a kind of sell-out for succumbing to the siren call of construction.[26] But whether or not Libeskind has sold his soul to the architectural establishment he so attacked earlier in his career (perhaps he hopes to change it from the inside?), it is clear that this period marks a major shift in his intellectual trajectory.

It was about this time that he began to address the question of memory specifically, a question looming large over the Jewish Museum project. (Indeed, almost all of Libeskind's first construction projects were sites of memory—the Jewish Musuem in Berlin, the Felix Nussbaum Museum in Osnabrück, and the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester are among the most notable.) From people like Heidegger, Libeskind had taken the critique of rationalism and technology, the whole "end of architecture" meta-narrative, but he had also taken the belief that designing and building carried with them certain existential burdens. Architecture was more than just design; it had to speak to the existential condition of a community. One of the few ways to do this was to engage with a community's memory, which, of course, is more of a process than a quantifiable substance.

The Politics of Place

If the totalitarian space of modernity and Modern architecture is defined by its homogenized uniformity (purged of difference), by its technological capability and its

[26] Philip Nobel's profile piece on Libeskind, "The Mystic of Lindenstrasse," in the January 1999 issue of *Metropolis* addresses this. It is available online at http://www.metropolismag.com/html/content_0199/ja99mys.htm.

rationalism, then the space of memory is a contested, ever-changing space. Unlike the thoroughly planned space of the engineer, the space of memory is never closed; it can never be fully mapped or demarcated. Instead, it is always open, like memory itself, to revisions. It erupts forth as quickly as it recedes, leaving residues which blanket space and are in turn blanketed themselves. Perhaps the best way to understand the differences between these two conceptions of space, the space of the engineer and the space of memory, is to invoke the work of the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, specifically his notion of—as Edward Soja calls it—"thirdspace." If "firstspace" refers to empirical space, and "secondspace" to "representations of space," to the space of planners, designers—yes, even and especially architects themselves—the space of all those who map, then "thirdspace" is, fundamentally, "lived space."[27] It is space that cannot be subsumed into the plan, and is radically open in its infinite possibilities for re-description.[28] The space of memory in Libeskind's work is akin to this notion "of thirdspace," and stands in opposition to the totalitarian homogeneity of "secondspace".[29]

Most architects and theorists influenced by Heidegger do not even use the term *space*, preferring *place* instead.[30] Heidegger, in "Building Dwelling Thinking," had of

---

[27] Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996), 66-68.

[28] In this, we can see the clear influence of the Situationists, with whom Lefebvre was for a time associated. For more on this, see Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999).

[29] One can go all the way back to Libeskind's Master's Thesis and still find a resonance with Lefebvre on this point, though he spoke of imagination rather than memory then. On page nine of "Imagination and Space" he says the following: "The power which imaginary space exerts on the dreamer is far greater than the effects which any ordinary or 'real' space can ever have in our concerned dealings with the environment ('umwelt'). To see the objects of the world *as objects* is to have a highly stylized picture of them. For this particular way of seeing is necessarily a derivative manner of relating to the world." Note the mixture of Heidegger and Bachelard.

[30] See, for example, Libeskind, *Breaking Ground*, 42-43: "A sense of place. It is an inviolable thing, whether you're talking about where a person belongs or what a building should reflect. The great modernist architects of the twentieth century—Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn—reveled in ignoring it, snapping the bonds to the past. Rather, they felt their role was to impose their vision on the world, and they did that brilliantly, if not always successfully. A Mies building is a Mies building

course distinguished between the two. He pitted the notion of place, which carried with it a certain lived and environmental context, against space, which he thought of as abstract, universal, and beholden to the modern will and domination of unfettered technology—the stuff of the plan. Memory, some would argue, can only be fostered via place, and never space. Indeed, some critics have enlisted Libeskind in the ranks of place-making architecture.[31] I doubt he would refuse the tag.

Of course, memory, especially collective memory, can quite easily slip into a rigid formation as unforgiving as any "secondspace," as any engineering plan. Collective memory tends to coalesce around certain shibboleths, encouraging blind obedience and discouraging dialogue. Monuments are a good example of this. They attempt to solidify memory, to thwart reinterpretation of the historical past. But just by engaging with the question of memory as a design concern, Libeskind seems to avoid this. His designs do not impose memory so much as they question and challenge it.[32]

Others have singled out Libeskind's awareness of memory over and against the blank-slate fantasies of Modernism. In the weeks leading up to the final selection of the

---

whether it is built in Berlin or Havana. This earlier generation of architects—like those who now try to follow in their footsteps—felt that the true architectural spirit is the authoritarian spirit. It is elitist. But after the disastrous movements of the twentieth-century, how can anyone embrace any ism—be it modernism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, or fundamentalism?" See also page 218.

[31] See, for example, Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Architecture as mimetic techno-poiesis: Dwelling on Heidegger," in Eduard Führ, ed., *Building and Dwelling: Martin Heidegger's Foundation of a Phenomenology of Architecture* (Münster and New York: Waxmann, 2000), 139-144.

[32] Of course, not everyone shares this opinion, particularly when it comes to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which some find over-determined by the event of the Holocaust. For such a dissenting assessment see Noah Isenberg, "Reading 'Between the Lines': Daniel Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum and the Shattered Symbiosis," in Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes, eds., *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis, 1945-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 155-179. For more on the problems of memorializing the Holocaust, see James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). I should mention that Young was part of the committee—which included Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C.—in charge of selecting the World Trade Center memorial. See Edward Wyatt, "In 9/11 Design, Rules are Set to be Broken," *New York Times*, April 29, 2003. For more on Lin, see Louis Menand, "The Reluctant Memorialist: Maya Lin," *American Studies* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002), 265-284.

World Trade Center design, the pages of the *Times* were a virtual debating forum for critics and pundits of all stripes. In a piece from the end of February, 2003, Marvin Trachtenberg singled out Libeskind's design as being "in a class by itself in its deeply creative, organic relationship to the specificity of ground zero and its environment and meaning." He went on to say that "Mr. Libeskind's design," unlike the other submissions, was "deeply rooted in the site." This was, in Trachtenberg's assessment, a welcome break from the tradition of "mainstream modernism" and its "repression of history, memory, place and identity; its soul-less "exaltation of functionalism, technology and the machine."[33]

All architecture, not just Modernist architecture, has trouble dealing with memory, though. Of all the usual suspects—geographers, city planners, etc.—architects are perhaps the party most often guilty of imposing the plan, of reifying space and memory both. For architecture is necessarily a kind of planning. By its very definition, it is a "secondspace" occupation. This is naturally a problem for someone like Libeskind, a problem which returns us, full circle, to the beginnings of his career, to his undergraduate thesis at Cooper Union in fact. That work, "Collage: An Architectural Methodology," was itself a critique of rationalism and functionalism, of the plan. "Collage," he wrote at the time, "stands…between organic and rational limits; between poetry and mass production."[34] Collage gives us a glimpse of the open space of (re)interpretation.

Libeskind returned again and again to these themes during the World Trade Center site competition. Whatever was to be built atop ground zero had to confront the

---

[33] Marvin Trachtenberg, "A New Vision for Ground Zero Beyond Mainstream Modernism," *New York Times*, February 23, 2003.

[34] Daniel Libeskind, "Collage—An Architectural Methodology," B. Arch Thesis, The Cooper Union School of Architecture, Spring 1970," Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:10.1.

memory of September 11th. And while he may not have used the language of collage, it was clear that Libeskind was approaching the task from the perspective of memory and not the perspective of the plan. In a seminar on "Monument and Memory" held at Columbia University on September 27, 2002, the very day that his design was selected as one of the six finalists in the LMDC-sponsored design competition, Libeskind addressed this concern specifically. "Memory cannot be added to architecture like a label as many postmodernist architects think," he cautioned. "One cannot simply inscribe memory like a logo onto a building as a kind of code. That is simply not what memory is all about: that banalizes memory." In his mind it was clear: "When I think of the discussions about 9/11 and about the monument, I feel it is time to rethink the divides that exist between urban planning and architecture, architecture and memory."[35] It is worth quoting Libeskind's remarks on this occasion at length, for they reveal the way in which the fundamental concerns of Libeskind's career-long struggle against the usurpation of the architectural imagination by the forces of rationality and technology come together in "Memory Foundations," his outline for the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site:

> One often thinks of a master plan as something that can be generated independently of what it embodies as a figure of the future, the past and the present. Architecture is a reflection in time. Certainly, this audience well knows that people have meditated on the enigmatic nature of time, on its simultaneity, modality and movement, in literature, poetry and history. Architecture seems to have been immune to this discourse. Everyone expects books, music and painting to have deep reflections about memory, but architecture seems not to have these same aspirations. Yet architecture, I think, is fundamentally a communicative art that should tell a story. Now, of course, many of the buildings one sees built today tell a story of an autistic kind, a story of their own making, an internal

[35] Daniel Libeskind, Leon Wieseltier, Sherwin Nuland, *Monument and Memory*, The Columbia Seminar on Art in Society, September 27, 2002 (New York: Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, 2003), 11.

> solipsistic way of thinking. But I beg to differ, because I think buildings should tell other stories about something completely different, outside of their own making, with multiple narrations.
>
> Another issue that we have inherited from modernist thought is that one should dispense with emotion in architecture and approach it as if it were made by someone without heart or soul. But buildings are flesh. They are transformations of inert materials—stone, concrete, glass—into something living. And in that sense, they speak a language, both communicative and silent. Thus is the realm that I'd like to share with you. I am a great believer that space is not just a universal continuum projected by an abstract mind, but is actually something more like a person, a physiognomy, a soul, a spiritual entity given in a particular locale.[36]

Throughout the Columbia seminar, Libeskind was adamant that his vision for the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan not be considered just another architectural design. The specificity of the place, a place already layered in meanings—World Trade Center, Ground Zero, monument, undeveloped real estate, etc.—and possible (re)interpretations, called out for recognition. This was not a blank canvas. "When I think about the site of 9/11," he said, "I don't think it's only about developing a large part of a new city, or about the latest technologies of building or filling the site with clever buildings."[37] The architect of the World Trade Center site has to "address the *genius loci* of the place itself."[38] This did not mean that the site had to be left bare, a kind of open wound or void as someone like Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of *The New Republic* and seminar participant, would have had it.[39] "Not everything has to become painted in a tonality of blue," Libeskind suggested. "One needs something inspiring, something that can move

---

[36] Libeskind's text in *Monument and Memory*, 11.
[37] Libeskind's text in *Monument and Memory*, 11.
[38] Libeskind's text in *Monument and Memory*, 12. Libeskind is also referencing, implicitly, the work of the theorist of architecture Christian Norberg-Shulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Place* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980). Norberg-Shulz's own work, it is worth noting, was deeply indebted to Heidegger. Indeed, he even claims in the preface to *Genius Loci* that Heidegger was "the catalyst" that "determined" the book's shape (5).
[39] See Wieseltier's contribution to the Columbia Seminar, *Monument and Memory*, 34: "Speaking for myself, all I need at Ground Zero is a void and a flag."

us forward." "But," he also admitted, "one cannot obliterate the traumatic nature of the event. And the trauma is here to stay."[40]

How can we orient a place so infused with trauma towards the future? This is the problematic of memory, which, as we have seen, Libeskind thinks architecture has failed to adequately address.[41] And given the totalitarian horrors of the twentieth century, this may well be an unending task for twenty-first century architecture, already burdened with traumas of its own.[42] But it is not an impossible task. The early Libeskind might very well have linked all of this up to the "end of architecture" rhetoric he was once so found of, but now, from the perspective of memory, he expresses hope. Without hope, there can be no memory. Memory is dependent upon a possible future as much as it is a past moment. To be sure, now that he is more than a paper architect, Libeskind is downright optimistic about building. In the "Monument and Memory" seminar he even proclaimed that "one can never be an architect unless one is an optimist." Why? He simply explained that building something is "about faith in the future."[43] For without faith in the future to come, why build at all?

In his earliest work as well as his most recent, we can see Libeskind struggling with the kinds of questions that have come to animate his whole life's work. There is a recognizable continuity there, which is not to say that Libeskind's thought has been

---

[40] Libeskind's text in *Monument and Memory*, 12.
[41] See Libeskind, *Breaking Ground*, 31.
[42] Describing a design he submitted to an architectural competition in Germany in the early nineties to redevelop a site adjacent to the former concentration camp at Sachsenhausen and which once belonged to the *SS*, Libeskind had this to say: "There are so many sites of this sort in the world—where evils have taken place, where human lives were destroyed, where perpetration of crimes we cannot even fathom took place—and yet each one of these sites has to have a future," Libeskind's text in *Monument and Memory*, 16. For an account of a separate attempt to reconstruct just such a place, this time at the grounds of a former Gestapo camp outside Saarbrücken, see Mark Landsman, "Property and the Banality of Memory," *Cabinet* 10 (Spring 2003): 94-97.
[43] Libeskind's response in *Monument and Memory*, 41.

static. In fact, his proposals for change have undergone significant revision over the years. He speaks less about poetry and collage these days and more about community and dialogue, although both postures are in-between positions ("thirdspace" positions), positions of openness which resist the finality of the plan (endemic to architecture) and the homogeneity of totalitarian space (endemic to Modernism). The glorification of poetry as an alternative to the over-rationalism of modern architecture, as Libeskind began to notice with regard to Heidegger, was itself a dead-end.[44] Abandoning the Heideggerian *Verfallsgeschichte* about the fiery end of architecture, as well as the romantic hope for the *deus ex machina* return of a saving god or poet, Libeskind has turned instead to what seems like an almost Habermassian conception of public dialogue and deliberation. This is the proper space of memory—the space of discussion and not the space of monuments. It is a "thirdspace" and not a "secondspace".[45]

If turning to figures like Habermas, Lefebvre, or Soja seems a little too removed from the world of architectural design itself, there are examples closer to home of a growing concern with the existential dimensions of building. The phenomenological architect Kimberly Dovey has himself spoken of "the cycle of lived space," so long ignored by architects and developers alike. In an article tellingly titled "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process," Dovey, like Soja and Lefebvre, makes a "distinction between lived and geometric modes of space."[46] Because it is "purged of social and cultural meaning," geometric space, according to

---

[44] See, for example, his critical comments regarding Heidegger in Daniel Libeskind, "Lecture Given at Jan Van Eyck Akademie, November 1990," Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections, Accession no. 920061:32*.1. See also his work *Countersign* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 42.

[45] See Libeskind, *Breaking Ground*, 161, 270, and especially 276 ff.

[46] Kimberly Dovey, "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process," in David Seamon, ed., *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 247.

Dovey, is fundamentally unable to properly address the "the infinitely complex" richness of lived-space, which is "thoroughly social and culturally conditioned."[47] But architects typically work in the realm of geometric space; they produce sketches, models, and plans. How could they possibly incorporate the concerns of lived space into such narrowly—by definition—geometric work? Dovey's recommended "cycle of lived space" would bracket the geometric phase of the architectural design process with the concerns of the actual persons for whom the building is being constructed. In other words, Dovey thinks that the geometric bent of architecture can be held in check by simply being attentive to the existential needs of the building's expected patron's (occupants, visitors, owners, etc.) in the beginning, and by recording their responses once the project is completed. By book-ending geometric space with the needs of lived space in this way, Dovey hopes, ultimately, to bridge the gap between the concerns of, to put it in the lingo of Soja and Lefebvre, second- and thirdspace. The architect is thus imagined as a kind of go-between, struggling to give human expression to an abstract and inhuman process.

Dovey's recommendation is admirably user-centric. He wants architects to be aware of the expressly human dimension of their work. We could even push his cycle of lived space further, so as to include community involvement even at the level of geometric design. But this is an argument for another occasion.[48] For now, we might want to focus on, following Dovey, the existential concerns of lived space and their relationship to the architectural process. In highlighting the importance of memory for architecture, I have been suggesting that Libeskind is turning architectural discourse

---

[47] Ibid., 250.

[48] There is a danger, I think, that Dovey's recommendations can be mistaken for utilitarian arguments for making architecture more efficient by making it more accountable to user needs. I am not suggesting that Dovey offers his advice out of such a concern, but merely that such a reading seems nonetheless possible.

away from substance and pointing it toward existential process, toward, specifically, the process of community involvement. He had to go through Heidegger to get to this point, but he also had to rebuke him. It is in this sense that his architecture is post-Heideggerian.

It should come as no surprise to say that such a turnaround in the idea of architecture demands a new kind of architect. For, from this perspective, it is not the architect or the poet on high who points past the totalitarian wreckage of the twentieth century, but the democratic public itself. Libeskind was adamant about this in the Columbia seminar.[49] He responded to one participant's suggestion that any building on the World Trade Center site would only be an expression of an architect's ego by calling into question "this fascist idea of architecture that comes straight from Ayn Rand's idea of the architect." "We don't have any Masters," he went on to say. "We don't want any more Masters. We've seen Master Architects and Master Planners, the mastery of space. We've seen Master Architects design concentration camps and build iron walls."[50] The Master Architect is a totalitarian relic of the twentieth century, unresponsive to the needs of memory and best left behind.

Conclusion: What's Next?

By way of a conclusion, I would like to return to the concern I raised at the beginning of this excursus about the threat posed to the public sphere of dialogue and deliberation by the media-driven forces of capitalism. There is a distinct danger here;

---

[49] Libeskind also made this a central theme of *Breaking Ground*.
[50] Libeskind's response in *Monument and Memory*, 44.

namely, that all this talk about community and memory and how public involvement will radically redefine the hitherto seemingly solitary task of the genius architect—there is the implicit danger of all of this deteriorating into little more than mere lobbying, or base self-advertisement. How much of this was just part of the attempt to win a lucrative and prestigious commission (the biggest architectural project of the century)? There has been, as I suggested at the opening, a great deal of this, on the part of Libeskind (who was not shy about getting his ideas out to the public, appearing even on *Oprah*) but especially the LMDC.[51] Some of the best critics and commentators caught on to this and exposed it. And, as the rebuilding of the World Trade Center proceeds, fit by fitful step, such dangers seem only to multiply. Attempting to recap the contentious goings-on in Lower Manhattan over the past several years would indeed be a monumental task, which I will not even dare to attempt here.

But if the space of memory is also the space of public dialogue, which follows up the "end of architecture," how do we begin to protect this space from co-option? How do we prevent the "colonization of the architectural lifeworld"—precisely at the point when it seems to be making its most democratic strides forward? Is this even possible? These are difficult questions, for which even a post-Heideggerian architect like Daniel Libeskind may not, in the end, have all the answers.[52] But perhaps this should not come

---

[51] Cynics will read *Breaking Ground* as nothing but a continuation of this PR campaign, especially as it was released just as Libeskind was being edged out of the rebuilding process by the leaseholder of the WTC site, Larry Silverstein.

[52] In fact, Daniel Libeskind sometimes slips into the very kind of nostalgia that he critiques in Heidegger. Take, for example, this passage from *Breaking Ground*, in which he waxes poetic about his rural roots, and sounds rather like Heidegger extolling the Black Forest life: "In contrast to the razzle-dazzle of high-tech modernism, I think back to Zakopane and the majesty of Poland's primeval forest nearby. Bison roamed the dark, rustling labyrinth formed by hectares of poplars and maples. Dressed in local peasant clothing, my sister and I would explore the bogs and glens, and search for blueberries in the undulating 'silver fields,' as the poet Adam Mickiewicz called them. Even as a child, I was awed by the forest's magical

as a surprise. After all, as we shall see in the conclusion, Heidegger has never been a repository of easy answers.

beauty, and it was there that I began to understand land and space and shelter and the materials of the earth—all the things I would focus on as an architect later in life" (223).

CONCLUSION
Scandals Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Heidegger's Place in the Culture Wars

I have argued in various books that the philosophers most often cited by cultural leftists—Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida—are largely right in their criticisms of Enlightenment rationalism. I have argued further that traditional liberalism and traditional humanism are entirely compatible with such criticisms. We can still be old-fashioned reformist liberals even if, like Dewey, we give up the correspondence theory of truth and start treating moral and scientific beliefs as tools for achieving greater human happiness, rather than as representations of the intrinsic nature of reality. We can be this kind of liberal even after we turn our backs on Descartes, linguistify subjectivity, and see everything around us and within us as one more replaceable social construction.

But I have also urged that insofar as these antimetaphysical, anti-Cartesian philosophers offer a quasi-religious form of spiritual pathos, they should be relegated to private life and not taken as guides to political deliberation.

—Richard Rorty[1]

In his foreword to *The Closing of the American Mind*, Saul Bellow described his friend Allan Bloom, the author of the surprise best-seller, as "a frontline fighter in the mental wars of our time."[2] Just a few pages later, in his preface, Bloom suggests that his "book is to be taken as a report from the front."[3] The battlefield metaphors—like Heidegger's re-appropriation of the language of the *Fronterlebnis* in *Being and Time*—were not accidental. When the book appeared, in 1987, the so-called culture wars were raging in the United States. It was possible and all too common at that time to resort to the rhetoric of armed partisanship, even though the debates, far from being matters of life and death, contained their fair share of farce. Whether you believe that struggles over

---

[1] Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1998), 96.
[2] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, foreword by Saul Bellow (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 12.
[3] Ibid., 22. In his fictional portrayal of Bloom in *Ravelstein* (New York: Viking, 2000), Bellow even suggested that his longtime friend was enamored of all things military: "For reasons of all sorts, Ravelstein was big on soldiers" (56).

NEH funding, pornography, canon (re)formation, and multiculturalism have faded away or, alternatively, that, after the attacks of September 11th especially, they have simply transmogrified into red state/blue state animosity, the fact of the matter is that the culture wars had a profound effect on higher education in this country.

Amidst the culture of scandal that defined the culture wars, Heidegger proved a particularly rich source for debate. Ongoing discussions about the extent of his Nazism fueled controversies that touched upon the moral responsibilities of professors, the politics of theory, and, more generally, the mission of the university itself—all of which were reasons why Bloom addressed his influence directly in *The Closing of the American Mind*. In this regard, the Heidegger affair was bound up with other headline-grabbing scandals that rocked campuses across the nation. The most prominent among these was the case of Paul de Man, the Yale literary critic who was, with Derrida, a co-founder of deconstruction, a program of literary interpretation that drew liberally from Heidegger's later philosophy. Revelations about the early collaborationist writings of the Belgian-born de Man—revelations that dealt a severe blow to the autonomy of disinterested scholarship, to say nothing of aesthetics itself—prompted a period of intellectual probing and posturing that in effect amplified the Heidegger affair. If the scandals showed that de Man and Heidegger had politicized, respectively, literary criticism and philosophy, then their intellectual heirs, represented most notably by Derrida, who had ties to both figures, but also by all who pledged allegiance to poststructuralism or postmodernism more generally, were compelled to explain—or explain away—such Faustian dealings.

* * *

The Faust reference is especially apt in Heidegger's case. By the late eighties, much of the terrain surrounding his political activities had already been explored, and thoroughly at that. For those first Americans who traveled across the Atlantic to study with Heidegger, like Marjorie Grene, there could be no doubt about Heidegger's political goals. For the émigrés—from Marcuse to Strauss—who saw Heidegger in action, his fateful decision may have come as a shock at first, but, looking back, it seemed to make perfect sense. Even American thinkers predisposed to overlook Heidegger's misdeeds, such as his translator J. Glenn Gray, wrestled with the Nazi question. So why, in 1987, would Heidegger's Nazism suddenly erupt as one of the most pressing intellectual issues of the day? Why would it become such a seminal event amidst all the other contemporary controversies? The answers to these questions have as much to do with historical circumstances (otherwise known as context) as they do with the idea of applied philosophy itself. Heidegger, far from being just another intellectual who fell under the totalitarian spell, was held responsible for the demise of truth itself by a bitterly divided culture at a very specific point in time.[4]

Intellectuals in Action: A Brief History

The term "intellectual" first appeared in the western lexicon at the time of the Dreyfus affair in France—that is, at about the turn of the last century. Although a noun,

[4] The roster of notable intellectuals who fell under the totalitarian spell is a long one. Though the problem goes all the way back to Plato and his journey to Syracuse, Heidegger remains the most vivid and talked about example of this phenomenon. See, for example, Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001).

it marked the "*action* of intervening in politics" that defined the public attempts to defend Dreyfus by such prominent writers as Emile Zola, André Gide, and Marcel Proust.[5] The action, however, was a contested one. At that time, the term "intellectual" was derisive. When anti-Dreyfusards like Maurice Barrès hurled this particular insult at the writers and journalists who dared to defend the falsely accused lieutenant, they were implying that their adversaries were traitors who were betraying the community. In their opinion, to be an intellectual was not to be somebody who stood for justice, but somebody who defended traitors. But in taking up the cause against Dreyfus, were not the anti-Dreyfusards also acting as intellectuals?[6]

Although "intellectual" can still carry a negative connotation today (except in France perhaps, where intellectuals are treasured commodities), it is mostly used in a more neutral sense in our everyday speech. But the rift that was created between two competing conceptions of the intellectual by the Dreyfus affair—the defender of universal reason on the left and the passionate patriot on the right—continues. As a result, intellectuals ever since the affair have enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the public whose interest they are expected to serve. Torn between the seemingly universal calling of their noble profession—and professionals they increasingly are—and the particular demands of the national communities that support them, intellectuals have alternatively fled and embraced the causes of the day.

Moments of international crisis have proven especially troubling times for intellectuals insofar as they further polarize scholarly communities already divided by the

---

[5] Jeremy Jennings and Anthony Kemp-Welch, "The Century of the Intellectual," in *Intellectuals in Politics*, eds. Jeremy Jennings and Anthony Kemp-Welch (New York: Routledge, 1997), 7.
[6] See Eric Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), 131, 137, 138.

usual antagonisms. The First World War, for example, represented a crisis for writers and thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic. Randolph Bourne, shocked by his mentor John Dewey's unflinching support of the American war effort, decried the way in which formerly critical voices joined the war-mongering chorus without any hesitation.[7] After the war, on the other side of the Atlantic, the French writer Julien Benda offered a slightly different, though no less disparaging analysis. In Benda's opinion, intellectuals had betrayed their very calling, not by refusing to remain critical "malcontents" (as Bourne would have it), but by deigning to participate in worldly affairs at all. Having witnessed the carnage of the war, Benda concluded that intellectuals must always and everywhere remain above the fray of the messy world below—i.e. the sullied world of party politics. "The treason of the intellectuals," as his 1927 tract was entitled, resided in the fact that so many of them had abandoned the pursuit of abstract, timeless, and universal truths for the flag-waving fervor of national chauvinism.[8] Had Benda composed his work after the Second World War and not the First, he likely would have chosen Heidegger as a prime example of this tendency.

Heidegger in Action: A Slightly Longer History

At about the same time that Benda was skewering his treasonous comrades for forsaking the pure and pristine life of the mind, Heidegger was translating his

---

[7] See the essays collected in Bourne, *War and the Intellectuals, Collected Essays, 1915-1919*, edited, with an introduction by Carl Resek (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999); especially "The War and the Intellectuals" and "Twilight of Idols". For a recent analysis, see James Livingston, "War and the Intellectuals: Bourne, Dewey, and the Fate of Pragmatism," *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era* 2:4 (October 2003): 431-450.

[8] Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (1928; New York: Norton, 1969).

philosophical insights into the language of National Socialism, which had lasting consequences for the reception of his work. Since 1933, when Heidegger publicly displayed his support for Hitler's regime, the political question has always and everywhere followed on the heels of his philosophical writings. Heidegger's lone foray into the world of politics tarnished his reputation forever. After World War II, he was no longer "the German philosopher Martin Heidegger" but "the Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger." A 1947 *New York Times* article by Oxford don (and former allied intelligence officer) H.R. Trevor-Roper on the condition of Germany two years after the Nazi defeat, for example, highlighted the potentially disastrous influence of Heidegger's thought for an intellectually and spiritually ruined nation. Trevor-Roper was dismayed to find that existentialism, "an irrational philosophy of defeat," dominated academic philosophy in Germany. After all, existentialism was "invented by a Nazi, Heidegger; it is a philosophy of nihilism like Nazism, appropriate to the vacuity of German life." That a Nazi philosophy could enjoy such prestige in the precarious postwar years was troubling, for it seemed to suggest that the Nazi ghost had yet to be fully exorcised from the nation. Seen from this perspective, existentialism threatened to carry on the Nazi cause under a different name. "It may yet generate," Trevor-Roper warned, "the ideology of another Rosenberg."[9]

Equating existentialism with Nazism because it was "invented by a Nazi" was of course a little too simplistic, and those who knew better tried to offer a more balanced

---

[9] H.R. Trevor-Roper, "The Strange Vacuum That is Germany," *New York Times* July 6, 1947. Interestingly, a version of this line of reasoning can be found in some of the most recent discussions of Heidegger's politics. Emmanuel Faye, for example, says that continuing to read Heidegger solely as a philosopher after the continuing revelations dealing with the extent to which his philosophy was informed by Nazi ideology is like treating Rosenberg's work as serious philosophy. See Faye's *Heidegger l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie: Autour des seminaries inédits de 1933-1935* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).

philosophical genealogy, one which went back beyond Heidegger to Kierkegaard and sometimes even all the way back to Pascal, figures who, unlike Nietzsche, another part of the extended existentialist family, could not be accused of proto-fascism. Karl Löwith, writing in *Social Research* in 1948, lamented the fact that twenty years after the publication of *Sein und Zeit* commentators like Trevor-Roper still misunderstood the origins and background of Heidegger's project.[10] Löwith, as we have seen, was not one to gloss over Heidegger's politics, but he did maintain that Heidegger's existentialism had to be understood on its own (philosophical) terms; it could not be dismissed out of hand as simply Nazi. Whatever Nazi implications it carried, they had to be unearthed and critically examined one by one, not ignored.[11]

This has been an ongoing, seemingly endless project. The political question has been an inescapable part of the reception of Heidegger's work. Although philosophers have every right to deny the importance of context, historians of intellectual and cultural life do not—and the fact is that the dissemination of Heidegger's work was as much a cultural as philosophical process, which means that contextual matters cannot be dismissed out of hand. Far from being peripheral, discussions about Heidegger's politics are perhaps the only constant of a constantly changing, consistently dynamic reception. The American case is no exception.

The extent and duration of Heidegger's Nazism was a topic of interest long before the revelations of Paul de Man's collaborationist writings sent the disciples of Derrida

---

[10] Karl Löwith, "Heidegger: Problem and Background of Existentialism," *Social Research* 15:3 (September 1948): 345-369.

[11] See Löwith, "Les Implications politiques de la philosophie de l'existence chez Heidegger," *Le Temps Modernes* 14 (November 1946), translated as "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism," in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 176-185.

scurrying up the ramparts of deconstruction's defensive fortifications. Heidegger's Nazism was well known to many of the refugees of course, and to American students, such as Marjorie Grene, who had studied in Germany in the years before 1933.[12] Since so many of the refugees had in fact studied with Heidegger, a majority of them, including Karl Löwith, Leo Strauss, and Hannah Arendt, to name just a few, wasted no time in linking Heidegger's existentialism with his Nazi politics.[13] But far from being the stuff of seminar-room gossip, this information was eventually made available to the general public as well. In the Seattle *Times*, for example, Sophie Blumenthal, an émigré herself who had settled in the Pacific Northwest, exposed some of the details of Heidegger's Nazism.[14] There was also the publication, in 1965, of the misleadingly titled *German Existentialism*, which contained between its covers a collection of Heidegger's notorious political speeches and addresses.[15] Given such evidence, we cannot shy away from the political question.

---

[12] Early condemnations of Heidegger's Nazism can be found in some of Grene's early articles on Heidegger, as well as in the pages of *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, which published the work of many of the émigrés, including Felix Kaufmann, Günther Anders, and Herbert Marcuse, who all took Heidegger to task on this point. (This journal begs for closer historical scrutiny, not only because its pages contain some of the earliest work on Heidegger in America, but also because it was a key haven, both intellectually and materially, for many of the refugees.) Other early analyses of Heidegger's Nazism could be found in the writings of Walter Kaufmann ["Heidegger's Castle" in *From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959)] and Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People* (New York: YIVO, 1946). Weinreich's important book, long out of print and very hard to find, has recently by reissued by Yale University Press.

[13] Many of them labeled it, quite simply, nihilism. See Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, edited by Richard Wolin, trans. Gary Steiner (New York: Columbia UP, 1995); Leo Strauss, "German Nihilism," edited by David Janssens and Daniel Tanguay, *Interpretation* 26:3 (Spring 1999): 352-378; Strauss, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism," *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, selected and introduced by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 27-46; and Arendt, "What is Existenz Philosophy?" *Partisan Review* 8/1 (Winter 1946):34-56.

[14] Sophie Blumenthal, "Martin Heidegger Clarifies His Role in Germany's Nazi Era," *The Seattle Times* August 10, 1969.

[15] Martin Heidegger, *German Existentialism*, translated with an introduction by Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965). The documents came from Guido Schneeberger, ed., *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962). Some of these same texts can be found

The late French philosopher Dominque Janicaud once referred to Heidegger's Nazism as—to quote the title of one of his books—the "shadow of that thought."[16] This is an especially apt metaphor, for a shadow, although distinct from its source, nevertheless follows it wherever it goes. Outrunning your shadow is impossible; and although it disappears in darkness, it returns each and every time with the rising sun. Shadows are also longest at the beginning of the day and near its end. Similarly, debates about Heidegger's politics, although endlessly recurring, have proven most concerted at these poles, at the beginning and during what might very well be the end of his influence. If the first debates were dominated by émigrés and exiles who knew Heidegger's work firsthand, the most recent debates took place as part of the so-called culture wars, when "French Theory," inspired so very much by Heidegger, enjoyed its widest influence in this country.

Affairs to Remember

In 1987 a scandal rocked the Parisian literary world. The publication of a book by Chilean scholar Victor Farías entitled *Heidegger and Nazism* returned the issue of Heidegger's politics to the front pages of the city's premiere papers with unflinching directness.[17] The headline in *Libération* said it all: "Heil Heidegger!"[18] Farías, who had

---

in slightly different translation in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993).

[16] Dominique Janicaud, *The Shadow of that Thought: Heidegger and the Question of Politics*, trans. Michael Gendre (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1996).

[17] Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*, edited, with a foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi, German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989). Farías's book was followed a few years later by another exposé of Heidegger's political past by the German historian Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

uncovered new material documenting Heidegger's political activities during the thirties, was initially unable to find a publisher in Germany for his book, mostly because of the nature of the subject. Indeed, for Heideggerians, his book was a ticking time-bomb. But preventing its publication in Germany did not defuse it, for when the book was published in France it proved to be equally—if not more—explosive. Because Heidegger's thought had penetrated so deeply into French intellectual life, influencing everything from the existentialism of Marcel and Sartre, the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, Lacan's psychoanalysis, and even the work of Foucault and Derrida, Farías's accusations—not only that Heidegger was a Nazi, but a fervent one—could not be easily dismissed. Although the ensuing debate had more to do with French intellectual life than it did with Heidegger per se, it revealed the extent to which the fate of Heidegger's philosophical legacy was tied up with larger cultural and political debates.[19]

It is tempting to dismiss the Farías affair as but another tempest in a teapot—the kind of thing that matters little beyond the narrow confines of Parisian posturing. What, after all, did this have to do with the reception of Heidegger's work in the United States? Why should a discussion of it show up in the pages of periodicals like the *Village Voice* (as it did with Paul Berman's article "Nazi Rector"—which spoke of a "shadow over Heidegger"—the following year), or even, more prominently, the *New York Times* (where shadow references were also invoked)?[20] In fact, the debates did have transatlantic repercussions, especially because the French intellectuals who were busy denouncing

---

[18] Robert Maggiori, "Heil Heidegger," *Libération* October 16, 1987. See Richard Wolin, "French Heidegger Wars," in *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 150.

[19] See Steven Ungar, "Scandal and Aftereffect: Heidegger in France," in Richard J. Golsan, ed., *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1992), 22.

[20] Paul Berman, "Nazi Rector," *Village Voice* September 13, 1988, 38. For a sample of the coverage in the *Times*, see James Markham, "Paris Journal: Over a Philosophic Temple, Shadow of a Swastika," Feb 4, 1988.

each other while trying to come to terms with Heidegger's influence on their own intellectual culture had become veritable academic stars in this country.[21] The shadow cast by Heidegger's Nazism extended a very long way indeed.

Beginning in the seventies, a new intellectual constellation appeared on the horizon of the American academy. Populated by French stars like Derrida and Foucault, this constellation, christened "French Theory" by a recent commentator, François Cusset, eventually came to exert a powerful influence on all manner of debates within the humanities.[22] But the infiltration took place primarily through literature departments and was predicated upon the reading of a few very powerful predecessors, with Heidegger being chief among them.[23] In the same way that existentialism first took shape in the work of philosophers like Jaspers and Heidegger but was ultimately disseminated around the world via the efforts of Sartre, French Theory originated, despite its name, in German thought, particularly Heidegger's. It took from Heidegger a critique of humanism, a

---

[21] Among the many monographs that emerged out of these debates, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991); Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the jews"*, trans. Andreas Michael and Mark S. Roberts, foreword by David Caroll (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, *Heidegger and Modernity*, trans. Franklin Philip (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and also Ferry and Renault, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*, trans. Mary Schnackenberg Cattani (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).

[22] François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003). For more on the American reception of French theory, see Anselm Haverkamp, ed., *Deconstruction is/in America: A New Sense of the Political* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1995); Sylvère Lotringer and Sande Cohen, eds., *French Theory in America* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Michele Lamont and Marsha Witten, "Surveying the Continental Drift: The Diffusion of French Social Theory and Literary Theory in the United States," *French Politics and Society* 6:3 (1988); and Jean-Philippe Mathy, *Extrême-Occident: French Intellectuals and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), as well as *French Resistance: The French-American Culture Wars* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). More generally, and recently, see Bruce Kuklick's review essay "French Letters," *Modern Intellectual History* 1:2 (August 2004): 283-292.

[23] See Michèle Lamont, "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida," *American Journal of Sociology* 93:3 (November 1987): 584-622; Krzysztof Ziarek, "The Reception of Heidegger's Thought in American Literary Criticism," *Diacritics* 19:3-4 (Fall/Winter, 1989): 114-126; and Henry McDonald, "The Ontological Turn: Philosophical Sources of American Literary Theory," *Inquiry* 45 (2002): 3-34.

suspicion of technology, and perhaps most importantly, an unwavering suspicion of "the tradition," which had to be overcome at all cost. What this meant was not always clear, but it was the chief way in which Heidegger, "outfitted with a French accent, became ensconced in the American academy."[24]

French Theory's back-door introduction of Heidegger into the American academy began with and revolved around the fortunes of deconstruction, a program of literary interpretation invented by de Man and Derrida based on Heidegger's talk of the *Destruktion* of the philosophical tradition. Heidegger thought that the tradition of western metaphysics had to be dismantled so as to allow for a direct confrontation with ancient Greek thought. In a similar manner, deconstruction sought to dismantle western literature so as to unearth the hidden presuppositions and inconsistencies that underlay its authority. Ironically, deconstruction itself came to be authoritative. It eventually took hold of such influential institutions of higher education as Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Cornell—forming what one critic at the time called a veritable post-structuralist "golden triangle."[25] De Man taught at all of these institutions and, over time, earned himself both a wide reputation and a large body of eager acolytes. From the heights of these ivory towers, deconstruction proposed a radical overhaul of university education that began with a reconsideration of the very notion of the humanities—the hallmark of liberal education—itself.

Far from representing a hostile takeover by foreign powers, though, French Theory was as much an American creation as a French one (which is precisely why Cusset retains the English term for his title). Cusset even likens it to a Hollywood

---

[24] Wolin, "Introduction: Of Labyrinths, Minotaurs, and Left Hedieggerianism," in *Labyrinths*, 3.
[25] Richard Moss, "Review," *Telos* 6 (Winter 1971): 354-359. Quoted in Cusset, *French Theory*, 42.

production, in which Derrida plays the part of Clint Eastwood, "the solitary pioneer."[26] He made this role his own when he presented his essay "The Ends of Man" at an international conference in New York in October, 1968, a few months after protests had erupted in cities all across the globe, from Prague to Mexico City and everywhere in between.[27] It was here, at an academic conference in New York, where many of the seeds of the culture wars were first sown.

Derrida opened his presentation to the 1968 international "Philosophy and Anthropology" conference in New York with an uncharacteristically frank assertion. "Every philosophical colloquium," he wrote "necessarily has a political significance."[28] What was at stake in 1968, he suggested, was the very fate of the West itself, and it is clear that, like Heidegger, and perhaps like Spengler even, Derrida saw the West only in terms of decline.[29] Setting up the theme of the entire essay, which has to do with the impending collapse of the west from the inside and the threat from the "other" outside, he wrote that "the anxious and busy multiplication of colloquia in the West is doubtless an effect of that difference which I just said bears down, with a mute, growing and menacing pressure, on the enclosure of Western collocution."[30] If this seems too abstract, then Derrida's reference to American involvement in Vietnam just a few lines later makes the context of his remarks all the more clear.

---

[26] Cusset, *French Theory*, 11.
[27] See Robert V. Daniels, *Year of the Heroic Guerilla: World Revolution and Counterrevolution in 1968* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1989); and Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2003).
[28] Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, translated, with additional notes, by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1982), 111.
[29] In a strange confluence of events, Jean Beaufret, the dean of French Heideggerianism, organized a conference in Aix-en-Provence in 1968 that was devoted to "Heidegger and the thinking of decline." See Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France: I. Récit* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 236.
[30] Derrida, "The Ends of Man," 113.

In "The Ends of Man," Derrida offered, primarily via a reading of Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism* (1947), a framework for deconstructive practice. The main tenets of deconstruction, in this account, include: a reduction or deflation of meaning, a trembling of the Western tradition from within (the protests of '68?) and without (third-worldism?), and lastly, the possible overcoming of the tradition itself.[31] According to Derrida, the discourse of anthropology (the ostensible subject of the conference and his talk), and indeed the very tradition of Western humanism itself, begged for a good and thorough shake. Deconstruction ensured that the shaking was first felt in American universities.[32]

Derrida and de Man met at a 1966 conference at Johns Hopkins whose proceedings were published four years later as *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*.[33] At the time, De Man was a professor of humanities at Hopkins, but he was ready and willing to subject the humanities, which were based on a stable understanding of 'man,' to critique in precisely the manner that Derrida later outlined in "The Ends of Man." If anything united their literary efforts it was this program, and de Man and Derrida worked closely together on it during the seventies, when deconstruction began to take hold of literary departments even beyond the "golden triangle." They were joined by American literary critics like William Spanos, who in 1976 devoted a whole issue of his journal *Boundary 2* to the topic of "Martin Heidegger and Literature."

---

[31] Ibid., 134-135.

[32] Derrida eventually tempered his attacks on the humanities and even came to defend them in his own peculiar way. See his "The University Without Condition," in *Without Alibi*, edited, translated, and with and introduction by Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), 202-237. When I saw Derrida present this text at Stanford in 1999, I did not understand at the time the relevance of it to his larger critical aims. Looking back, it seems clear to me that Derrida here intends not so much to deconstruct the humanities out of existence, but to make them into a deconstructionist project in their own right.

[33] Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., The *Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970). See also Wendy Steiner, "The Trahison des Clercs," in *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in An Age of Fundamentalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 192.; and Jonathan Arac, Wlad Godzich, Wallace Martin, eds., *The Yale Critics: Deconstruction in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

Spanos admitted that Heidegger's thought had previously made inroads into American thinking, mainly via "American schools of theology" influenced by Tillich, but he argued in his preface to the special issue that the time had come for the destructive side of Heidegger's work to be highlighted. It was time for the existential Heidegger to be abandoned and the radical tradition-overcoming, anti-humanist Heidegger to be embraced. Western literature and western criticism were, like the tradition of western metaphysics, coming to an end, Spanos suggested, and Heidegger's "'destruction' of the Western onto-theo-logical tradition" represented a positive step forward.[34] This was the patently Heideggerian starting point of the so-called cultural Left, which, to the lament of less radical intellectuals like Rorty, often traded actual politics for university politics.

For the cultural Left, the revolution began with curricular change. Overcoming the humanities, as Spanos had learned from Derrida, meant overturning "man."[35] The same program could be found in de Man's criticism. Like Derrida, de Man's work was indebted to Heidegger, from whom he, too, had absorbed the critique of humanism. In his opinion, as he put it in a 1964 essay, Heidegger's later philosophy provided "a

---

[34] William V. Spanos, "Martin Heidegger and Literature: A Preface," *Boundary 2* 4:2, *Martin Heidegger and Literature* (Winter 1976): 337-339. The issue eventually grew into a volume Spanos edited entitled *Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979). Spanos was very familiar with the earlier, existential reading of Heidegger for he had edited a volume in which Heidegger was presented this way: see Spanos, ed., *A Casebook on Existentialism* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966). For more on Spanos's reading of Heidegger, which over time came to emphasize the anti-modern, anti-humanist aspects of his thought, see Michael A. Peters, ed., *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 6-7. See also Spanos's 1990 interview: Paul A. Bove, "A Conversation with William V. Spanos," *Boundary 2* 17:2 (Summer 1990): 1-39, especially, 32-33.

[35] On this topic, see Spanos's later works, namely *The End of Education: Toward Posthumanism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); and *America's Shadow: An Anatomy of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). In the later book he has posed this issue in an explicitly political frame that echoes Derrida's "The Ends of Man": "The Vietnam War, as I have suggested, was the epochal moment in contemporary history that bore witness to the 'end' of the discourse of ('American') Man. It did not simply disclose the violent contradictions, including its continuity with Europe, inhering in the benign exceptionalist logic of liberal American democracy. This disclosive moment also instigated the e-mergence of a multiplicity of historical subject positions (contradictory Others) hitherto repressed or marginalized by a larger and dominant identity: 'America'" (170).

philosophical basis for the act of exegesis itself," one that put the workings of language before any consideration of the existential self.[36] As he put it in another essay from around the same time, a critical account of the existential psychologist Ludwig Binswanger, one of Heidegger's selling points was that he did not take "a preconceived notion of 'man' for granted" in his work.[37] Because of this, Heidegger's later writings on poetry and language were indispensable tools for the literary critic and de Man was glad that, in the middle sixties, Heidegger was finally being translated into English in a substantive way.[38]

The new-fangled literary-theory tool that de Man and Derrida's deconstruction was ("The New New Criticism" it was sometimes called) helped American academics to read texts—and deconstruction maintained that everything was a text—in a profoundly original way. Politically, it was of course presented as a leftist project. As an interpretive program, however, deconstruction could be put to all kinds of competing ends. "Its ability to spur critics of all persuasions, ranging from the ultraconservative to the radical, from the traditional humanist to the committed Marxist, from the empiricist and pragmatist to the philosophical idealist and materialist," was part of the reason for its institutional success.[39] But when it was revealed in 1987—the same year that Farías's book was published in Paris—that a young de Man had composed articles, some of them

---

[36] Paul de Man, "Heidegger Reconsidered," *Critical Writings, 1953-1978*, edited and with an introduction by Lindsay Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 105. The essay, which was a review of William Barrett's *What is Existentialism?* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), first appeared in the April 2, 1962 issue of the *New York Review of Books*.

[37] Paul de Man, "Ludwig Binswanger and the Sublimation of the Self," *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Second Edition, Revised, introduction by Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 38. See also "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin" in the same volume, 246-266.

[38] de Man, "Heidegger Reconsidered," 106.

[39] Vincent B. Leitch, *American Literary Criticism: From the Thirties to the Eighties* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), 270.

anti-Semitic, for collaborationist periodicals in Belgium between 1940 and 1942, the political implications of deconstruction suddenly seemed suspect. The whole radical project of hailing or bringing about the end of man was seen in an entirely different light as, seemingly overnight, two of its most visible proponents were outted as fascists.

De Man had been dead almost five years when a graduate student unearthed his offensive early texts, but his influence was still very much alive, which is why the ensuing scandal garnered so much media attention.[40] Some of the biggest names in academia became involved in an exchange of invective so shrill at times that it set a new standard for academic infighting.[41] Defenders defended and detractors detracted, but, in the end, not much was settled. As literary critic Catherine Gallagher put it, "everyone learned everything he already knew."[42] But whatever de Man's early articles meant for deconstruction as a literary program, it was clear that, seen from outside the academy, they were, like Heidegger's Nazism, damning evidence of a much larger problem in higher education. And it did not help that academic literary criticism had so thoroughly turned in on itself during this time, to the point that the only "real intercourse between academic criticism and the culture at large" was, as Louis Menand put it, a "negative" one.[43]

Blue-Jean Democracy

[40] See Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure*, 188-208.
[41] The key texts of the de Man affair have been collected in Werner Hamacher, Neil Hertz, and Thomas Keenan, eds., *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Journalism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).
[42] Catherine Gallagher, "Blindness and Hindsight," in *Responses*, 207.
[43] Louis Menand, "The Politics of Deconstruction," *New York Review of Books* November 21, 1991.

If Derrida, de Man, and their followers, such as Spanos, thought that the humanities needed to be shaken up, conservative critics thought that they had to be defended at all costs. The culture wars were fought over many things, not all of them cultural.[44] At their core, though, was a substantial philosophical question, one that went back to Heidegger's critique of humanism. To put it crudely: deconstruction, as part of a larger current of poststructuralist, or, even looser, postmodern thought, was for it; while critics outside the academy were against it. Once again, Heidegger's legacy split American thinkers right down the middle. Derrida and de Man's most prominent counterpart on the other side of the debate was of course Allan Bloom, who decried deconstruction as but another form of the relativism that had taken hold of American culture at large, and American education in particular.[45]

Bloom, a political philosopher who had studied with Leo Strauss, thought that Heidegger was part of an attack upon the mission of university education itself and he did not refrain from saying so. His polemical book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, which shot to the top of the charts after its publication, represented the antithesis to everything for which Derrida seemed to stand. If Derrida, following Heidegger, thought that the humanities needed to be radicalized, Bloom fretted that they had already been radicalized—and the effects, in his opinion, were simply disastrous. To be sure, Bloom was not necessarily an objective analyst. At times, it was hard to tell if he was even being entirely serious. He lumped Heidegger's pernicious influence on American students with other such lamentable and offensive phenomena as, in no particular order:

---

[44] For an account of the de Man scandal that places it in the larger context of the culture wars, one that highlights the so-called crisis of the humanities, see Daniel Bell, "American Intellectual Life, 1965-1992," *Wilson Quarterly* 16:3 (Summer 1992): 74-108.

[45] Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure*, 197.

rock music, European relativism (or nihilism), Woody Allen, and everything and anything to do with the sixties, such as radicalism, the counter-culture, and free love.

The legacy of the sixties is really what *The Closing of the American Mind* is all about. And about this Bloom was dead serious. He had a front row seat from which to view the student radicalism of that time since he taught at Cornell, which was the sight of an armed takeover of university buildings by a militant black student group in 1969.[46] The event changed Bloom's perspective for good.[47] It convinced him—like others of his generation—that the university was under siege on all fronts. Buildings were occupied and curricula were taken hostage. Looking back—in *The Closing of the American Mind*—upon the events of that time, Bloom concluded that "it is the humanities that have suffered most as a result of the sixties."[48] Once the reservoir of all that was good in the western tradition, the humanities—and the stable, timeless, body of wisdom they were supposed to contain—was systematically dismantled by attempts to broaden or question their scope by feminists, multiculturalists, and other such agitators. The humanities stopped being the raw material for elite education, for producing greatness, and became instead just another disposable conglomeration of texts that supported the status quo. In other words, Americans had lost faith in the power of the humanities.

American naiveté was a wonderful thing in Bloom's eyes. The great thing about American students was that they "gave promise of a continuing vitality for the tradition because they did not take it to be tradition."[49] Unlike their European counterparts, who

---

[46] See Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (1988; Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000), 170; and Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 342.
[47] See Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), 47-73.
[48] Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 352.
[49] Ibid., 49.

had been beaten to death with the canon of the great thinkers, Americans saw the great texts always in a pure and direct light. But sometime in the fifties, Americans began to read the great texts like the Europeans. They no longer came to the Great Books without preconceived notions about their larger historical and cultural meanings. The switch, Bloom argued, had something to do with the "popularization of German philosophy in the United States." The "antirational and antiliberal" thought of Nietzsche and Heidegger penetrated—via émigrés like Herbert Marcuse and others—the American academy, producing what Bloom memorably called "a Disneyland version of the Weimar Republic."[50] Shorn of the pathos that defined its original European debut, the American version was a faint copy—it was, as Bloom called it, "nihilism without the abyss" or "nihilism with a happy ending"—but it still had the power to ruin American students.[51] Innocently introducing Heidegger to American students was equivalent to "playing with fire."[52] Heidegger, as a radical historicist, led straight to nihilism. As a form of relativism, Heideggerian nihilism undid the authority of the humanities. It put all values up for grabs. In this sense, Heideggerian thinking had corrupted American students, plain and simple.

Although he tried not to present it as a conspiracy theory, Bloom held the postwar reception of German thought almost solely responsible for the devolution of higher education in America. This was paradoxical, in his eyes, because this reception occurred precisely when American know-how was rebuilding a Europe which had subjected itself to almost total self-immolation during the Second World War:

---

[50] Ibid., 147, 149.
[51] Ibid., 147, 155.
[52] Ibid., 154.

> In short, after the war, while America was sending out its blue jeans to unite the young of all nations, a concrete form of democratic universalism that has had liberalizing effects on many enslaved nations, it was importing clothing of German fabrication for its souls, which clashed with all that and cast doubt on the Americanization of the world on which we had embarked, thinking it was good and in conformity with the rights of man. Our intellectual skyline has been altered by German thinkers even more radically than has our physical skyline by German Architects.[53]

According to Bloom's scenario, there was a direct line that led from the postwar reception of German philosophy through to the student revolts of the sixties, which were led by a New Left that "was a Nietzscheanized-Heideggerianized Left," up to "Deconstructionism," the "last, predictable, stage in the suppression of reason and the denial of possibility of truth in the name of philosophy."[54] Bloom was quick to point out that the latter was the work of "Parisian Heideggerians."[55] In 1987, of course, the "Parisian Heideggerians" were wrestling with Farías's allegations. It was quite a coincidence that Bloom's book was published the very same year, for, taken together, the two events ensured that Heidegger enjoyed a special place at the heart of the culture wars.

For Bloom, Heidegger's notorious *Rektoratsrede*, which Marjorie Grene had suffered through over half a century ago, was the perfect example of just how damaging Heidegger could be when applied to education.[56] It was obvious, to him, because Heidegger himself had attempted to politicize the university, and the results of his actions, as everybody knew, were diabolical. Against Heidegger's influence in the United States decades later, Bloom called for intellectuals and teachers to "support the university's traditional role." They had to recognize that "what happened in German

---

[53] Ibid., 152.
[54] Ibid., 314, 379.
[55] Ibid., 379.
[56] Ibid., see part three, "From Socrates' *Apology* to Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede*," 243-312.

universities in the thirties is what has happened and is happening everywhere. The essence of it all is not social, political, psychological or economic, but philosophic."[57]

Bloom's plea to stem the tide of university radicalization created a straw-man out of Heidegger, but it was, as arguments against straw-men usually are, entirely effective.[58] Bloom was championed by more and less thoughtful conservative cultural critics across the country. But he was also attacked by the very people whom he had attacked.[59] One did not have to be a card-carrying Heideggerian to see through Bloom's simplistic tale of foreign contagion.[60] After all, his almost farcical narrative, which set American good-natured naïveté off against old-world depravity, was but the latest version of a long-standing, exceptionalist discourse. It was intellectual nativism dressed up in blue-jeans.

Conclusion: Scandals to Come

The Farías and Bloom scandals did not mark the end of Heidegger in America—far from it, in fact. If the culture wars reduced Heidegger to a mere example, to a modern-day Faust tale, they also, for that very reason, made him into a subject of wider

---

[57] Ibid., 312.
[58] A response to Bloom's attack on Heidegger can be found in John McCumber, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2001), 108-110.
[59] For the full range of the debate, see two volumes which have collected responses to Bloom's book: Robert L. Stone, ed., *Essays on* The Closing of the American Mind (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1989); and William K. Buckley and James Seaton, eds., *Beyond Cheering and Bashing: New Perspectives on* The Closing of the American Mind (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992).
[60] For a card-carrying Heideggerian's response, see William V. Spanos, *Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction*, foreword by Donald E. Pease (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). For Spanos's take on the meaning of the Farías affair, see especially his "Heidegger, Nazism, and the 'Repressive Hypothesis': The American Appropriation of the Question," 181-251. For critical responses, see Robert Holub, *Crossing Borders: Reception Theory, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 182 ff.; and David H. Hirsch, "Leaning Left from the Far Right," *Academic Questions* 8:1 (Winter 1994-95): 74-81.

fascination: how could the century's greatest philosopher have been a Nazi?[61] The relationship of Heidegger's life to his work and his work to his life became the basis of a parable which dramatized philosophy in a way that made it relevant far beyond the seminar room.[62] It was but a short step from here to the proliferation of "dummies" books, with which we began our story.

Our journey has taken us from the travels of eager young philosophical pioneers to Germany before World War II to the disciplinary history of American philosophy; from the flight of refugee intellectuals from Europe during the thirties to the peculiarities of the publishing world in the United States during the second half of the last century; from architectural theory to popular culture. Charting Heidegger's reception in this country demanded that we utilize a number of different approaches. Somewhere between the history of philosophy, the sociology of knowledge, the history of the book, intellectual history, cultural history, and theories of international intellectual exchange, Heidegger's American reception becomes visible, but no one perspective alone allows for a unencumbered sightline of the subject. Making sense of it all is not an easy task, but it remains a necessary one. Scholars have successfully discussed the Americanization of European thought before, but, in this moment of American-led globalization ("the

---

[61] Some of the issues that defined the de Man and Farías affairs reemerged a few years later in the so-called "affaire Derrida." Derrida, objecting to the inclusion of an interview he gave to *Le Nouvel Observateur* at the time of the Farías controversy in a sourcebook on Heidegger's politics edited by Richard Wolin, a book which he deemed to be too critical of Heidegger, threatened legal action if the piece was not removed from the volume. What is interesting is that Derrida, who had done so much to destabilize the notion of authorship and authorial intent via deconstruction, resorted to threats of legal action in order to protect his hold over a text that was not his in two senses: first, the *Le Nouvel Observateur*, from which Wolin had procured the rights, legally owned the text; and second, the piece was an *interview*—as a dialogue it thus had not one, but two authors. For more on this issue, see Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure*, 183. See also Wolin's preface to the second edition of his book, "Preface to the MIT Press Edition: Note on a Missing Text," *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (1991; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), ix-xx.

[62] See, for example, James Miller, "Heidegger's Guilt," *Salmagundi* 109/110 (Winter, Spring 1996): 178-235.

American moment in world history," as Bloom called it), perhaps it is time for us to more fully explore the ways in which the United States, even as it was democratizing the world with its blue-jeans, was being transformed by an increasingly internationalized intellectual culture.[63] And to do so without falling into the nativist trap.[64]

Heidegger continues to be a rich intellectual resource. No doubt he will continue to be a source of scandal as well, especially since so many of his papers are still kept under lock and key (and heavy guard). Their contents, when revealed, will surely spark at least one more round of heated debate. But if Heidegger continues to scandalize, it is only because he continues to captivate.

---

[63] Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 382. For serious studies of the American reception of European ideas, see for example, Nathan Hale, *Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876-1917* (New York: Oxford, 1971) and *Freud and the Americans, Volume 2: The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1917-1985* (American Philological Association, 1995). Other such studies in reception history include Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *Neither Rock nor Refuge: American Encounters with Nietzsche and the Search for Foundations* (PhD dissertation: Brandeis University, 2003); Paul Spurlin, *Montesquieu in America, 1760-1801* (Louisiana State UP, 1940) and *Rousseau in America, 1760-1809* (University of Alabama Press, 1969).

[64] On this, see my "Coca-Cola for Camus, Hi-Fis for Heidegger: American Intellectual and Cultural History in the Age of Globalization," *Intellectual News: Review of the international society for intellectual history* 15 (Spring 2005).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

Hannah Arendt Papers. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Available online at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/arednthtml/about.html.

Daniel Libeskind Papers, 1968-1992. Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Special Collections.

Paul Oskar Kristeller Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

Hans W. Loewald Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Printed Sources

Adorno, Theodor. *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973.

---. *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. Trans.E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso, 1974.

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. "Continental Influence on American Christian Thought since World War I." *Church History* 27:3 (September 1958): 256-272.

---. *A Religious History of the American People*. Second Edition. Foreword and concluding chapter by David D. Hall. 1972. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.

Albrecht, Renate and Werner Schußler. *Paul Tillich: Sein Leben*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993.

Alternbernd Johnson, Patricia. *On Heidegger*. Wadsworth Philosophers Series. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 2000.

Anders, Günther. *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution*. 1956. München: C.H. Beck, 1961.

---. *Burning Conscience: The Case of the Hiroshima Pilot*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1962.

---. *Der Mann Auf Der Brücke: Tagebuch aus Hiroshima und Nagasaki*. München: C.H. Beck, 1959.

---. [Günther Stern]. "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 8:3 (March, 1948): 337-371.

---. *Tagebücher und Gedichte*. München: C.H. Beck, 1985.

---. *Über Heidegger*. Herausgegeben von Gerhard Oberschlick in Verbindung mit Werner Reinmann als Übersetzer, Mit einem Nachwort von Dieter Thomä. München: C.H. Beck, 2001.

---. *Visit Beautiful Vietnam: ABC der Aggressionen heute*. Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1968.

Apel, Karl-Otto. "Wittgenstein and Heidegger: language games and life forms." Ed. Christopher Macann, *Critical Heidegger*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 241-274.

Arac, Jonathan, Wlad Godzich, and Wallace Martin, eds. *The Yale Critics: Deconstruction in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

Arendt, Hannah, and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe, 1925-1975: Und Andere Zeugnisse*. Ed. Ursula Ludz. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998.

---. "Martin Heidegger at 80." *New York Review of Books*. Volume 17 Number 6 (21 October 1971): 50-54.

---. "The Image of Hell." *Essays in Understanding*. Ed. Jerome Kohn. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994. 197-205.

---. "What is Existenz Philosophy?" *Partisan Review* Volume 13 Number 1 (Winter 1946): 34-56.

Auxier, Randall E. and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. *The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene*. Library of Living Philosophers Volume XXIX. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois, 2002.

Bailyn, Bernard, and Donald Fleming, eds. *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1969.

Bambach, Charles. *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995.

---. *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003.

Barrett, William. "Dialogue on Anxiety." *Partisan Review* 14:2 (1947): 151-159.

---. *The Illusion of Technique: A Search for the Meaning of Life in a Technological Age*. London: William Kimber, 1979.

---. *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*. New York: Doubleday, 1958.

---. *The Truants*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982.

---. *What is Existentialism?* New York: Grove Press, 1964.

---. "Writers and Madness." *Partisan Review* 14:1 (1947): 5-22.

--- and Henry D. Aiken, eds. *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. Four Volumes. New York: Random House, 1962.

Bellow, Saul. *Herzog*. New York: Penguin, 1964.

---. *Ravelstein*. New York: Viking, 2000.

Bergmann, Peter. "Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Americanization of Defeat." *International Studies in Philosophy* 27:3 (1995): 73-84.

Berman, Paul. "Nazi Rector." *Village Voice* September 13, 1988.

Berns, Laurence. "Heidegger and Strauss: Temporality, Religion and Political Philosophy." *Interpretation* 27:2 (Winter 1999-2000): 99-104.

Bixler, Julius Seelye. "German Phenomenology and Its Implications for Religion." *The Journal of Religion* 9:4 (October 1929): 589-606.

Blake, Casey Nelson. *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Bloom, Alexander. *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.

Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.

Blumenthal, Sophie. "Martin Heidegger Clarifies His Role in Germany's Nazi Era." *The Seattle Times* August 10, 1969.

Borradori, Giovanna. *The American Philosopher: Conversations with Quine, Davidson, Putnam, Nozick, Danto, Rorty, Cavell, MacIntyre, and Kuhn*. Trans. Rosanna Crocitto. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1994.

Boss, Medard. *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology*. Trans. Stephen Conway and Anne Cleaves. New York: J. Aronson, 1979.

Brick, Howard. *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s*. 1998. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001.

Brock, Werner. *An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1935.

Brogan, Walter and James Risser, eds. *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "On the Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas." Ed. Richard Shusterman. *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999. 220-228.

---. *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*. Trans. Peter Collier. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.

Caputo, John D. *Demythologizing Heidegger*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.

---. *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1978.

---. "Of Mystics, Magi, and Deconstructionists." Ed. James R. Watson. *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999. 24-33.

---. "Toward a Postmodern Theology of the Cross: Augustine, Heidegger, Derrida." Ed. Merold Westphal. *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999. 202-225.

Carnap, Rudolf. "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache." *Erkenntnis* II (1932): 219-241.

Casey, Edward. "Proceeding to Place by Indirection: Heidegger." *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. 243-284.

Ceaser, James. "*Katastrophenhaft*: Martin Heidegger's America." *Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997. 187-213.

Cerf, Walter H. "An Approach to Heidegger's Ontology." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1:2 (December, 1940):177-190.

Cochrane, Arthur C. *The Existentialists and God: Being and the Being of God in the Thought of Sören Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Tillich, Etienne Gilson, Karl Barth*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.

Collins, Jeff. *Heidegger and the Nazis*. New York: Totem Books, 2000.

Collins, Jeff and Howard Selina. *Introducing Heidegger*. New York: Totem, 1998.

Collins, Randall. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Belknap, 1998.

Commager, Henry Steele. *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1950.

Cooney, Terry. *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: "Partisan Review" and Its Circle*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

Coser, Lewis. *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Cotkin, George. *Existential America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Cotter, Matthew J., ed. *Sidney Hook Reconsidered*. Afterword by Richard Rorty. Amherst: New York: Prometheus Books, 2004.

Cremer, Douglas J. "Protestant Theology in Early Weimar Germany: Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56:2 (April 1995): 289-307.

Cussett, François. *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis*. Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003.

Dallmayr, Fred. *Between Freiburg and Frankfurt: Toward a Critical Ontology*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991.

de Man, Paul. *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*. Second Edition, Revised. Iintroduction by Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

---. *Critical Writings, 1953-1978*. Ed. with an introduction by Lindsay Waters. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

de Ruggiero, Guido. *Existentialism: Disintegration of Man's Soul*. Introduction by Rayner Heppenstall. New York: Social Science Publishers, 1948.

Derrida, Jacques. "The Ends of Man." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. with additional notes by Alan Bass. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1982. 109-136.

---. *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*. Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

---. "*Ousia* and *Grammē: Note on a Note from* Being and Time." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. with additional notes by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 29-67.

De Waelhens, Alphonse. *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger*. Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1942.

Diggins, John P. *Up from Communism: Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual Development*. 1975. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, Division I. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991.

---. *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992.

---. "Wild on Heidegger: Comments." *Journal of Philosophy*. 60:22 (October 24, 1963): 677-680.

---, and John Haugeland. "Continental and Analytic Perspectives in the Philosophy Curriculum." *Phenomenology and Existentialism: Continental and Analytic Perspectives on Intentionality in the Philosophy Curriculum*. San Francisco: The Council for Philosophical Studies, 1981.

---, and Mark A. Wrathall, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2005.

Drury, Shadia B. *Leo Strauss and the American Right*. London: Macmillan, 1997.

Earle, William, James M. Edie, and John Wild. *Christianity and Existentialism*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1963.

Edie, James M. "Phenomenology in the United States." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 5:3 (October 1974): 199-211.

---, Francis H. Parker, and Calvin O. Schrag, eds. *Patterns of the Life-World: Essays in Honor of John Wild*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1970.

Edwards, Paul. *Heidegger's Confusions*. Amherst: New York: Prometheus Books, 2004.

Ermarth, Michael. "Heidegger and Americanism: *Ruinanz* and the End of Modernity." *Modernism / Modernity* 7:3 (2000): 379-400.

Ettinger, Elżbieta. *Hannah Arendt / Martin Heidegger*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995.

Farber, Marvin. *The Foundation of Phenomenology*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1943.

---, ed. *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1940.

---, ed. *Philosophic Thought in France and the United States: Essays Representing Major Trends in Contemporary French and American Philosophy*. Buffalo, New York: University of Buffalo Publications in Philosophy, 1950.

Farías, Victor. *Heidegger and Nazism*. Edited, with a foreword by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi, German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989.

Faulconer, James and Mark A. Wrathall, eds. *Appropriating Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

Faye, Emmanuel. *Heidegger l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie: Autour des seminaries inédits de 1933-1935*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2005.

Fermi, Laura. *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-41*. Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Ferry, Luc, and Alain Renault. *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*. Trans. Mary Schnackenberg Cattani. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

---. *Heidegger and Modernity*. Trans. Franklin Philip. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Fogel, Gerald I. *The Work of Hans Loewald: An Introduction and Commentary*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1999.

Frampton, Kenneth. "The Isms of Contemporary Architecture." *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present / Architectural Design Profile*. 1982. 60-82.

---. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." Ed. Hal Foster. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983. 16-30.

Freund, Ernest H. "Man's Fall in Martin Heidegger's Philosophy." *The Journal of Religion* 24:3 (July 1944): 180-187.

Fried, Gregory. "On the Editing of Heidegger's Nietzsche Lectures." *Heidegger's* Polemos: *From Being to Politics*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2000. 257-261.

Friedman, Michael. *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2000.

Friess, Horace L. "The Progress of German Philosophy in the Last Hundred Years." *Journal of Philosophy* 27:15 (July, 1930): 396-415.

Fritsche, Johannes. *National Socialism and Historical Destiny in Heidegger's* Being and Time. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.

Führ, Eduard,ed. *Bauen und Wohnen: Martin Heideggers Grundlegung einer Phänomenologie der Architektur / Building and Dwelling: Martin Heidegger's Foundation of a Phenomenology of Architecture*. Münster: Waxmann, 2000.

Timothy Fuller, ed. *Something of Great Constancy: Essays in Honor of the Memory of J. Glenn Gray, 1913-1977*. Colorado Springs: The Colorado College, 1979.

Fulton, Ann. *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America, 1945-1963*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1999.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Heidegger's Ways*. Trans. John W. Stanley, with an introduction by Dennis J. Schmidt. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.

Giere, Ronald N., and Alan W. Richardson, eds. *Origins of Logical Empiricism* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Gilman, Nils. *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003.

Gordon, Peter Eli. "Continental Divide: Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger at Davos, 1929—An Allegory of Intellectual History." *Modern Intellectual History* 1:2 (August 2004): 219-248.

---. *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Grassi, Ernesto. *Heidegger and the Question of Renaissance Humanism*. Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1983.

Gray, J. Glenn. "Denazification: An American Appraisal" *American Perspective*. Volume III Number 8 (January 1949): 420-430.

---. "German Recovery: Apparent or Real?" *Western Humanities Review* Volume XI, Number 4 (Autumn 1957): 307-319.

----. *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1941.

----. "Heidegger's Being." *The Journal of Philosophy* Volume XLIX Number 12 (June 5, 1952): 415-422.

---. "Heidegger's Course: From Human Existence to Nature" *The Journal of Philosophy*. Volume LIV Number 8 (April 11, 1957):197-207.

---. "Heidegger 'Evaluates' Nietzsche" *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Volume XIV Number 2 (April 1953): 304-309.

---. "Heidegger on Remembering and Remembering Heidegger" *Man and World*. Volume 10 Number 1 (1977): 62-78.

---. "Homelessness and Anxiety: Sources of the Modern Mode of Being" *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Volume 48 Number 1: 24-39.

---. "The Idea of Death in Modern Existentialism" *The Journal of Philosophy*. Volume XLVIII Number 5 (March 1, 1951): 113-127.

---. "Martin Heidegger: On Anticipating my own Death" *The Personalist*. XLVI:4 (Fall, October 1965): 439-458.

---. "Munich University: Class of '50. A Case Study in German Re-education" *Commentary* (May 1948): 440-448.

---. "The New Image of Man in Martin Heidegger's Philosophy." Ed. George L. Kline. *European Philosophy Today*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965.

---. *On Understanding Violence Philosophically & Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

---. *The Promise of Wisdom: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1968.

---. "Salvation on the Campus: Why Existentialism is Capturing the Students" *Harper's Magazine*. May 1965. 53-59.

---. *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*. Introduction by Hannah Arendt. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

---. "We Must Love One Another or Die" *The Personalist* Volume XXXIII Number 3 (Summer, July 1952): 266-272.

---. "The Winds of Thought" *Social Research* 44:1 (Spring 1977): 44-62.

Grene, Marjorie. *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

---. *Martin Heidegger*. New York, Hilary House, 1957.

---. [Marjorie Glicksman]. "A Note on the Philosophy of Heidegger" *Journal of Philosophy* 35:4 (1938): 93-104.

---. *Philosophy In and Out of Europe*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

---. *A Philosophical Testament*. Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1995.

Guignon, Charles B., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective." *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the*

Historian's Debate. Ed. and trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Introduction by Richard Wolin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989. 140-142.

Hagestedt, Jens. *Freud und Heidegger: Zum Begriff der Geschichte im Augang des Subjektzentrischen Denkens*. München: W. Fink, 1993.

Hahn, Lewis E., ed. *The Philosophy of Paul Weiss*. Library of Living Philosophers Volume XXIII. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995.

Hale, Jr., Nathan G. *Freud in America*. Two Volumes. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971, and 1995.

---. "From Berggasse XIX to Central Park West: The Americanization of Psychoanalysis, 1919-1940." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* (1978): 299-315.

Hamacher, Werner, Neil Hertz, and Thomas Keenan, eds. *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Journalism*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

Harries, Karsten. *The Ethical Function of Architecture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1990.

Haverkamp, Anselm, ed. *Deconstruction is/in America: A New Sense of the Political*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1995.

Hays, K. Michael, ed. *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998.

Heidegger, Martin. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale UP, 1959.

---. *Basic Writings*. Revised and expanded edition. Ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

---. *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962.

---. *The Concept of Time*. Trans. William McNeill. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

---. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999.

---. *Early Greek Thinking*. Trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1975.

---. *The Essence of Reasons*. Trans. Terrence Malick. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1969.

---. *Existence and Being*. Ed. Werner Brock. London: Routledge, 1949.

---. *German Existentialism*. Trans. with an introduction by Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965.

---. *History of the Concept of Time*. Trans. Theodore Kisiel. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1985.

---. *Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*. Trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

---. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Fifth Edition, Enlarged. Trans. Richard Taft. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

---. *On the Way to Language*. Trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

---. "The Onto-theo-logical Nature of Metaphysics." *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference*. Trans. Kurt F. Leidecker. New York: Philosophical Library, 1960. 33-68.

---. *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation to Phenomenological Research*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2001.

---. *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason. Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

---. *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004.

---. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

---. *The Question of Being*. Trans. Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback. New York: Twayne, 1958.

---. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. with an introduction by William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

---. *Reden Und Andere Zeugnisse Eines Lebensweges*. Gesamtausgabe 16. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000.

---. *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to* Being and Time *and Beyond*. Ed. John van Buren. Albany: SUNY Press, 2002.

---. *What is Called Thinking?* Trans. and introduction by J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

---. *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback. New Haven: College and University Press Publishers, 1958.

---. *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols—Conversations—Letters*. Ed. Medard Boss, trans. with notes and afterwords by Franz Mayr and Richard Askay. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2001.

Heilbut, Anthony. *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present*. 1983. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

Heinemann, F. H. *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953.

Heinze, Andrew R. *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the 20th Century*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.

Hemming, Laurence Paul. *Heidegger's Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.

Hollinger, David. *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996.

Hook, Sidney. "A Personal Impression of Contemporary German Philosophy." *Journal of Philosophy* 27:6 (March 13, 1930): 141-160.

---. *Out of Step: A Unique Life in the 20th Century*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

---. "Some Memories of John Dewey." *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life*. New York: Basic Books, 1974.

---. Sidney Hook, "The Quest for Being" *Journal of Philosophy*. 50:24 (November 1953): 709-731.

Hughes, H. Stuart. *The Sea Change*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.

Hutton, Holly . "Imported from France: American Adaptations of Existentialist Ideas and Literature." PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2004.

Huyler, Jerome. *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Ihde, Don. "Deromanticizing Heidegger." *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1993. 103-115.

Inwood, Michael. *A Heidegger Dictionary*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999.

---. *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*. 1997: Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Isaac, Joel. "W.V. Quine and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy in the United States." *Modern Intellectual History*. 2:2 (August 2005): 205-234.

Janicaud, Dominique. *Heidegger en France*. Two Volumes. Paris: Albin Michel, 2001.

---. *The Shadow of that Thought: Heidegger and the Question of Politics*. Trans. Michael Gendre. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1996.

Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950*. 1973. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.

---. *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America*. New York: Columbia UP, 1985.

Jencks, Charles. *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*. London: Academy Editions, 1977.

Jennings, Jeremy and Anthony Kemp-Welch, eds. *Intellectuals in Politics*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Jonas, Hans. *Erinnerungen*. Nach Gespräpchen mit Rachel Salamander, Vorwort von Rachel Salamander, Geleitwort von Lore Jonas, Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Christian Wiese. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2003.

---. *The Gnostic Tradition*. Boston: Beacon, 1958.

---. "Heidegger and Theology." *Review of Metaphysics* XVIII:2 (December 1964): 207-233.

---. *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good after Auschwitz.* Ed. Lawrence Vogel. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1996.

Jumonville, Neil. *Critical Crossings: The New York Intellectuals in Postwar America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Jung, Hwa Yol. "The Life-World, Historicity, and Truth: Reflections on Leo Strauss's Encounter with Heidegger and Husserl." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 9:1 (January 1978): 11-25.

Katz, Barry M. *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1989.

Kaufmann, Fritz. "Concerning Kraft's 'Philosophy of Existence'." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1:3 (March, 1941): 359-363.

Kaufmann, Walter, ed. *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

---. *From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

---. "The Reception of Existentialism in the United States." *Salmagundi* 10-11. Special double-issue on The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals (Fall 1969—Winter 1970): 69-96.

Kearney, Richard and Joseph Stephen O'Leary, eds. *Heidegger et la Question de Dieu*. Paris: Grasset, 1980.

King, Margaret L. "Iter Krsitelleranium: The European Journey (1905-1939)" *Renaissance Quarterly* 47:4 (Winter, 1994): 907-929.

Kisiel, Theodore. *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

---, and John van Buren, eds. *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.

Kittsteiner, Heinz Dieter. "Heideggers Amerika als Ursprungsort der Weltverdüsterung" *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 45:4 (1997): 599-617.

Kleinberg, Ethan. *Generation Existential: Heidegger's Philosophy in France, 1927-1961*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005.

Kloppenberg, James T. "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?" *Journal of American History* 83 (June 1996): 100-138.

---. *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought*, *1870-1920*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

Kolb, David. "Heidegger at 100, in America." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. LII: 1 (January-March 1991): 140-151.

Kosinski, Jerzy. *Being There*. 1970. New York: Grove Press, 1999.

Krell, David Farrell. "A Smile and a Sense of Tragedy: Letters from J. Glenn Gray." *Philosophy Today*. Volume XXV Number 2/4 (Summer 1981): 95-113.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Humanismus und Renaissance*. Hrsg. von Eckhard Kesler, übersetzung aus dem Englischen von Renate Schweyen-Ott. München: W. Fink, 1974-76.

---. "A Life of Learning." The Charles Homer Askins Lecture for 1990. American Council of Learned Societies Occasional Paper No. 12. Available online at http://www.acls,org/op12.htm.

---. *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*. Trans. Virginia Conant. New York: Columbia UP, 1943.

---. "The Philosophical Significance of the History of Thought." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 7:3 (June 1946): 360-366.

---. *Renaissance Concepts of Man: And Other Essays*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972.

---. "Some Problems of Historical Knowledge." *The Journal of Philosophy* 58:4 (February 16, 1961): 85-110.

Krohn, Claus-Dieter. *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*. Trans. Rita and Robert Kimber, foreword by Arthur J. Vidich. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Kroner, Richard. "Heidegger's Private Religion." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 11 (1956): 23-27.

Krüger, Gustav. "The 'Theology of Crisis.'" Ed. W. Warren Wagar. *European Intellectual History since Darwin and Marx*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966: 135-158.

Kuhn, Helmut. *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism*. 1949. London: Metheun & Co., 1951.

---. *Freedom Forgotten and Remembered*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943.

---. "Review of Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*." *Journal of Philosophy* 41:20 (Sept. 28, 1944): 553-560.

Kuklick, Bruce. *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.

---. "French Letters." *Modern Intellectual History* 1:2 (August 2004): 283-292.

---. *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720-2000*. Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 2001.

---. "Philosophy at Yale in the Century after Darwin." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21: 3 (July 2004): 313-336.

---. *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860-1930*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977.

Kunkel, Benjamin. *Indecision*. New York: Random House, 2005.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe. *Heidegger, Art and Politics*. Trans. Chris Turner. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Lamont, Michèle. "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida." *American Journal of Sociology* 93:3 (November 1987): 584-622.

Langan, Thomas. *The Meaning of Heidegger: A Critical Study of An Existentialist Phenomenology*. New York: Columbia UP, 1959.

Lasky, Melvin J. "Literature and the Arts: Transatlantic Letters—Restoration but not Renaissance." Ed. Lewis Galantière, *America and the Mind of Europe*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951.

Lear, Jonathan. *Therapeutic Action: An Earnest Plea for Irony*. New York: Other Press, 2003.

Leavy, Stanley A. "Time and World in the Thought of Hans W. Loewald." *Psychoanalytic Study Child* 44 (1989): 231-240.

Lemay, Eric, and Jennifer A. Pitts. *Heidegger for Beginners*. Illustrated by Paul Gordon. New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1994.

Libeskind, Daniel. *Breaking Ground: An Immigrant's Journey from Poland to the United States*. With Sarah Crichton. New York: Riverhead, 2004.

---. *Chamberworks: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*. London: Architectural Association, 1983.

---. *Micromegas*. Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1980.

---. *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings*. Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997.

Lilla, Mark. *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*. New York: New York Review Books, 2001.

Loewald, Hans W. *The Essential Hans Loewald*. Introduction by Jonathan Lear. Hagerstown, Maryland: University Publishing Group, 2000.

---. *Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1978.

Losurdo, Domenico. *Heidegger and the Ideology of War: Community, Death, and the West*. Trans. Marella and Jon Morris. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2001.

Lotringer, Sylvère and Sande Cohen, eds. *French Theory in America*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Löwith, Karl. "Heidegger: Problem and Background of Existentialism." *Social Research* 15:3 (September 1948): 345-369.

---. *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*. Ed. Richard Wolin. Trans. Gary Steiner. New York: Columbia UP, 1995.

---. *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

---. *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*. Trans. Elizabeth King. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Lyons, James R. *The Intellectual Legacy of Paul Tillich*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1969.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Heidegger and "the jews"*. Trans. Andreas Michael and Mark S. Roberts. Foreword by David Caroll. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

Macquarrie, John. *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*. London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1955.

---. *Heidegger and Christianity*. The Hensley Henson Lectures 1993-94. New York: Continuum, 1999.

---. *Martin Heidegger*. London: Lutterworth Press, London, 1968.

Mahoney, Edward P., ed. *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*. New York: Columbia UP, 1976.

Marcuse, Herbert. *Heideggerian Marxism*. Eds. Richard Wolin and John Abromeit. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Mathy, Jean-Philippe. *Extrême-Occident: French Intellectuals and America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

May, Reinhard. *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*. Trans. with a complimentary essay by Graham Parkes. New York: Routledge, 1996.

McClay, Wilfred. "Historical Research on the Refugee Intellectuals: Problems and Prospects," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 7:3 (1994): 513-526.

---. "Weimar in America." *The American Scholar* 55:1 (Winter, 1985-6): 119-128.

McCumber, John. *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2001.

McDonald, Henry. "The Ontological Turn: Philosophical Sources of American Literary Theory." *Inquiry* 45 (2002): 3-34.

McLoughlin, William G. and Robert N. Bellah, eds. *Religion in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2001.

---, ed. *Pragmatism: A Reader*. New York: Vintage, 1997.

Mendieta, Eduardo, ed. *The Frankfurt School on Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Mewes, Horst. "Leo Strauss and Martin Heidegger: Greek Antiquity and the Meaning of Modernity." Eds. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt. *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Émigrés and American Political Thought after World War II*. New York: German Historical Institute and Cambridge UP, 1995. 105-120.

Miller, James. "Heidegger's Guilt." *Salmagundi* 109/110 (Winter, Spring 1996): 178-235.

Montgomery, Paul L. "Scholar Breaks with Heidegger." *New York Times*, April 11, 1964.

Moyn, Samuel. "Judaism against Paganism: Emmanuel Levinas's Response to Heidegger and Nazism in the 1930s." *History and Memory* 10:1 (Spring/Summer 1998): 25-58.

Murray, Michael, ed. *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.

Myerson, George. *Heidegger, Habermas and the Mobile Phone*. Cambridge: Totem Books, 2001.

O'Meara, Thomas F. "Heidegger and His Origins: Theological Perspectives." *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 205-226.

---. "Tillich and Heidegger: A Structural Relationship." *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968): 249-261.

Naess, Arne. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. Trans. and revised by David Rothenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

Nehamas, Alexander. "Trends in Recent American Philosophy." *American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines*. Ed. with an introduction by Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske. Foreword by Stephen R. Graubard. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998. 227-241.

Nesbitt, Kate, ed. *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.

Neske, Günther and Emil Kettering, eds. *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*. Introduction by Karsten Harries, trans. Lisa Harries, French portions translated by Joachim Neugroschel. New York: Paragon House, 1990.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Thinkers and Thought." *New York Times* July 13, 1958.

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place*. Trans. Antony Shugaar. Milan: Skira, 2000.

---. *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to Figurative Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.

---. *Intentions in Architecture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1965.

---. "Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture." *Oppositions* 18 (1979), 28-47.

Norton, Anne. *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.

Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Association*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

Ockman, Joan. "Resurrecting the Avant-Garde: The History and Program of Oppositions." Eds. Beatriz Colomina and Joan Ockman. *Architectureproduction* New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988. 180-199.

Okrent, Mark. *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

Olivetti, Marco M., ed. *La recezione italiana di Heidegger*. Padova: Cedam, 1989.

Ott, Hugo. *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*. Trans. Allan Blunden. London: Harper Collins, 1993.

Palmier, Jean-Michel. *Weimar en Exil: Le Destin de L'Émigration Intellectuelle Allemande Antinazie en Europe et aux États-Unis*. Two Volumes. Paris: Payot, 1988.

Parkes, Graham. *Heidegger and Asian Thought*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.

Pauck, Wilhelm and Marion. *Paul Tillich: His Life & Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

Pettegrew, John, ed. *A Pragmatist's Progress? Richard Rorty and American Intellectual History*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

Phelps, Christopher. *Young Sidney Hook: Marxist and Pragmatist*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997.

Polt, Richard and Gregory Fried, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger's* Introduction to Metaphysics. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001.

Rabaté, Jean-Michel, ed. *Lacan in America*. New York: Other Press, 2000.

Richardson, William J. *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*. Fourth Edition. 1963. New York: Fordham UP, 2003.

---. "Heidegger and God—and Professor Jonas." *Thought* XL (1965): 13-40.

---. "An Unpurloined Autobiography." Ed. James R. Watson. *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999. 142-152.

Rabinbach, Anson. "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. 97-128.

Ratner-Rosenhagen, Jennifer. *Neither Rock nor Refuge: American Encounters with Nietzsche and the Search for Foundations*. PhD dissertation: Brandeis University, 2003.

Robinson, James M. and John B. Cobb, Jr., eds. *The Later Heidegger and Theology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Rockmore, Tom. *Heidegger and French Philosophy: Humanism, Antihumanism, and Being*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

---, and Joseph Margolis, eds. *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992.

Rodgers, Daniel T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Belknap, 1998.

Rorty, Richard. *Achieving Our Country*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998.

---. *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

---. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.

---. *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers Volume 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.

---,ed. *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

---. *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Collected Philosophical Papers Volume I*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.

---. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1979.

---. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

---. *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty*. Ed. with an introduction by Eduardo Mendieta. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006.

Rossinow, Doug. *Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.

Rothenberg, David. *Is it Painful to Think: A Conversation with Arne Naess*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Safranski, Rüdiger. *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*. Trans. Ewald Osers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1998.

Schimanski, Stefan. "On Meeting a Philosopher." *Partisan Review* 15:4 (April 1948): 506-511.

Schlipp, Paul Arthur, ed. *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*. Library of Living Philosophers Volume XI. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1963.

Scott, Charles. "Heidegger, the Absence of God, and Faith." *The Journal of Religion* 46:3 (July, 1966): 365-373.

---. "Heidegger Reconsidered: A Response to Professor Jonas." *Harvard Theological Review* 59:2 (1966): 175-185.

Sheehan, Thomas, ed. *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*. Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981.

---. "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion, 1920-21." *The Personalist* 55 (1979-1980): 312-24.

Shook, John, ed. *Dictionary of Modern American* Philosophers. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005.

Silverman, Hugh J., John Sallis, and Thomas Seebohm, eds. *Continental Philosophy in America*. Pittsburgh, Duquesne UP, 1983.

Smith, Steven. "*Destruktion* or Recovery?: Leo Strauss's Critique of Heidegger." *Review of Metaphysics* 51:2 (December 1997): 345-378.

Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996. 66-68.

Spanos, William V. *A Casebook on Existentialism*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966.

---. "Heidegger, Nazism, and the 'Repressive Hypothesis': The American Appropriation of the Question." *Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. 181-251.

---. *Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979.

Speier, Hans. *Social Order and the Risks of War: Papers in Political Sociology*. New York: George W. Stewart, 1952.

Spurlin, Paul. *Montesquieu in America, 1760-1801*. Louisiana State UP, 1940.

---. *Rousseau in America, 1760-1809*. University of Alabama Press, 1969.

Stambaugh, Joan. "A Heidegger Primer." *Thoughts on Heidegger*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1991. 3-14.

Steiner, Wendy. *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in An Age of Fundamentalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Strathern, Paul. *Heidegger in 90 Minutes*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002.

Strauss, Leo. "German Nihilism." Eds. David Janssens and Daniel Tanguay. *Interpretation* 26:3 (Spring 1999): 333-378.

---. "A Giving of Accounts: Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss." *The St. John's Review/The College* 22:1 (April 1970): 1-5.

---. "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism." *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*. Selected and introduced by Thomas L. Pangle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. 27-46.

---. *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*. New York: Basic, 1968.

---. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1953.

---. "Persecution and the Art of Writing." *Social Research* 8:4 (November 1941): 488-504.

---. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*. 1936. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1952.

---. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*. 1930. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1965.

Tanguay, Daniel. *Leo Strauss: Une biographie intellectuelle*. Paris: Grasset, 2003.

Taubes, Susan Anima. "The Gnostic Foundations of Heidegger's Nihilism." *The Journal of Religion* 34:3 (July 1954): 155-172.

Tillich, Paul. *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*. Ed. Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

---. "The Conquest of Theological Provincialism." Ed. Rex Crawford. *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America*. The Benjamin Franklin Lectures. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953. 138-156.

---. *The Courage to Be*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1952.

---. "Existential Philosophy." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (January 1944): 44-70.

---. *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

---. *Systematic Theology*. 1951. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1967.

---. *Theology of Culture*. Ed. Robert C. Kimball. New York: Oxford UP, 1959.

Thomä, Dieter, hrsg. *Heidegger Handbuch*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2003.

Thompson, Iain. *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.

Tucker, Aviezer. *The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence from Patočka to Havel*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000.

---. "Vaclav Havel's Heideggerianism." *Telos* 85 (Fall 1990): 63-78.

van Buren, John. *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

van Dijk, Paul. *Anthropology in the Age of Technology: The Philosophical Contribution of Günther Anders*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.

Vycinas, Vincent. *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961.

Wald, Alan M. *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Walker, Gerald Lee. *Heidegger and Modern Architecture*. PhD dissertation: University of Pennsylvania, 1993.

Ward, Graham, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001.

Ward, James F. "Political Philosophy & History: The Links Between Strauss & Heidegger." *Polity* 20:2 (Winter 1987): 273-295.

Watt, Michael. *Heidegger: A Beginner's Guide*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001.

Weinreich, Max. *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People*. New York: YIVO, 1946.

Werkmeister, W.H. "An Introduction to Heidegger's 'Existential Philosophy'." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 2:1 (September 1941): 79-87.

West, Cornel. *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Westbrook, Robert B. *John Dewey and American Democracy*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.

Whitebook, Joel. "Hans Loewald: A radical conservative." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 85 (2004): 85-97.

Wiggershaus, Rolf. *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*. Trans. Michael Robertson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994.

Wild, John. *The Challenge of Existentialism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955.

---. *Human Freedom and Social Order: An Essay on Christian Philosophy*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke UP, 1959.

---. "The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger." *Journal of Philosophy*. 60:22 (October 24, 1963): 664-677.

Wood, Ralph C. *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*. Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004.

Richard Wolin, "French Heidegger Wars." *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995. 142-161.

---. *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001.

---,ed. *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*. 1991. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993.

---. *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger*. New York: Columbia UP, 1990.

Wrathall, Mark. *How to Read Heidegger*. London: Granta, 2005.

---, ed. *Religion After Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

---, and Jeff Malpas, eds. *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, *Volume 1*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000.

---. *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, *Volume 2*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000.

Wyschogrod, Michael. *Kierkeggard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence*. London: Routlegde & Kegan Paul, 1954.

Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. *Hannah Arendt: For the Love of the World*. 1982. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.

Ziarek, Krzysztof. "The Reception of Heidegger's Thought in American Literary Criticism." *Diacritics* 19:3-4 (Fall/Winter, 1989): 114-126.

Zimmerman, Michael E. *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.