

# TOPIC KRITIKS 2003-2004



5

HEIDEGGER

BY ROGER SOLT

**The 2003-2004 Topic Kritiks  
Five - Heidegger  
by Roger Solt**

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## INTRODUCTION

Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher who lived from 1889 to 1976. One measure of his philosophical stature is the influence he has exerted over virtually every major movement in continental philosophy from the 1920s to the present. These include phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and postmodernism. Heidegger has also had an important influence on recent environmental thought, and it is the environmental implications of his philosophy which are central to this kritik.

Heidegger's thought is notoriously difficult, and he is probably best approached, at least initially, through secondary sources. His environmentalist interpreters tend to emphasize his criticism of the modern, technological world. The technological worldview leads us to regard nature as a "standing reserve," that is, as an object (or natural resource) to be manipulated for human ends. The result of this is that we no longer experience the world as it is; its true being is hidden from us. This leads to an alienated and inauthentic existence, a "fallen" and fundamentally dehumanized condition. It may also threaten our survival. Treating nature as an object inevitably leads to its degradation and neglect.

The "natural resources" wording in the topic is probably the clearest link to this kritik. Focus on natural resources is part of the mindset of management and manipulation of nature. Science and technology also are important parts of this mindset, and they therefore provide additional links. Political activism and political reform may be still further ways in which humans willfully attempt to control their environments rather than allowing the process of releasement (or "letting be") to take place.

To let things be means to allow them to manifest themselves as bona fide beings, not just as objects of manipulation. It also means to let nature and natural beings unfold according to their own nature, as opposed to reshaping them for human ends. Humanity has real hope of survival only if it can recover this process of non-manipulative appreciation.

A starting point for many answers to the kritik is Heidegger's membership in the Nazi Party. There has been an ongoing (and very heated) debate in the Heidegger literature concerning the significance of this biographical fact. His defenders argue that though it was a profound political misjudgment, it does not fundamentally impugn his thought. There are good reasons to believe that Heidegger did not embrace the entire Nazi worldview; for example, he does not personally appear to have been anti-Semitic. (A number of his most famous students, including Hanna Arendt and Herbert Marcuse, were Jewish.) Nor does one need to be a Nazi to embrace Heidegger's criticism of the modern, manipulative, technological worldview.

On the other hand, Heidegger's radical antagonism towards the modern world may well have disposed him to favor the Nazis. Certainly, he was no friend of liberal democracy. His critics charge that an authoritarian and even totalitarian bent is inherent in his thought. In one of their aspects, the Nazis were quite pro-environmental (at least in their rhetoric), lending further credence to charges that radical environmentalism could become ecofascist.

According to one view, Heidegger's work underwent a fundamental turn or transition, and it is the latter work, with its emphasis on releasement and the rejection of willful striving and manipulation which many environmentalists embrace. This too, however, poses problems. One answer to the charge of Nazism is that the later Heidegger withdrew from active political engagement. But saving the environment may require activism, rather than simply "letting things be."

Heidegger's philosophy focuses on the ontological, that is, on the way that things fundamentally ARE. This ontological focus is said to be essential for humans to transcend their debased modern lives and to recover an authentic existence. But there are several problems with this stance. First, ontological issues may be ultimately irresolvable. The basic nature of existence is something that has been debated for thousands of years without being resolved. Second, we might question why we should embrace Heidegger's view of authenticity. If people prefer more materialistic and manipulative lives, why are they wrong and Heidegger right? Finally, there is the problem that an ontological focus may lead to the neglect of ethical concerns. A focus on nature and the appreciation of being can lead to estrangement from human concerns and can create an indifference to human suffering.

## **INC SHELL**

### A. THE PREVAILING WORLDVIEW THREATENS SURVIVAL

#### 1. PRESENT PRACTICES HAVE PRODUCED ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.2.

Thinking today must concern itself with the earth. Wherever we turn – on newsstands, on the airwaves, and in even the most casual of conversations everywhere – we are inundated by predictions of ecological catastrophe and omnicidal doom. And many of these predictions bear themselves out in our own experience. We now live with the ugly, painful, and impoverishing consequences of decades of technological innovation and expansion without restraint, of at least a century of disastrous "natural resource management" policies, and of more than two centuries of virtually unchecked industrial pollution -- consequences that include the fact that millions of us on any given day are suffering, many of us dying of diseases and malnutrition that are the results of humanly produced ecological devastation; the fact that thousands of species now in existence will no longer exist on this planet by the turn of the century; the fact that our planet's climate has been altered, probably irreversibly, by the carbon dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons we have heedlessly poured into our atmosphere; and the mind-boggling fact that it may now be within humanity's power to destroy all life on this globe.

#### 2. FOR HEIDEGGER, SUBORDINATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT THREATENS HUMAN SURVIVAL

Hugh McDonald, Professor of Philosophy, New Jersey City University, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Winter 2001, p.423.

As Heidegger emphasizes, humans are in the world, part of a community of plants, animals, soil, air, and other elements. Humans are one species in the world among others. They live in and require the environment provided by the biosphere and interact with other species within it. Many of these are required for human survival as species, continued actualization of humans as a distinct value, especially domesticated plants and animals and not a few wild ones. Thus, the value of the biosphere and the species required for human survival -- whether a small number necessary for it or a larger number enhancing it -- is reciprocal. Humans care for such species and they provide their good to humans. There is no subordination of the biosphere to human good; the environment as a whole and different species stand in a reciprocal relation of equal worth.

### B. LINKS

#### 1. NATURAL RESOURCE FOCUS

THE TOPIC CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF MARINE "NATURAL RESOURCES." BUT LOOKING AT NATURE AS A RESOURCE IS THE BASIC SOURCE OF THE DEGRADED MODERN WORLDVIEW.

- BOTH NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE HOLOCAUST EXPRESSED THE RESOURCE ORIENTATION

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH MODERNITY, 1990, p.43.

Nevertheless, in speaking of the Holocaust in the same breath with the hydrogen bomb, Heidegger was making an important point. Mass extermination in the Nazi camps was possible only because of developments within industrial technology. Moreover, the Nazis spoke of the Jews as if they were little more than industrial "waste" to be disposed of as efficiently as possible. Officials in charge of planning strategic use of nuclear weapons must be trained to conceive of the enemy populace in wholly abstract terms. Heidegger argued in several places that the hydrogen bomb—an instrument of mass extermination—was not the real problem facing us. Instead, the problem is the perversion and constriction of humanity's understanding of being itself in the technological era. Extermination camps and hydrogen bombs, from Heidegger's viewpoint, were both symptoms of humanity's conception of itself and everything else as resources to be produced and consumed, created and destroyed, at will.

**INC SHELL cont'd****2. REFORMISM**

- FOR HEIDEGGER, REFORM FAILS BECAUSE IT MERELY REINFORCES HUMAN BEINGS OBSESSION WITH CONTROL

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.109.

Because modern humanity's openness for being has become so constricted that things can only show themselves one-dimensionally as flexible raw material, modern humanity has become oblivious to its highest possibility, namely, to let things be by holding open the clearing in which they can reveal themselves. Like a deep ecologist, Heidegger argued that reforming existing institutions would only reinforce the destructive urges of the control-obsessed subject.

**3. ACTIVISM**

- FOR HEIDEGGER, EVEN PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM RISKS THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT IT SEEKS

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.120-1.

Political activism reinforces the slide into nihilism, for politics manifests the subject's striving for control, from which the coming god was to free humankind. Similarly, deep ecologists say that reformism will only reinforce the status quo, unless people undergo a spiritual conversion. From Heidegger's viewpoint, however, the Deep Ecology Platform, ostensibly broad enough to be embraced by activists of many stripes, may itself be influenced by the modern control impulse criticized by deep ecologists. The DEP justifies mass movements, which, despite their noble aim of halting ecological destruction, may unwittingly trigger off events with the opposite effect, for example, the Wise-Use Movement's growing opposition to deep ecology. To avoid being seduced by their own version of self-righteous subjectivism, then, deep ecologists must be skeptical about whether they have in fact achieved nondualistic, ecological sensibility.

**C. HEIDEGGER'S WORLDVIEW OFFERS A SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE****1. HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE PRODUCES RESPECT FOR THE WORLD**

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.72.

There is one last, but important point which Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty both make in their own ways, about being a subject in the world. Heidegger believes that as subjects we are capable not only of acting in and on the world of objects, we are also capable of a more reflective appreciation of it. He believes that the world, as well as showing itself as equipment or as raw material for our use, can show itself to us as it is. We need to do some clearing away of the plans, theories, practices which operate to show the world as we want to see it. But having cleared that away, the world will show itself in its true light. Merleau-Ponty voices a similar thought. If we pause from our everyday concerns and classifications concerning the world, we can experience wonder, awe, respect for the world. It is there and it makes sense to us. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty illustrate this point with reference to artists. Heidegger cites Van Gogh as capturing and conveying in his paintings the world showing itself. Merleau-Ponty cites Cezanne as bringing out, in his paintings, how the world is something to be wondered at (see Plate 5.1).

**INC SHELL cont'd****2. HEIDEGGER'S SENSE OF RADICALIZED WONDER HELPS COUNTER THE NUCLEAR THREAT**

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.147.

But human and natural existence on earth is now imperiled. To the Heideggerian thought that it is an accident that there is not nothing (I know that the word "accident" is inadequate as any such word must be) it now depends on human choice whether one day there will be nothing. The death of God coincides with the birth of humanity-as-God-the-destroyer, able to choose to preserve what it did not and could not create, what was not created and did not have to exist. It is then possible to extend Heidegger's thought and say that the liberated sense of inessentiality and the radicalized wonder that grows out of it when joined now to the novel sense of earthly precariousness provides the scarcely nameable passion that informs the affirmation of life and hence the disposition to feel a preserving protective attachment to earthly existence as such in its ungraspable indefiniteness. I know of no philosopher who imparts such a vivid and saving sense of the inessentiality of things as Heidegger. To be sure his sense that the source of the danger lies in man's resentment must be supplemented though not necessarily abandoned. It is an enhancement of Nietzsche's notion of vengeful moralism. Yet even if resentment of the human condition had no conceptual place in the attempt to understand the nuclear situation, Heidegger's thought on the response to it would be of considerable importance.

**3. PHENOMENOLOGY ILLUMINATES THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND OFFERS PRACTICAL GUIDANCE**

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.79.

In summary, phenomenology has both practical and theoretical implications for our dealings with the environment. In practical terms, it can alert us to a crisis that concerns not only the quantity of our supplies but the quality of our lives. The phenomenological method of description, applied to how we relate to our environment, both natural and built, can itself result in a richer, deeper experience of that environment bringing us to know better and be more attuned to it and it to us. What we learn from such investigations might aid us in planning our towns, managing our countryside, protecting our resources and our wild places.

## **OBJECTIFICATION PRODUCES AN INHUMAN WORLD**

### **1. OBJECTIFICATION TURNS THE WORLD INTO AN UNWORLD**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.251-2.

The doing-away with all that is suprasensible and with all that is "in itself" has been completed and is accomplished by the making secure of the constant reserve by means of which modern man makes secure for himself all resources, material as well as spiritual, and this for the sake of his own security which wills nothing but dominion over all that is, in order that all that is willfully correspond to his will to power. From now on to be for each thing and each being means nothing but to be mastered, controlled, at someone's disposal, to stand-reserve as part of a carefully positioned stock. In his blind desire to guarantee the stability of what is so posited, controlled, and finally used up, man himself is also drawn into this process, He now becomes the most important raw material, insofar as he remains the subject of all consumption. At the same time our world has become an unworld.

### **2. OBJECTIFICATION TURNS THE WORLD INTO A MACHINE**

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.19-20.

The objectifying method - wanting to measure and calculate everything, for the sake of certainty -has to reduce everything that is to measurable and calculable quantities. Weight, distance, and duration were most easily available to exact measurement; but then the objectifying method reduced nature, too, to a coherence of motions of a whole series of points in a three-dimensional, geometric space, coursing in a one-dimensional time, thought as a time-axis', and reduced things to geometric substances with defined extension. Since this reduction robbed events of their singularity, a repeatable reeling off of the same event became thinkable; repeatable experimenting and engineering set forth on its triumphal procession, and along with it the interpretation of nature and the whole world as a machine. In objectifying subjectivism human beings see themselves as "master and owner of nature" and the world as a large machine. Finally, the objectifying turns back to the subject and, with the supremacy of the machine, itself gets interpreted more and more exclusively as a functional, psychosomatic apparatus.

### **3. FOR HEIDEGGER, TECHNOLOGY IS DEHUMANIZING**

Arthur Herman, Professor of History, George Mason, THE IDEA OF DECLINE IN WESTERN HISTORY, 1997, p. 419.

Heidegger had been profoundly influenced by Klages's Nietzschean attack on technological capitalism. Heidegger would spend days and weeks climbing in the mountains, and often appeared in class and at Nazi Party rallies dressed in alpine garb and open shirt. He viewed modernity's loss of touch with nature as part of modern man's loss of Being, which technology epitomized: "The object-character of technological domination spreads itself ever more quickly, ruthlessly, and completely." Heidegger complained that not only does Western technology "establish all things as producible in the process of production," it also "delivers the products of production by means of the market." Hence, through technological capitalism "the humanness of man and the thingness of things dissolve into the calculated market value of a market which spans the whole earth."

### **4. THE GREATEST DANGER IS FORGETFULNESS OF THE DISTINCTIVELY HUMAN**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.4.

In numerous essays - in particular the beautiful 1953 essay, "The Question Concerning Technology" - Heidegger speaks of what he sees as the danger of dangers in this, our, age. This danger is a kind of forgetfulness - a forgetfulness that Heidegger thought could result not only in nuclear disaster or environmental catastrophe, but in the loss of what makes us the kind of beings we are, beings who can think and who can stand in thoughtful relationship to things. This forgetfulness is not a forgetting of facts and their relationships; it is a forgetfulness of something far more important and far more fundamental than that. He called it forgetfulness of 'the mystery'.

## **ESTRANGEMENT FROM NATURE CAUSES INAUTHENTIC EXISTENCE**

### **1. MODERN LIFE BECOMES INAUTHENTIC BY LOSING SIGHT OF NATURE**

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.76.

In broad terms, Heidegger would agree with this. The point of disagreement between Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger emerges more in their different styles and concerns. Heidegger believed that nature could and would show itself as it really is, but only to those who allowed it to. Heidegger believed that modern life, science, technology, industry, commerce, tourism and economics entraps us so that we forget, lose sight of, or become alienated from both ourselves and our world, making us live 'inauthentically'. Again it is hard to state clearly what the difference is between authentic and inauthentic ways of living. It is certainly hard to articulate how exactly things can 'show themselves' or how we would recognise it if they did. But we can recognise, in ourselves and others, examples of inauthenticity, of alienation: tourists rushing from viewpoint to viewpoint to return home too exhausted to develop their film; commerce and politics requiring that fishermen throw their catch back to pollute the sea; butter mountains, grain stores and wine lakes being destroyed while people are starving. All these surely involve a failure to recognise things for what they are, to treat nature mindfully and with care.

### **2. FOR HEIDEGGER, THE LOSS OF AN AUTHENTIC RELATION TO BEING IS WORSE THAN NUCLEAR WAR**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.119-20.

Heidegger asserted that human self-assertion, combined with the eclipse of being, threatens the relation between being and human Dasein. Loss of this relation would be even more dangerous than a nuclear war that might "bring about the complete annihilation of humanity and the destruction of the earth." This controversial claim is comparable to the Christian teaching that it is better to forfeit the world than to lose one's soul by losing one's relation to God. Heidegger apparently thought along these lines: it is possible that after a nuclear war, life might once again emerge, but it is far less likely that there will ever again occur an ontological clearing through which such life could manifest itself further, since modernity's one-dimensional disclosure of entities virtually denies them any "being" at all, the loss of humanity's openness for being is already occurring. Modernity's background mood is horror in the face of nihilism, which is consistent with the aim of providing material "happiness" for everyone by reducing nature to pure energy. The unleashing of vast quantities of energy in nuclear war would be equivalent to modernity's slow-motion destruction of nature: unbounded destruction would equal limitless consumption. If humanity avoided nuclear war only to survive as contented clever animals, Heidegger believed we would exist in a state of ontological damnation: hell on earth, masquerading as material paradise.

## **ONTOLOGICAL FOCUS IS KEY**

### **1. FOR HEIDEGGER, THE MOVE FROM THE DOMINATION OF NATURE REQUIRES AN ONTOLOGICAL SHIFT**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.106.

Like Heidegger, many deep ecologists maintain that since modernity's attempt to dominate nature stems from a constricted understanding of what things are, only an ontological paradigm shift can generate new attitudes, practices, and institutions that exhibit respect and care for all beings. In Heidegger's view that authentic human Dasein let things be, deep ecologists discern similarities to their idea that human self-realization is bound up with letting other things realize their own potential.

### **2. FOR HEIDEGGER, ONTOLOGY PRECEDES ETHICS**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.109.

Claiming that anthropocentric humanism underestimates humanity, he favored a "higher humanism" that lets things be, instead of disclosing them as instruments serving the power-interests of the human subject. Like many deep ecologists, he said that the ethics needed to improve our treatment of nature cannot arise from the metaphysical framework of humanism, but only from a new ethos, a new way of understanding what humans and nonhumans are. In this sense, ontology proceeds ethics.

## DISCURSIVE FOCUS IS KEY

### - APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE IS KEY TO OUR RELATIONSHIP TO BEING

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xix.

Access to the way to which Heidegger wishes to introduce us, the way to thinking and to a free relationship with Being, lies through language. For thinking is man's according with and responding to Being, and "language is the primal dimension" in which that responsive corresponding takes place.

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## ECONOMICS

### - EVEN PRO-ECOLOGICAL ECONOMIC THOUGHT IS REDUCTIONISTIC

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.27.

Just as problematic as natural science's reduction of all beings in the concept of energy is, so too is the economic reduction of all beings to a monetary value problematic. Certainly the proposals for economic decentralization and for the development of a softer technology made by the British economist E. F. Schumacher (author of Small is Beautiful) are as relevant today as ever. Certainly the provocative theses of an Ivan Illich are in many ways very pertinent. And probably an ecological economy will develop presumably in the direction of James Robertson's "alternatives worth living." But one cannot overlook the fact that an ecological accounting still reduces things to a monetary value and that many concepts of these authors are characterized by the economy of objectifying subjectivism, by a worldview of the retailers - as, for example, the concept of a "qualitative growth."

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## ENERGY

### 1. THE IDEA OF ENERGY IS REDUCTIONISTIC

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.27.

As sensible and correct as the demand to save energy is, still the concept of energy remains reductionist and ambiguous, because it reduces the light and warmth of the sun, the waterfall in the mountain stream, the roaring of the wind, the burning of wood, and the power of the horse, reduces this whole world to kilowatt hours. Is it not noteworthy that the concept of energy comes from the way language got used in the eighteenth century and, in the historical unfolding of being in this language, is connected with Aristotelian *energeia*, the work-character of beings?

### 2. ENERGY EXTRACTION UNLOCKS AND EXPOSES NATURE

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.15.

This setting-upon that challenges forth the energies of nature is an expediting [Fordern], and in two ways. It expedites in that it unlocks and exposes. Yet that expediting is always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense. The coal that has been hauled out in some mining district has not been supplied in order that it may simply be present somewhere or other. It is stockpiled; that is, it is on call, ready to deliver the sun's warmth that is stored in it. The sun's warmth is challenged forth for heat, which in turn is ordered to deliver steam whose pressure turns the wheels that keep a factory running.

## ENVIRONMENTALISM

### 1. THE ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENT STILL DISPLAYS OBJECTIFYING REDUCTIONISM

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.27.

A few years after the Americans landed on the moon, the Club of Rome published those famous computer predictions, entitled "The Limits of Growth," which showed that, if things continue the way they have gone on "spaceship earth," soon it could not go on. Better founded and more oppressing still was the study commissioned by President Jimmy Carter, which appeared in 1980 with the title Global 2000 Study. Both studies are honest appraisals and cautious predictions, which can shake up humankind. However, since they take for granted the basis of "world-models" or "spaceship earth," they can also solidify the opinion that the world is a machine. Spaceship earth and the world model correspond to a worldview of objectifying subjectivism and are snares along the way of descent from the throne of master and owner of nature. Actually the question emerges whether the objectifying reductionism of natural science - which can be detected in many notions of the ecological movement - should not also become questionable for this movement.

### 2. HEIDEGGER QUESTIONS THE ECOLOGISTS' "RESPECT FOR LIFE"

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.28.

All ecological thought patterns that proceed from the evolution of living creatures remind us of the shortsighted hybris and the objectifying subjectivism of the astronaut perspective of evolutionary biology. Here I am thinking of the publication A Planet Is Being Plundered by Herbert Grohl and The Eight Deadly Sins of Civilized Humanity by Konrad Lorenz - and then of the enthusiastic representatives of the so-called evolutionary theory of knowledge, which traces our present ecological mistakes back to the condition of our evolution and expects the rescue from danger to come from this biological self-enlightenment of humans. Heidegger's putting the biological worldview into question has also to do with the appeal to "life," which enjoys some popularity today with the ecological movement, whose precursor was Albert Schweitzer with his "respect for life."

### 3. BIOLOGICAL THOUGHT IS REDUCTIONISTIC

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.27-8.

The worldview of biology, too, has shaped many concepts and thought patterns of the ecological movement and based them in the objectifying subjectivism. The word environment (*Umwelt*) in "environmental protection" is such a concept. The only thing that this concept has in common with what is called in *Being and Time* the most close-at-hand, domestic, surrounding world of humans is the name. The environment meant by biology is the surroundings in whose mi-lieu, in whose middle-place, the organism resides. The opposition of organism and its environment as well as the concept of organism itself correspond to a characteristic amalgamation of machine and subject. The organism and its environment, e.g., the praying mantis and the meadow, are thereby given a mechanical explanation - and along with that the organism is seen from the human vantage point, anthropomorphically, as subject. But natural science's reduction and anthropomorphic interpreting of life are a basic assumption for the theory of evolution.

## HUMANISM

### 1. THE DELUSION OF HUMAN OMNIPOTENCE IS DESTROYING THE EARTH

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.vii.

Thus, this volume unfolds itself at the edge of paradox. It comprises discussions of how we as active agents might come to hold ourselves resolutely open for the occurring of non-technological, non-managerial, non-agential thought, of how it might come about that speaking, thinking, and living might occur differently, of how we might begin now to undergo the loss of our delusion of impending omnipotence and perhaps escape that delusion's nihilistic results. The conversants are not environmental experts armed with information about particular crises or the consequences of particular techniques. They are philosophers struggling to open thinking toward paths that will affirm, rather than destroy the earth.

### 2. HUMANISM REINFORCES THE REPRESSIVE STATE

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.12.

In demystifying the "truth" of humanism, in showing that the philosophical tradition it brings to fulfillment ends, as he puts it in his "Letter on Humanism," in "the dictatorship of the public realm which decides in advance what is intelligible and what must be rejected as unintelligible," Heidegger's inaugural Denken "put research on new foundations" that accommodated "the urge towards historical actuality." However indirectly in some cases, it also provided the philosophical context for the emergence, in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, of the discourses of deconstruction, genealogy, a certain feminism deriving from Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the neo-Marxisms that have shifted their emphasis away from the critique of the economic base to the critique of the now "semiautonomous" superstructural sites of late bourgeois capitalism. These affiliated contemporary theoretical discourses have collectively disclosed the complicity between (the humanistic) discourse of truth and sociopolitical power or, to put it in a way that conflates Gramsci and Althusser, between the discourse of "hegemony" and "the (repressive) state apparatuses."

### 3. FOR HEIDEGGER, ANTHROPOCENTRISM LEADS TO TECHNOLOGICAL DOMINATION

Bill Devall and George Sessions, Professors of Philosophy, Humboldt State University and Sierra College, DEEP ECOLOGY, 1985, p.98.

Martin Heidegger made three contributions to the deep, long-range ecology literature. First, he provided a major critique and indictment of the development of Western philosophy since Plato. He concluded that this anthropocentric development paved the way for the technocratic mentality which espouses domination over Nature. Being, a key ontological concept for Heidegger, was constrained into narrow Christian paths or into secular, humanistic, technological philosophy in the West.

### 4. FOR HEIDEGGER, HUMANISM LEADS TO THE FORGETTING OF BEING

Christopher Manes, philosopher and Deep Ecologist, 1990, Green Rage, p.142.

Along with biological science, the cutting edge of philosophy also turned its back on anthropocentrism. Martin Heidegger, perhaps the most influential figure in philosophy during the first half of this century, argues in The Question Concerning Technology and "Letter on Humanism," among other works, that modern societies preoccupation with human values and human ends since the Enlightenment is but another episode in the "forgetting" of Being in all its limitless possibilities.

### 5. TO OVERCOME DESTRUCTIVENESS, ANTHROPOCENTRISM MUST BE REJECTED

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.148-9.

At its most rigorous, Heidegger's hint is that the only person who is truly alive is one who is dead while still living - dead, that is, to what society calls life. In "dying to the world" one for the first time is able to be in the world and not in some fantastical simulacrum of it. One comes back from the dead and starts to live for the first time. One recovers. One lives as an individual, as one not wholly social. Constant awareness of one's literal mortality tinges one's sense of the inessentiality of all things. Thus cured of a driven anthropocentric purposiveness, which in the modern age is tantamount to resentment and an enraged desire to make the world over, one is withdrawn from the pervasive spirit of rapacity and hence from a blind destructiveness.

### 6. FOR HEIDEGGER, HUMANISM STUNTS THE POSSIBILITIES OF BEING

Arthur Herman, Professor of History, George Mason, THE IDEA OF DECLINE IN WESTERN HISTORY, 1997, p.350.

In 1947 Martin Heidegger, now in disgrace, wrote a furious attack on Sartre's existential humanism, charging that it was inadequate for confronting the crisis of modern man in the grip of technology and mass culture. All forms of humanism, Heidegger proclaimed, lead inevitably to metaphysics, since they presuppose a human being with a fixed rational nature. Instead of freeing man, the humanist view actually reduces Being's infinite possibilities to the dim, stunted creature of the modern age.

**INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY****1. HUMANS HAVE ABANDONED TRUE THOUGHT FOR INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.249.

The growing thoughtlessness springs from a process that gnaws at the very marrow of man today; today man is in flight from thinking. Part of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it. He even flatly denies this flight from thinking. In his view, there never was a time that there were more far-reaching plans, so many inquiries in so many areas, and so much research carried on as passionately as today. In Heideggerian view, this is true, and this display of ingenuity and deliberation certainly has its great usefulness; it is even indispensable. Yet it is true also that this form of thinking is a thinking of a very special kind. We often call it a form of "instrumental rationality."

**2. IT'S POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE CALCULATIVE AND ACHIEVE MEDITATIVE THINKING**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.250.

Thus there are two modes of thinking, calculative and meditative thinking, and each is justified in its own way. When we say that contemporary man is in flight from thinking, we mean meditative thinking. Many people will say that this form of thinking serves no meaningful purpose; it is worthless for dealing with real issues. Furthermore, it is above the reach of ordinary understanding. It does not just happen by itself; it demands practice; it requires a great effort; and it is in need of even more delicate care than any other form of thinking or even any craft. Whether all of this is correct or not, it is nonetheless a fact that anyone can follow the path of meditative thinking in his own manner and within his own limits, because man is indeed a thinking, i.e., a meditating being. Meditative thinking need not be high-flown; it is enough that we dwell on what lies close and meditate on what concerns us here and now. This is modern science.

**3. REJECTION OF ANALYTICAL THINKING CAN LEAD TO RELEASEMENT**

Bill Devall and George Sessions, Professors of Philosophy, Humboldt State University and Sierra College, DEEP ECOLOGY, 1985, p.99.

Heidegger called his readers to step back to a "reversal" of our usual analytical thinking and to use our intuitive power. By stepping back we may open the way for releasement of Being.

## **MANAGERIAL THINKING**

### **1. MANAGERIAL THINKING TURNS PEOPLE AND THE EARTH INTO COMMODITIES**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.6.

What is now especially dangerous about this sense of our own managerial power, born of forgetfulness, is that it results in our viewing the world as mere resources to be stored or consumed. Managerial or technological thinkers, Heidegger says, view the earth, the world, all things as mere Bestand, standing-reserve. All is here simply for human use. No plant, no animal, no ecosystem has a life of its own, has any significance, apart from human desire and need. Nothing, we say, other than human beings, has any intrinsic value. All things are instruments for the working out of human will. Whether we believe that God gave Man dominion or simply that human might (sometimes called intelligence or rationality) in the face of ecological fragility makes us always right, we managerial, technological thinkers tend to believe that the earth is only a stockpile or a set of commodities to be managed, bought, and sold. The forest is timber; the river, a power source. Even people have become resources, human resources, personnel to be managed, or populations to be controlled.

### **2. THE IDEA OF TECHNOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT DESTROYS OTHER PATHS OF THINKING**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.5-6.

This dream of Hawking's is a dream of power; in fact, it is a dream of absolute power, absolute control. It is a dream of the ultimate managerial utopia. This, Heidegger would contend, is the dream of technological thought in the modern age. We dream of knowing, grasping everything, for then we can control, then we can manage, everything. But it is only a dream, itself predicated, ironically enough, upon concealment, the self-concealing of the mystery. We can never control the mystery, the belonging together of revealing and concealing. In order to approach the world in a manner exclusively technological, calculative, mathematical, scientific, we must already have given up (or lost, or been expelled by, or perhaps ways of being such as we are even impossible within) other approaches or modes of revealing that would unfold into knowledges of other sorts. Those other approaches or paths of thinking must already have been obliterated; those other knowledges must already have concealed themselves in order for technological or scientific revelation to occur.

### **3. THE MANAGERIAL APPROACH ULTIMATELY FAILS**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.6.

The danger of a managerial approach to the world lies not, then; in what it knows - not in its penetration into the secrets of galactic emergence or nuclear fission - but in what it forgets, what it itself conceals. It forgets that any other truths are possible, and it forgets that the belonging together of revealing with concealing is forever beyond the power of human management. We can never have, or know, it all; we can never manage everything.

## **MORAL/ETHICAL APPEALS**

### **1. MORAL DISCOURSE IS PART OF TECHNOLOGY**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.viii.

The first essay, "Guilt as Management Technology: A Call to Heideggerian Reflection," gives an overview of Heidegger's thinking on technology and discusses Heidegger's call for reflection as opposed to instrumental or calculative thinking about the earth. It carefully distinguishes reflection, in Heidegger's sense<sup>1</sup> from moral stock-taking or ethical judgment. In fact, it suggests that moral discourse and practice are themselves forms of technology, sets of techniques for maintaining control over self and other. As such, morality shows itself as a danger, as part of the technological, calculative, managerial thinking that currently endangers the earth itself. The essay closes with a kind of warning. If it is the case that morality is part of technological discourse and practice rather than a separable discourse whose purpose is critique, then moral condemnation and moral guilt are reinstatiations of the calculative. Thus, our tendency to feel guilty about our treatment of the earth is not a change of heart but is rather a perpetuation of human domination.

### **2. ETHICAL THOUGHT IS PART OF TECHNOLOGY**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.8.

When we respond to Heidegger's call as if it were a moral condemnation, we reinstate a discourse in which active agency and its projects and responsibilities take precedence over any other way of being with the earth. In other words, we insist on remaining within the discourses, the power configurations, of the modern managerial self. Guilt is a concept whose heritage and meaning occur within the ethical tradition of the Western world. But the history of ethical theory in the West (and it could be argued that ethical theory only occurs in the West) is one with the history of technological thought. The revelation of things as to-be-managed and the imperative to be in control work themselves out in the history of ethics just as surely as they work themselves out in the history of the natural and human sciences.

### **3. A GUILTY RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS SIMPLY ENTRENCHES MANAGERIAL ATTITUDES**

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.8-9.

Therefore, when we react to problems like ecological crises by retreating into the familiar discomfort of our Western sense of guilt, we are not placing ourselves in opposition to technological thinking and its ugly consequences. On the contrary, we are simply reasserting our technological dream of perfect managerial control. How so? Our guilt professes our enduring faith in the managerial dream by insisting that problems - problems like oil spills, acid rain, groundwater pollution, the extinction of whales, the destruction of the ozone, the rain forests, the wetlands - lie simply in mismanagement or in a failure to manage (to manage ourselves in this case) and by reaffirming to ourselves that if we had used our power to manage our behavior better in the first place we could have avoided this mess? In other words, when we respond to Heidegger's call by indulging in feelings of guilt about how we have been treating the object earth, we are really just telling ourselves how truly powerful we, as agents, are. We are telling ourselves that we really could have done differently; we had the power to make things work, if only we had stuck closer to the principles of good management. And in so saying we are in yet a new and more stubborn way refusing to hear the real message, the message that human beings are not, never have been, and never can be in complete control, that the dream of that sort of managerial omnipotence is itself the very danger of which Heidegger warns.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### 1. VIEWING THINGS AS RAW MATERIAL IS CENTRAL TO THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH MODERNITY, 1990, p.xiii.

This book discusses how a major twentieth-century philosopher, Martin Heidegger, interpreted and evaluated modern technology. For Heidegger, "modern technology" had three interrelated meanings: first, the techniques, devices, systems, and production processes usually associated with industrialism, second, the rationalist, scientific, commercialist, utilitarian, anthropocentric, secular worldview usually associated with modernity; third, the contemporary mode of understanding or disclosing things which makes possible both industrial production processes and the modernist worldview. Heidegger maintained that the third meaning of "modern technology" is most important. Both industrialism and modernity are symptoms of the contemporary disclosure of things as raw material to be used for expanding the scope of technological power for its own sake. This one-dimensional disclosure of things as raw material, in Heidegger's view, has resulted not from human decision, but instead from developments within "the history of being" itself. The technological stage in that history has so transformed how things are understood that people have been more or less compelled to take part in the industrial order and to adopt the modernist worldview related to it.

### 2. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS SHOWS THAT NATURE IS MORE THAN A RESOURCE

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.77.

To speak, as we do, of nature as having only instrumental value, as merely a resource to be exploited, or to regard any other value being attached to it as mere sentiment, phenomelogists would claim, is to forget two important features of the natural world. First, it presents itself to us as something other than an instrument, and that bending it to our purposes often involves an obvious violation of something we know to be precious. Second, instrumental value is a much more complex thing than is perhaps generally recognised. To use nature as a means to our end, we need to have ends. But the ends we can have depend on the skills and habits we have developed. We have developed these in a world of objects. To then regard these means and ends as separable is to distort the relation of instrument to user.

## SCIENCE

### 1. HEIDEGGER FINDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE ROOT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Andrew Murphy, Valparaiso University, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Spring 2003, p.91-2.

Any attempt to correct or reverse the modern degradation of nature must involve a critique of industrialism, which views nature as a resource 'to be utilized at human whim; and a cautious attitude toward the increasing spiral of technology, whose promises of human liberation remain as yet unrealized. Again, we find in Heidegger insights central to the contemporary narrative of environmental decline. For Heidegger, modern science is intricately related to (yet distinct from) modern technology. Modern science's apotheosis of humanity vis-a-vis nature paves the way for the drive toward "maximum yield at minimum expense" that characterizes modern technology. Thus, technology sets upon nature in order to make it "yield everything that can be stored," and nature becomes a mere energy source for human purposes, what Heidegger famously called "the standing reserve."

### 2. FOR HEIDEGGER, SCIENCE IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE TECHNOLOGICAL DOMINATION OF NATURE

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.55.

A familiar view of the relation between science and technology is that there is pure science, which technology applies the findings of Heidegger rejects this orthodox view. He argues that science is through and through technological; that its abstraction, laws, concepts, and its dominant metaphor of nature as a mechanism are all guided by and geared to the aim of technological control over nature. This being so, science is not value free, instead being laden with this value of humans as controllers of nature. To regard nature as mechanistic is to regard it from the very start as like an artefact, a machine, or something we have made. But we have not made nature; rather, it has made us. This is perhaps the true message we need to get from evolutionary theory. So, for Heidegger, science is not a purely factual matter. Scientific theory and practice take for granted certain values. Are they values which we want to hold? In the light of the environmental crisis, we might well reply negatively to that question.

### 3. SCIENCE DEGRADES OUR BEING BY VIEWING THE WORLD AS A COMMODITY

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.55.

The modern world-view is that science tells us what the facts are. What use we make of the scientific information depends on what our values are. Values are what we determine and then project onto the world. Phenomenology argues that science already embodies a system of values, of the world as a commodity to be used by us however we want to, as having value only in so far as we can use it as an instrument to our ends. Phenomenology further argues that this world-view represents a 'falling' from a richer way of being on our part. Via this world-view, we have lost sight of something deep and precious in the way we are essentially situated, at home in the world.

### 4. SCIENCE FALSIFIES NATURE BY OBJECTIFYING IT

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxvi-xxvii.

Science strikingly manifests the way in which modern man as subject represents reality. The modern scientist does not let things presence as they are in themselves. He arrests them, objectifies them, sets them over against himself, precisely by representing them to himself in a particular way. Modern theory, Heidegger says, is an "entrapping and securing refining of the real" (SR 167). Reality as "nature" is represented as a manifold of cause and effect coherences. So represented, nature becomes amenable to experiment. But this does not happen simply because nature intrinsically is of this character; rather it happens, Heidegger avers, specifically because man himself represents nature as of this character and then grasps and investigates it according to methods that, not surprisingly, fit perfectly the reality so conceived.

### 5. MODERN SCIENCE TRAPS NATURE

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.21.

Modern science's way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces. Modern physics is not experimental physics because it applies apparatus to the questioning of nature. Rather the reverse is true. Because physics, indeed already as pure theory, sets nature up to exhibit itself as a coherence of forces calculable in advance, it therefore orders its experiments precisely for the purpose of asking whether and how nature reports itself when set up in this way.

**SCIENCE cont'd****6. WE HAVE LOST CONTROL OVER OUR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.253.

In the last decade even life has been placed in the hands of scientists who will be able to synthesize, split, and change living substances at will. We all admire these daring research projects without, however, thinking about it. We do not dare to consider that a new attack with technological means is being prepared on the life and nature of man, compared with which the hydrogen bomb means relatively little. Yet it is not the fact that the world is becoming ever more scientific and technical which is really uncanny. For most uncanny is the fact that we are not prepared for this change and are unable to confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age. No single man and no group of men, no government, industry, or science can brake or direct the progress of history in the atomic age; no human organization is capable of gaining control over it.

**7. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DENY OBJECTS ALL SIGNIFICANCE IN THEMSELVES**

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxx.

The dominion of Enframing as the essence of modern technology and the concomitant presence of the standing-reserve are most clearly seen in the realm of machine technology, where no object has significance in itself and where the "orderability" of everything, from energy and statistics to machines and persons, is all-important. It can be found also, Heidegger says, in the sphere of science, namely, in modern physics. There again, the object, otherwise the hallmark of the sciences, has disappeared. In its stead the relation between subject and object comes to the fore and "becomes a standing-reserve" to be controlled (SR 173).

**8. SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IS CALCULATIVE, NOT MEDITATIVE**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.249-50.

In all these ways of thinking Heidegger continues we always reckon with conditions that are given. we take them into account with the calculated intention of their serving some specific purpose. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and engages in research. Such thinking remains calculating thinking, even if it never works with numbers or never uses computers. Calculating thinking inherently computes. It computes ever more promising and ever new economical possibilities. It races from one project to another; It never stops and never collects itself. It is not meditative thinking that contemplates the meaning that reigns in everything that is.

**9. THE CALCULATIVE THINKING OF SCIENCE IS NIHILISTIC**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.250.

There are two basic forms of thinking. Modern man is concerned predominantly with calculative thinking only. This is the form of thinking that is employed in the sciences. The sciences, in manifold ways, claim to present the fundamental form of knowing and of the knowable. Yet to the degree that modern man is in flight from meditative thinking, he exposes himself to the dangers of nihilism.

**10. SCIENCE LIMITS MEDITATIVE THINKING**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.252.

Yet, Heidegger continues, we must ask: does this statement spring from reflection, from meditative thinking? Does it ponder on the meaning of the atomic age? No for if we rest content with the statements of science and technology, we remain as far as possible from meditating thinking, and from the reflective insights into the meaning of our own age. For then we forget to ask: precisely what is the ground that enabled modern science and technology to discover and set free new energies in nature?

**SCIENCE cont'd****11. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ARE INSEPARABLE**

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxviii-xxix.

We ordinarily understand modern technology as having arisen subsequently to science and as subordinate to it. We consider it to be a phenomenon brought about through scientific advance. Heidegger points out that, on the contrary, modern science and machine technology are mutually dependent upon one another. More importantly, technology, in its essence, precedes and is more fundamental than science. This is no mere statement concerning chronological priority, for the "essence of technology" is the very mode of Being's revealing of itself that is holding sway in all phenomena of the modern age. Man's arrogation to himself of the role of subject in philosophy; his objectifying of nature, life, and history in dealing with them in the sciences; and his calculating and cataloguing and disposing of all manner of things through machine technology - all these alike are expressions of that essence and of that revealing. Technology, so understood, is in no sense an instrument of man's making or in his control. It is rather that phenomenon, ruled from out of Being itself, that is centrally determining all of Western history.

**12. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIFY THE WORLD**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.251.

Man, within the subjectness belonging to whatever is, rises up into the subjectivity which is nothing but the positing subjectivity. At the same time the world changes into an object. In this revolutionary objectifying of everything that is, the earth, that which first of all must be put at the disposal of the pro-posing presentation, moves into the midst of the human positing. The earth can show itself as the object of an assault that, in man's will to power, establishes itself as unconditioned objectification. Nature appears everywhere exclusively as the object of modern science and technicity.

## TECHNOLOGY

### 1. FOR HEIDEGGER, TECHNOLOGY SEEKS TO DEVOUR THE WHOLE PLANET

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.69.

If entities began showing up in terms of possibilities proper to themselves, then -- presumably -- the ontologically expanded human Dasein would spontaneously begin treating entities with greater respect and care. In the one-dimensional technological world, however, such respect is impossible for there are no limits to human activity. Since only humans seem out of harmony with physis and its governing logos, only humans overstep the appropriate limits. Heidegger states that "the unnoticeable law of the earth" prevents the bee and birch tree from overstepping their limits. Unfortunately, in the technological era Dasein lacks such limits and thus seeks to devour the whole planet.

### 2. FOR HEIDEGGER, TECHNOLOGICAL FOCUS IS ULTIMATELY NIHILISTIC

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.105-6

For Heidegger, subjectivism, dualism, anthropocentrism, and the progressive view of history gave rise to the technological age, in which all things are disclosed as nothing but raw material for consumption. Forgetting that its highest calling is to "let things be," that is, to allow things to manifest themselves according to their own appropriate possibilities, modern humanity becomes reduced to the "clever animal" that dominates everything for the sake of power and security. To move beyond technological nihilism, Heidegger said that the West needs a new beginning as profound as the one initiated in ancient Greece.

### 3. TECHNOLOGY LEADS TO NIHILISM

Arthur Herman, Professor of History, George Mason, THE IDEA OF DECLINE IN WESTERN HISTORY, 1997, p.337.

According to Heidegger, the Western rational animal had evolved into the mechanical laboring animal. Technology forces man and nature to work to the same rationalist timetable, the same "unreasonable demands" modern man makes of himself. The earth, once the sacred source of man's sense of being, was now treated as a commodity. Man extracted from the sacred earth iron and coal by the ton, while its forests were turned into lumber and pulp for reading matter for the mindless masses. The Rhine itself, that hallowed symbol of Germanic and Wagnerian myth, was diverted to create hydroelectric plants to power the capitalists' factories. Heidegger warned that rational civilization had shattered man's place in nature and sense of himself, leaving him "to the giddy whirl of his products so that he may tear himself to pieces and annihilate himself in empty nothingness."

### 4. TECHNOLOGY EXPRESSES A LUST FOR DOMINATION

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxix.

Modern technology in its essence is a "challenging revealing." It involves a contending with everything that is. For it "sets upon" everything, imposing upon it a demand that seizes and requisitions it for use. Under the dominion of this challenging revealing, nothing is allowed to appear as it is in itself. The rule of such a way of revealing is seen when man becomes subject, when from out of his consciousness he assumes dominion over everything outside himself, when he represents and objectifies and, in objectifying, begins to take control over everything. It comes to its fulfillment when, as is increasingly the case in our time, things are not even regarded as objects, because their only important quality has become their readiness for use. Today all things are being swept together into a vast network in which their only meaning lies in their being available to serve some end that will itself also be directed toward getting every thing under control. Heidegger calls this fundamentally undifferentiated supply of the available the "standing-reserve."

### 5. TECHNOLOGY SEPARATES HUMANS FROM BEING

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxix-xxx.

This challenging summons, ruling in modern technology, is a mode of Being's revealing of itself. Yet in it, also Being withdraws, so that the summons that thus "enframes" is all but devoid of Being as empowering to be. Compelled by its claim, ordered and orderer alike are denuded. All that is and man himself are gripped in a structuring that exhibits a mere skeleton of their Being, of the way in which they intrinsically are. In all this the essence of technology rules.

**TECHNOLOGY cont'd****6. THE TECHNOLOGICAL TEMPERAMENT PREVENTS OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EARTH**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.188. A discovery of our earthly home is warranted. The chief threat to this discovery is the technological temperament that transforms contemporary human being into a nomad in pursuit of physical and cognitive mastery. Within this nomadic worldview, all problems and mysteries, including those most fundamental to the human condition, are proposed as resolvable. They are expected to dissolve in the fast-moving stream of technological progress.

**7. TECHNOLOGY REDUCES HUMANS TO ONE-DIMENSIONALITY**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS*, Fall 1993, p.198. Anticipating deep ecology, Romantic poets claimed that the technological domination of nature led to the repression of the human spirit as well. More than a century later, Horkheimer and Adorno argued that the domination of outer nature inevitably leads to the domination of inner nature. Similarly, Heidegger and Herbert Marcuse maintained that in the technological era all things, including humans, reveal themselves one-dimensionally: as raw material for enhancing the technological system, which has become an end in itself. Following this tradition, the deep ecologist George Sessions sees "the diminishment of man and the diminishment of the planet and its nonhuman inhabitants as essentially one and the same problem."

**8. TREATING TECHNOLOGY AS NEUTRAL ENSLAVES US**

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, *THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS*, 1977, p.4.

Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as some thing neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.

**9. MODERN TECHNOLOGY PLACES UNREASONABLE DEMANDS ON NATURE**

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, *THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS*, 1977, p.14.

The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [Herausfordern], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such. But does this not hold true for the old windmill as well? No. Its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it. In contrast, a tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the oil as a mineral deposit.

**10. MODERN TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES NATURE**

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, *THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS*, 1977, p.15.

The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In the sowing of the grain it places the seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase. But meanwhile even the cultivation of the field has come under the grip of another kind of setting-in-order, which sets upon [stellt] nature. It sets upon it in the sense of challenging it. Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium, for example; uranium is set upon to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use.

**11. TECHNOLOGY CONCEALS DEEPER TRUTHS**

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, *THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS*, 1977, p.28.

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.

**TECHNOLOGY cont'd****12. HEIDEGGER THOUGHT TECHNOLOGY MUST BE ABANDONED**

Arthur Herman, Professor of History, George Mason, THE IDEA OF DECLINE IN WESTERN HISTORY, 1997, p.419-20.

Heidegger insisted that man had to become the steward, not the master, of nature. Through poetry and art modern man could restore his sense of "the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinity and mortals." The new man would learn to abandon technology and consumerism and accept his humble place in the unity of nature. "Self-assertive man," he wrote in 1926, "whether or not he knows and wills it as an individual, is the functionary of technology."

**13. TECHNOLOGICAL REASONING LED TO AMERICAN VIOLENCE IN VIETNAM**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.198. Such a dissociation of American military violence from American cultural discourse would be the reading demanded by the binary logic of Davidson's interpretation of and judgment against Heidegger's synecdochical text, if this last were applied to the American intervention in Vietnam, as significantly it has not been nor even thought. What I mean, rather, is that the American intervention constituted a relay of interventions, which were in essence the same. However uneven the distribution of destruction, they were informed through and through by a hyperinstrumentalized reason - the advanced, end-oriented technology that, according to Heidegger, in extending its dominion over the planet, promises the fulfillment and "end of philosophy." As I will show, they were also the same in the sense that the culpability for the horrible human consequences of this relay of interventions defies moral discrimination.

**WILLFULLNESS****1. RELEASEMENT REQUIRES RESOLUTE DEDICATION, NOT WILLFUL STRIVING**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.246. Releasement is to be sought with resolute determination. But it is only truly achieved once one no longer wills it. Resolute determination in the absence of willful striving constitutes waiting. The groundwork for this position is laid in Heidegger's critique of subjectivism. Metaphysical subjectivism culminates in the (Nietzschean) will to will, and the rule of enframing. Releasement marks the successful struggle against subjectivism wherein the subject/object dichotomy no longer structures perception and action, and the will to will is placed in abeyance. At this point one may act in and on the world without at the same time becoming invested (as a subject) in the bending of reality (as an object) to the dictates of will.

**2. THEY EMBRACE WILLFUL PROBLEM SOLVING - BUT RELEASEMENT REQUIRES THE ABANDONMENT OF WILLING**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.76. How are we to understand this letting-be? The teacher in Heidegger's "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking" indicates that "when we let ourselves into releasement ... we will non-willing," to which the scientist responds: "Releasement is indeed the release of one self from transcendental re-presentation and so a relinquishing of the willing of a horizon. Such relinquishing no longer stems from a willing, except that the occasion for releasing oneself ... requires a trace of willing. This trace, however, vanishes while releasing oneself and is completely extinguished in releasement."

## HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE PROMOTES HUMAN SURVIVAL

### 1. DESPITE HIS POLITICS, HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT HELPS TO COUNTER THE RISK OF EXTINCTION

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.135.

And Heidegger, though locating the danger to existence in Western rationalism's compulsive effort to convert all nature, and man himself, into something manmade, also contributes to thinking about attachment to existence. One does not have to adopt completely his analysis of the trouble to benefit from his sense of what a change of heart would be. I admit that in separating out various elements from two thinkers who are deliberately elusive I run the risk of misconstruing and misusing them. I grant that this risk is increased when one feels, as I do, that practically every direct remark on politics by either Nietzsche or Heidegger is silly or wicked, and that practically every effort made so far to distill for reconstructionist uses -- apart from the nuclear predicament -- a political theory or a vision of the good society from their work ends up fascistlike, or reactionary, or communitarian-conservative, and self-deluded to boot. These writers matter politically only for a certain politics, actually the most important politics -- the politics of attachment to existence in our age (and coming ages, if there are any) which contain the possibility of extinction. Their saving implications must be wrested from them almost violently.

### 2. HEIDEGGER HELPS TO SUSTAIN AN ATTACHMENT TO EXISTENCE

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.148.

Just as Nietzsche introduces considerations, especially aesthetic ones, which can help sustain us in an attachment to existence beyond all considerations, even aesthetic ones, so Heidegger, by suggesting a way of curing resentment, surpasses the question of resentment in the direction of an overall preservative sense. He explicitly repudiates aestheticism, but his philosophical call is to cultivate a sense that surely bears some resemblance to Nietzsche's sense of beauty. As I have suggested, Heidegger wants to avoid having to praise things in nature anthropocentrically -- that is, to praise them because they already serve some human purpose or other or because they seem to reflect outwardly some human likeness.

### 3. HEIDEGGERIAN RECEPTIVITY HELPS OVERCOME DESTRUCTIVENESS

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.148-9.

This receptivity attends to the "isness" or "thereness" of every particular. It is a kind of self-emptying, a living outside oneself, a living ecstatically. It is a cure for habitual immersion in a fatally thoughtless, if gratifying, life. At its most rigorous, Heidegger's hint is that the only person who is truly alive is one who is dead while still living -- dead, that is, to what society calls life. In "dying to the world" one for the first time is able to be in the world and not in some fantastical simulacrum of it. One comes back from the dead and starts to live for the first time. One recovers. One lives as an individual, as one not wholly social. Constant awareness of one's literal mortality tinges one's sense of the inessentiality of all things. Thus cured of a driven anthropocentric purposiveness, which in the modern age is tantamount to resentment and an enraged desire to make the world over, one is withdrawn from the pervasive spirit of rapacity and hence from a blind destructiveness.

### 4. THE CONTINGENCY OF LIFE ATTACHES US TO THE WORLD

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.149.

Yet, whatever Nietzsche or Heidegger may say, the horror and the obscenity crowd in again and shove themselves forward; their existence cannot be denied or made glamorous. Existence is not confined to the beautiful. Condemnatory judgments will inevitably be made. Feelings of disgust and horror must shake the soul. But just because the earth is inessential, contingent, not necessary, just because there could have been earthly nothingness -- to leave aside the philosophically disputable idea of literal universal nothingness -- one must finally attach oneself to earthly existence as it is, whatever it is, and act to preserve it, not just because of its beauty and in spite of its suffering and wickedness, just as we are not allowed to jeopardize it for the sake of any value or purpose that arises within it.

### 5. TRANSFORMATIVE HEIDEGGERIAN RETHINKING IS NEEDED TO AVOID DESTROYING THE EARTH.

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.ix.

In "Earth-Thinking and Transformation," Kenneth Maly shows us ways in which Heideggerian reflection upon the fact of our being as earth-dwellers can be transformative of our thinking at its very core and therefore transformative of our world. Maly believes that our culture's insistence upon a divorce between rationality and other ways of thinking and knowing has resulted in an impoverishment of our being and a destructive distancing from the earth that gives rise to, shelters, and sustains us. When we take ourselves and the earth as fixed entities to be comprehended by rational observation and theoretical constructs we lose sight of earth and being-human as process, as forever unfixed, as changing, growing, outgrowing, as living and therefore dying. It is only when we begin to think human being and earth as unfixed, as always undergoing transformation in a living unfolding of our/its being that a new, less destructive understanding of humanity-in/on-earth can come into being. And such understanding, Maly would argue, is absolutely necessary if we are to avoid destroying the earth.

## HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

### 1. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY BEST SAFEGUARDS ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.186. Heidegger's unwillingness to exchange anthropocentrism for biocentrism, however, does not weaken his contribution to an ecological politics. Arguably, it makes his contribution more significant. Celebrating the unique capacities of human being to disclose in a way that preserves best ensures humanity's caretaking of the earth and the world. The fostering of human freedom, understood as a disclosive letting-be rather than, a sovereign control, is precisely the measure that will best safeguard the earth's ecological diversity and health. One of Heidegger's favorite Heraclitean fragments is "Nature loves to hide." Nature loves to hide, one might say, because it resists becoming an open book. However we disclose the natural world, something else remains hidden yet beckoning: relationships of interdependence, evolutionary legacies, biological and aesthetic properties. The vast diversity of nature solicits the manifold modes of disclosure to which humans are heir because of their capacity for freedom. Hence our disclosive guardianship of nature marks, at the same time, the preservation of the greatness and uniqueness of human being.

### 2. HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGY HELPS US MAKE SENSE OF OUR LIVES IN RELATION TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., *ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY*, 2000, p.77-8.

Phenomenology has applications both in theory and in practice. What are the practical applications? On a personal level, phenomenology can be life-enhancing. It encourages one to dwell on one's experiences, good and bad, and tease out what it is about them that makes them significant. It helps us to make sense of our lives and our relations with our environments. Heidegger invites us to reflect on ways in which we are alienated. Older readers may reflect on how we, as a culture, are becoming increasingly alienated, or at least separated from nature. Our expertise both in interpreting, and acting in, the world is very high in the world of artefacts and technology, but much less so in the world of nature. In Heidegger's terms, we are increasingly enframed by technology. We take for granted the technological imperative and the technological fix. The world and the care distinctive of proper dealings with it are out of sight behind the technological interface.

### 3. PHENOMENOLOGY ILLUMINATES THE LINKS BETWEEN OUR LIVES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., *ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY*, 2000, p.78.

Third and relatedly, phenomenology can make us aware of the complexity of ways in which our lives are intimately tied up with our environments. We might thereby come to recognise this feature of any living thing, other beings with their environments. Some animals, our pets, clearly dwell, and in much the same way that we do. Might we have a more enlightened view of all animals and even plants if we attended more to how they dwell in their habitats? They do not experience the phenomena as we do, but we might use some of the concepts drawn from phenomenology to apply to other creatures' relations with their environments. Even non-living things, natural or artificial, might invite us to apply the terminology that phenomenology invites: the cliff 'protects' the cove, the mountain peak 'dominates' the range; the church 'nestles' in the valley; the spires 'dream' over Oxford's waking products.

### 4. PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF NATURE REVEALS ITS INTRINSIC WORTH

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., *ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY*, 2000, p.74.

It is also claimed that phenomenological investigation of nature reveals value in nature that is not just value as an instrument for us to use as means to our ends. The complexities, harmonies, balances, robustness, fragility and integrity of ecosystems constitute a demand that we treat them with care, that we do not violate or manipulate them. Others might claim that these features of ecosystems at least constitute a practical warning: because of these features, it is extraordinarily difficult to predict the results of our interference with them we upset them at our peril.

## **HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT cont'd**

### **5. PHENOMENOLOGY OFFERS THE BASIS FOR MORE ENLIGHTENED ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE**

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.74.

Those who seek to apply phenomenology to the natural environment point out that this approach may be more suitable to the study of ecosystems. They, too, are significant totalities with parts relating symbiotically to each other, properly regarded holistically, not as collections of separable items. Whether ecological science does, can or should adopt a more holistic, more phenomenological, model is too large an issue for this chapter. Suffice it to say that the current models - the system of energy model and the system of information model - both seem to be, in essence, mechanistic models that construe nature in the light of machines, albeit more complex machines than Descartes knew about (see Chapter 7). The issue is whether one can explain in mechanistic terms such features of the world as the normal size and life-span of members of a species being dependent on their habitat, or that how an ecosystem will develop, spread, withdraw, increase or decrease in biodiversity, will depend both on what its constituent parts are and the greater whole of which it is a part. Phenomenology, it is argued, could be used as the basis for a more enlightened ecological science.

### **6. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR AN ECOLOGICAL POLITICS**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.183. Heidegger's ecological credentials have become a frequent topic of discussion among philosophers and environmental ethicists. Charles Taylor for example writes that "Heidegger's understanding of language, its telos, and the human essence can be the basis of an ecological politics. founded on something deeper than an instrumental calculation of the conditions of our survival (though that itself ought to be enough to alarm us). It can be the basis of in one sense a 'deep' ecology.

### **7. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY ALLOWS US TO COPE WITH THE LIMITS TO GROWTH**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.191. Ecological concerns have erupted in postmodern times largely as a result of the increasingly apparent limits to human growth. The more these limits are ignored - or worse, viewed as obstacles to be overcome - the graver the crisis becomes. Heidegger develops a philosophy of limits. More to the point, Heidegger describes our freedom as dependent on rather than curtailed by our worldly boundaries. Once the boundaries of human being are experienced neither as a threat to human freedom nor as an affront to human dignity, the tragic attempt to conquer the earth might be abated and the opportunity for its caretaking approached.

### **8. HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT SUPPORTS SOUND ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.183. The word ecology derives from the Greek oikos, meaning a house, home, or dwelling. Ecological practice, it follows, is about the caretaking of our earthly dwelling place. Heidegger's philosophy of freedom, which promotes the caretaking of home, corresponds to an ecological practice. Commenting on this linkage, Michael Zimmerman writes that "Heidegger's critique of anthropocentric humanism, his call for humanity to learn to 'let things be,' his notion that humanity is involved in a 'play' or 'dance' with earth, sky, and gods, his meditation of the possibility of an authentic mode of 'dwelling' on the earth, his complaint that industrial technology is laying waste to the earth, his emphasis on the importance of local place and 'homeland,' his claim that humanity should guard and preserve things, instead of dominating them - all these aspects of Heidegger's thought help to support the claim that he is a major deep ecological theorist." There is much to what Zimmerman says here, and one might add to his list Heidegger's understanding of Dasein as care, and Heidegger's definition of human being as the "shepherd of Being."

### **9. HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGY SUPPORTS PRACTICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNs**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.185. The ontology of dwelling engages the meaning of human being in a way that buttresses practical environmental concerns. Heidegger writes, "Mortals dwell in that they save the earth.... To save really means to set something free into its own presencing. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it, which is merely one step from spoliation" (PLT 150). The identification of human being as an ontologically care-full, worldly dweller facilitates an actual (ontic) earthly caretaking. Identifying oneself, and one's dignity, by the exercise of disclosive freedom precludes wholesale efforts at control and subjugation. To be free, we remember, is to set free, is to let be. The exercise of freedom coalesces our who and our how, our sense of self and our way of being in the world. To understand human freedom as a disclosure that preserves is to be well on the way to an ecological practice.

**HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT cont'd****10. ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS REQUIRE AN OPENING TO BEING**

Bill Devall and George Sessions, Professors of Philosophy, Humboldt State University and Sierra College, DEEP ECOLOGY, 1985, p.204-5.

From a deep, long-range ecology perspective, whatever is to be done, we are the people to do it; the only people to do it. Direct action means giving active voice to deep ecological intuitions, encouraging more intuitive insights, as well as acquiring more knowledge and understanding of our bioregion, homeland, Nature and ourselves. Much of the process of direct action means attuning our rhapsodic intellect and physical bodies more fully to Heidegger's "round dance of appropriation," that qualify of living fully in the space between Earth, sky, gods and our own mortal flesh, realizing the danger, in our technocratic-industrial society, that acting in such a way is risking our socially-defined self. But we provide an opening to being, to receiving answers to questions we have not yet begun to ask.

**11. HEIDEGGER REJECTS POSSESSIVE MASTERY OF THE EARTH**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.184. Despite such caveats, Heidegger's ecological credentials can be supported on a number of grounds. Our sense of self, always in part philosophically derived, impinges on our political, social, and cultural lives. The way we act in the world depends on who we think we are - that is, on how and what we think (of) ourselves. To define human being as care, while not stipulating any particular ethical or environmental attitude or comportment, indicates that human being is not to be defined by its possessive mastery of the world. "It is one thing just to use the earth," Heidegger writes, "another to receive the blessing of the earth and to become at home in the law of this reception in order to shepherd the mystery of Being and watch over the inviolability of the possible."

**12. HEIDEGGER'S UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITY MOVES US AWAY FROM TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.184-5.

Relations with others and nature would develop in a less technologically exploitative and more preservative, ecological direction, Heidegger suggests, once the understanding of human being as care displaces the subjectivism that grounds out metaphysical self-understandings. In writing that "man is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of Being," Heidegger gestures at the changes to our concrete, worldly relationships that might ensue from changes in our ontological relationships.

**13. BIOREGIONALISM IS THE MOST ECOLOGICALLY SOUND**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.187. In advocating a disclosive, caretaking orientation toward nature, Heidegger supports what in ecological circles is called bioregionalism. Bioregionalism is an orientation toward environmental care that advocates human guardianship of nature organized around relatively small communities sustainably integrated into local ecosystems. Likewise, Heidegger stresses that intimate ties to soil and locality are the antidote for the destructive exploitation of the earth and the technological manipulation and extortion of nature. Heidegger envisions living and working with, rather than against, natural processes. In contrast to high-tech agribusiness, for example, Heidegger affirms that "the work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In the sowing of the grain [the peasant] places the seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase" (QT 15). The remedy for our earthly homelessness, Heidegger maintains, "remains most readily possible and most enduringly effective there where the powers of encompassing nature and the echo of historical tradition abide together side by side.... Only the rural regions and the small country towns are today still adequate to this decisive task."

## **RELEASEMENT ENHANCES FREEDOM**

### **1. FREEDOM REQUIRES RELEASEMENT**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.75. Summing up Schelling's thesis, Heidegger remarks that freedom demands pantheism (ST 85). That is, freedom demands openness to the impenetrable immanence of Being in beings. It also demands what Heidegger calls "releasement toward things" (*Gelassenheit zu den Dingen*). Heidegger borrows the term *Gelassenheit* from Meister Eckhardt. It literally means a letting-be. The dispositions that best prepare human being for the visitations of freedom, then, are an ontological openness to no-thingness (Being) combined with a receptive releasement toward things (beings). Human freedom for Heidegger, particularly after his "turning" of the mid-1930s, is fundamentally and foremost an openness and letting-be.

### **2. RELEASEMENT ALLOWS OUR INTUITIVE LEAP TO BEING**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.244-5.

Heidegger identifies releasement as that which allows our intuitive leap to Being. The closest Eastern equivalent of Heidegger's notion of releasement is the Taoist understanding of *wu wei*. "*Wu wei*" is often translated as "noninterference." It refers to a disposition of unattachment wherein willful behavior is suspended. One stills and empties one self, abjuring willfulness in patient preparation for the vision of what is. Lao Tzu affirms that "if any one should wish to get the kingdom for himself, and to effect this by what he does, I see that he will not succeed. The kingdom is a spiritlike thing, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it.... the kingdom is made one's own (only) by freedom from action and purpose." Similarly, Heidegger writes that "in-dwelling in releasement . . . mean[s] exulting in waiting, through which we become more waitful and more void.... [It is] pure resting in itself of that willing, which, renouncing willing, has released itself to what is not will"(DT 82, 85). Taoist freedom is much like Heidegger's disclosive freedom. Released from willfulness, one achieves as a witness what one is denied as a master and possessor.

## RELEASEMENT PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

### 1. HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE ALLOWS RELEASEMENT

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.215. Once it is revealed that to be human means to be the openness in which things can manifest themselves and thus "be" it becomes possible to identify with and to care about all things not just the ego body. Paradoxically, when one becomes "nothing" (the openness), one simultaneously becomes "everything" in the sense that one no longer identifies with and defends a particular phenomenon - the ego body - but rather can identify with all things and "let them be." Mystics argue that their path is not a flight into otherworldly abstraction but instead the most concrete way of encountering things Spinoza for example maintained that at the most realized level of awareness one discerns that each particular thing is God. Presumably such ontological realization would elicit major changes in one's everyday treatment of things!

### 2. MORTALS RESCUE THE EARTH BY LETTING IT BE

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.17-18.

Mortals rescue the earth by not exploiting it and by letting the earth be earth. Letting be means not only letting the earth be at rest but also letting its being come forth to intimate its root unfolding, to let earth emerge, including emerge into flora and fauna. Mortals receive the sky by not conquering it and by letting it be coming forth and drawn to day and night the seasons of the year, the weather patterns -- also foregoing that technical dialectics which makes night into day and winter into summer.

### 3. "LETTING BE" MEANS RESPECTFUL INTERACTION WITH THE WORLD

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.203.

Heidegger and deep ecologists both call on humanity to "let beings be." For Heidegger, this phrase has at least three meanings. First, it means to open up the ontological clearing in which things can disclose themselves and thus "be." Second, it means to allow things to show themselves without undue human interference. Third, it means to interact with things in respectful ways to bring forth not only the goods needed for human life, but also new creations, including works of art.

### 4. WAITING IS AN ANTIDOTE TO TECHNOLOGICAL HYPERACTIVITY

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.77. Waiting, it seems, is a good antidote for the technological hyperactivity to which we are prone. But there is more here. Once we stop "fooling ourselves" and escape the seductive powers of calculative thought, we realize that our most basic existential situation, our who and where, remains every bit a mystery. This realization is, minimally, the prerequisite for releasement. Life, after all, is waiting.

### 5. RELEASEMENT ALLOWS US TO DWELL IN THE WORLD IN A DIFFERENT WAY

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.216-7.

Awaiting gods is an openness to the mystery. Receiving the sky is a releasement toward things. Together they allow our liberation from enframing without at the same time forsaking our technological achievements and skills. Awaiting and receiving, openness and releasement, are summoned by recollective thinking. Only thus is the mood of homelessness attendant on technological ordering displaced. "Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together," Heidegger writes. "They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way."

### 6. RELEASEMENT ALLOWS US TO COME TO TERMS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.254.

As Heidegger sees it, Gelassenheit in regard to beings and openness to the mystery belong together. By means of them, thought can grant us in principle the possibility of dwelling in the world in a new way. They promise us a new foundation upon which we can stand and from which we can endure in the world of technicity without being periled by it.

**RELEASEMENT PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT cont'd****7. THE CONCEPT OF "LETTING BE" EXPRESSES HEIDEGGER'S BIOCENTRISM**

Bill Devall and George Sessions, Professors of Philosophy, Humbolt State University and Sierra College, DEEP ECOLOGY, 1985, p.99.

Near the end of his life, Heidegger realized that the poetic voice was a clearer expression of intuition than formal philosophy. He arrived at a biocentric position in which humans would "let beings be" Heidegger wrote: Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky. They leave to the sun and the moon their journey, to the stars their courses, to the seasons their blessing and their inclemency; they do not turn night into day nor day into a harassed unrest.

**8. "LETTING BE" OVERCOMES THE FORCES OF RESENTMENT**

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.148.

Letting things be is taking each as itself and not coercing it into human use or human likeness. Not coercing is a strenuously self-denying act. Even when human beings make things, the spirit of their making should be of letting the materials they work on slowly reveal themselves. (Perhaps Heidegger's conception of letting things be can also be extended - but not as he himself seems to extend it - to relations between people, whether private or institutional.) Human beings must learn to stop forcing or projecting or imposing themselves on otherness; rather they must preserve it, guard it, shepherd it.

## RELEASEMENT ISN'T PASSIVE

### 1. RELEASEMENT ISN'T PASSIVE BUT LEADS TO DISCLOSIVE FREEDOM

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.94. Disclosive freedom is facilitated by releasement toward things and openness to the mystery of Being. But this is not to say that freedom is achieved without effort and enjoyed in passivity. Heidegger insists that "releasement toward things and openness to the mystery never happen of themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking" (DT 56). Persistent, courageous thinking provides the foundation on which disclosive freedom gains its foothold in the world. Indeed, there is a unique and original freedom to be practiced in thought itself.

### 2. "LETTING BE" ISNT A RETREAT FROM THE WORLD

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.83. Disclosive freedom is always the freedom resolutely to will openness to Being and releasement to beings. Openness and releasement do not preclude, but rather invite, activity and thought. In turn, letting-be is not tantamount to a retreat from the world. Quite the opposite: it entails the formation of worldly relationships made all the more dynamic because they are no longer constrained by the habits of possessive mastery. Heidegger writes: "The freedom to reveal something overt lets whatever 'is' at the moment be what it is. Freedom reveals itself as the 'letting-be' of what-is.... The phrase we are now using, namely the 'letting-be' of what-is, does not, however, refer to indifference and neglect, but to the very opposite of them. To let something be is in fact to have something to do with it.... To let what-is be what it is means participating in something overt and its overtness in which everything that 'is' takes up its position."

### 3. "LETTING BE" ISN'T PASSIVE

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS*, Fall 1993, p.203. "Letting things be," then, is not to be understood merely passively, as a disinterested "bearing witness" to things, but also actively, as working with things to bring forth new possibilities. Such authentic producing is to be distinguished from technological producing at the end of the history of productionist metaphysics. Technological production forces entities to reveal themselves inappropriately, e.g., animals as mere machines.

### 4. RELEASEMENT FOSTERS ACTIVE BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.245. Releasement does not signal passivity, a lack of power to act, or a denial of the will to live (DT 80). Releasement fosters an active Being-in-the-world, one whose dynamism arises out of the absence of attachment to specific models of the future. Taoists have a similar perspective. Chuang Tzu asserts that "he who practices the Tao, daily diminishes his doing. He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing. Having arrived at this non-inaction, there is nothing that he does not do." Similarly, Buddhist practitioners seek releasement from will or craving so as to be free from karma.

### 5. HEIDEGGER STRESSES THAT DWELLING IN THE WORLD IS AN ACTIVE PROCESS

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., *ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY*, 2000, p.75.

Heidegger, too, emphasizes the role of action in our being in the world. He explores the relation between dwelling and building, and concludes that they are, if not the same, at least intimately interrelated. Our way of dwelling in the world essentially involves building. Heidegger recommends that we build in such a way that our buildings reveal rather than disguise dwelling. Our buildings should allow nature and the significance it has as our home to show itself. Giving a clear account of this difference is a difficult task, but finding examples of buildings that do and those that do not demonstrate dwelling is not so hard. Heidegger's example is that of a river bridge integral to the life of the community residing at both sides of it, a meeting place, a way for the river-banks to show themselves as possible dwelling places, etc. He contrasts this with a dam, part of a hydroelectric power plant. This has the significance not of nature as our dwelling place but of nature as a resource, a potential source of energy, to be stored up, and used up by us so that we can make it possible to live as if nature was not our home, to forget how to dwell.

## RETHINKING NEEDED

### 1. WE NEED TO RETHINK OUR RELATIONSHIP TO TECHNOLOGY

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.1.

Heidegger calls us to give thought to - or give ourselves over to thought of - the strangeness of our technological being within the world. His works resound with calls for human beings to grow more thoughtful, to take heed, to notice and reflect upon where we are and what we are doing, lest human possibility and the most beautiful of possibilities for thought be lost irretrievably in forces we do not understand and only pretend we can control.

### 2. NON-CALCULATIVE THOUGHT OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.3.

Heidegger's work is a call to reflect, to think in some way other than calculatively, technologically, pragmatically. Once we begin to move with and into Heidegger's call and begin to see our trying to seize control and solve problems as itself a problematic approach, if we still believe that thinking's only real purpose is to function as a prelude to action, we who attempt to think will twist within the agonizing grip of paradox, feeling nothing but frustration, unable to conceive of ourselves as anything but paralyzed. However, as so many peoples before us have known, paradox is not only a trap; it is also a scattering point and passageway. Paradox invites examination of its own constitution (hence of the patterns of thinking within which it occurs) and thereby breaks a way of thinking open, revealing the configurations of power that propel it and hold it on track. And thus it makes possible the dissipation of that power and the deflection of thinking into new paths and new possibilities.

### 3. WE MUST RETHINK BOTH ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND SCIENTIFIC SOLUTIONS

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.3-4.

But of course, those drives and those conceptual dichotomies are part of the very structure of our self-understanding both as individuals and as a tradition and a civilization. Hence, Heidegger's call is a threatening one, requiring great courage, "the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called in question." Heidegger's work pushes thinking to think through the assumptions that underlie both our ecological vandalism and our love of scientific solutions, assumptions that also ground the most basic patterns of our current ways of being human.

### 4. TO TRULY THINK ECOLOGICALLY WE NEED TO RETHINK THE HUMAN SUBJECT

Ladelle McWhorter, Professor of Philosophy, Northeast Missouri State, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, 1992, p.vii-viii.

However, in the midst of this urgency, thinking ecologically, thinking Heideggerly, means rethinking the very notion of human action. It means placing in question our typical Western managerial approach to problems, our propensity for technological intervention, our belief in human cognitive power, our commitment to a metaphysics that places active human being over against passive nature. For it is the thoughtless deployment of these approaches and notions that has brought us to the point of ecological catastrophe in the first place. Thinking with Heidegger, thinking Heideggerly and ecologically, means, paradoxically, acting to place in question the acting subject, willing a displacing of our will to action; it means calling ourselves as selves to rethink our very selves, insofar as selfhood in the West is constituted as agent, as actor, as controlling ego, as knowing consciousness. Heidegger's work calls us not to rush in with quick solutions, not to act decisively to put an end to deliberation, but rather to think, to tarry with thinking unfolding itself, to release ourselves to thinking without provision or predetermined aim.

### 5. QUESTIONING IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A FREE RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Martin Heidegger, German philosopher, THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.3-4.

In what follows we shall be questioning concerning technology. Questioning builds a way. We would be advised, therefore, above all to pay heed to the way, and not to fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics. The way is a way of thinking. All ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a manner that is extraordinary. We shall be questioning concerning technology, and in so doing we should like to prepare a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology. When we can respond to this essence, we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds.

## RETHINKING NEEDED cont'd

### 6. RETHINKING LEADS US TO MEDITATIVE THINKING

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.21.

And the re-thinking leads away from objectifying calculating and measuring to phenomenological, meditative thinking, from natural science's reduction of phenomena to the upholding of their fullness, from the perspectival worldview to a regard for the inseparable interconnectedness of thinking, world, human, death, sky, earth, and language: to mindfulness of Ereignis of being and time, of Ereignis of the world-fourfold: Rethinking leads away from progress to "overture."

### 7. MEDITATIVE THINKING IS NEEDED TO CHECK SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.253-4.

Is man, then, a defenseless victim at the mercy of the irresistible power of modern science area technology? He would be if man were to abandon any intention of balancing merely calculative thinking with meditative thinking, instrumental rationality with genuinely human rationality. Can a new ground or foundation be granted to man, a foundation out of which man's Being and all his works may flourish in a new way in our atomic age? The answer to this question lies at hand, so near that we all too easily overlook it. This way is the way of meditative thinking.

### 8. MEDITATIVE THINKING ABOUT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS NEEDED TO PRESERVE THE GENUINELY HUMAN

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.254-5.

Yet for the time being, man finds himself still in a very perilous situation. For the danger remains that the approaching tide of the technological revolution will captivate and beguile us, because calculative thinking is still quite universally accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking. To overcome this thoughtlessness and avoid that man will have to give up and throw away what genuinely makes him human, we must try to keep meditative thinking alive. We must try to prepare for this thinking by engaging in a more careful meditation about the meaning of modern science and technicity.

### 9. SUSTAINABILITY REQUIRES A BASIC CHANGE IN THE WAY WE ARE

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.189. Heidegger would agree with Hardin that many problems, including that of the caretaking of our earthly home, are without technical solutions. Only a change in the way we think and feel - in the way we "are" - will allow their redress. Heidegger would also support Hardin's critical challenge to the traditional understanding of freedom.

### 10. WITHOUT A BASIC ATTITUDE CHANGE, TECHNOLOGY WILL REMAIN ENSLAVING

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.217. The worldly dwelling to which we may aspire is not merely different from that experienced in the midst of willful technological endeavors. There is no true dwelling in an enframed world, only the visitation of a boundless ordering upon it. To dwell is already to have found an abode in the mystery of Being and to have gained release from the possessive mastery of things. Until this occurs, our attempts to control the products of technology will only perpetuate our subordination to its imperative. The greatest irony is that the freedom that has been systematically nurtured and cherished for two and a half millennia in the West has fostered this technological servitude.

### 11. HEIDEGGER'S MEDITATIVE THINKING IS A NECESSARY STEP

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.70.

Critics have often charged that Heidegger's otherwise charming account of the fourfold fails to confront the harsh realities of modern political economics. By the 1940s, however, he had -- for good reason -- recused himself from further political involvement. Since politics was part of the problem, continuing to engage in it would only make matters worse. The idea of the fourfold (Geviert), then, is not to be seen as a set of political recommendations or as a call to action, but rather as an antipode to the "enframing" (Gestell) that compels modern humankind to undertake the brazen task of the technological conquest of nature. Given the extent to which yesterday's technological "solutions" (e.g., nuclear power) have given rise to today's problems (e.g., how to dispose of hideously poisonous nuclear wastes), one might well appreciate Heidegger's counsel that we need to step back from our incessant action. Meditative "thinking" may help to reveal the historical character of the technological disclosure of the being of entities. Realizing that our current mode of disclosure is not absolute or eternal, but instead is only temporary, constitutes a necessary step toward the advent of an alternative disclosure.

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT PROFOUND AND INFLUENTIAL**

### **1. HEIDEGGER WAS A VASTLY INFLUENTIAL PHILOSOPHER**

Don Idhe, general editor, Indiana University Series in the Philosophy of Technology, Foreword to Michael Zimmerman, **HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH TECHNOLOGY**, 1990, p.x.

There can be little doubt that Heidegger is one of the most prominent philosophical giants of the twentieth century. In continental Europe he is the self-acknowledged influence, often the most primary such thinker, behind the main figures in many of today's debates. The two primary hermeneutic philosophers, Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, have noted their debts, as have both the leaders of contemporary critical theory in Germany through Jürgen Habermas and the late post-structuralist Michel Foucault, and the deconstructionist Jacques Derrida of France. In North America, philosophers as diverse as William Barrett of existentialist fame and Richard Rorty as a "post-analytic" philosopher have confirmed Heidegger as one of the "top three." The first names Heidegger along with Wittgenstein and James in this category, the latter substitutes Dewey for James.

### **2. HEIDEGGER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PHILOSOPHER OF TECHNOLOGY**

Don Idhe, general editor, Indiana University Series in the Philosophy of Technology, Foreword to Michael Zimmerman, **HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH TECHNOLOGY**, 1990, p.x.

Even more to the point for this series, Heidegger stands as the single most important philosopher to have directed and made central to his thought the age of technology. No historical or critical look at the philosophy of technology could afford to ignore Heidegger. The broad claim that the entire history of metaphysics from Plato to the present is a trajectory into the age of technology combined with the paradigm inversion of the relation between science and technology wherein science becomes the instrument of a technological revealing of world, raises the issues of technology to highest metaphysical and ontological status.

## **HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM DOESN'T DISCREDIT HIS THOUGHT**

### **1. THE VALUABLE PARTS OF HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT NEED TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIS POLITICS**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, **BENEATH THE SURFACE**, Eric Katz, et al., eds., 2000, p.178.

The sheer scale and awful consequences of Heidegger's political misjudgment (not to mention his postwar, silence about the Holocaust) have led many people to conclude that his thought is little more than an apology for fascism. Though understanding the reasons for this conclusion, I cannot agree with it. Efforts must be made to identify those aspects of Heidegger's thought which led him to support the Nazi movement, but efforts must also be made to study aspects of his thought that retain their importance despite his politically perverted application of them.

### **2. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM DOESN'T DISQUALIFY HIS THOUGHT**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM**, 1992, p.125.

Now that we have some measure of distance from the turbulent controversy surrounding Heidegger's National Socialist involvements, it would seem fair by way of summary to draw four conclusions: 1) To suggest that Heidegger's 1927 magnum opus *Sein und Zeit* would in some way be "disqualified" by his political misdeeds of six years hence would be to profane that "love of wisdom" that informs the spirit of all authentic philosophical inquiry.

### **3. HEIDEGGER'S POLITICS DON'T DISCREDIT HIS PHILOSOPHY**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, **HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM**, 1993, p.5.

Heidegger's philosophical texts as such, from *Being and Time* to the late essays interrogating the hegemony of *Technik* (including the notorious "Rectorate Address"), resist any simple identification with historical Nazism and Nazi practices; that they exceed the essentially reactionary political purposes attributed to them by his "liberal" humanist detractors.

## **HEIDEGGER REJECTED NAZI DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES**

### **1. HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF NATURE WAS DISTINCT FROM THE NAZIS**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.214. Critics have noted that, because National Socialism and Heidegger were both opponents of Marxism, they refused to explain historical events solely in terms of socioeconomic "causes," but rather in terms of something more primal. For National Socialism, however, this "primal" was non-transcendental and naturalistic: the Will to Power. For Heidegger, the primal was transcendental and nonnaturalistic: the being of entities. Of course, insofar as nature (*physis*) appropriates human existence as the opening for the self-manifesting of entities, Heidegger conceded that human existence is a part of "nature." But his idea of nature, and of humanity as "caring" openness which "lets things be," are radically opposed to the crude naturalism of National Socialism.

### **2. IN THE END, HEIDEGGER REJECTED THE HISTORICAL PRACTICE OF NAZISM**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, BENEATH THE SURFACE, Eric Katz, et al., eds., 2000, p.176.

Influenced by German idealism, which distinguished between the natural and the historical domains, Heidegger criticized Nazi ideologues for portraying humans merely as intelligent animals, governed by natural laws and struggling for survival in competition with the rest of life on Earth. In the end, Heidegger concluded that the historical reality of National Socialism was another dreary instance of modernity's naturalistic humanism, which seeks to gain control of everything through science, technology, and industry.

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## **HEIDEGGER WASN'T A RACIST**

### **1. HEIDEGGER REJECTED NAZI RACISM**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.60.

Heidegger abjured all forms of "naturalism," according to which humans can be adequately defined as intelligent animals that have arisen by virtue of blind, material, evolutionary processes. This antinaturalistic stance led some deep ecologists to suspect that despite many indications that his thought had a green dimension, Heidegger adhered to the humanity-nature dualism and anthropocentrism that have helped to generate the ecological crisis. As we shall see, however, Heidegger's antinaturalism had the virtue of leading him to reject Nazism's biological racism, despite his attraction to certain other elements of its program.

### **2. HEIDEGGER'S MOST PROMINENT STUDENTS WERE JEWISH**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH MODERNITY, 1990, p.37.

Despite the fact that Heidegger the man committed himself and his writings to National Socialism, there are reasons for questioning the allegation that his writings are intrinsically linked to that movement. First, one can study his writings without suspecting that they could be or were used to support the violently anti-Semitic movement which we now associate with National Socialism. Certainly Heidegger's Jewish graduate students from the 1920s, including Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt, were shocked by his political decision in 1933.

## **THE NAZI CHARGE IS DISHONEST AND IDEOLOGICAL**

### **1. THE INDICTMENT OF HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IS INTELLECTUALLY DISHONEST**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, **HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM**, 1993, p.2. The publication of Victor Farias's *Heidegger and Nazism in France* in 1987 reopened the question concerning the relationship between Heidegger's thought and Nazi politics with the force of scandal. Farias's book contributes little that was not already known about Heidegger's personal affiliation with Nazism.<sup>1</sup> And his analytical effort to implicate Heidegger's thought at large with Nazism is characterized by a superficiality so obvious that, as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe has observed, it betrays a certain intellectual dishonesty, a dishonesty, I would add, endemic to the future anterior perspective of anthropological inquiry. It suggests that Farias's identification of Heidegger's philosophical writing at large with an anti-Semitic fascism is the tendentious result, not so much of reading Heidegger's texts, as of an inexorably fixed moralistic point of view grounded in the self-evidently damning "facts" of Heidegger's personal adherence to the Nazi Party.

### **2. THE ATTACK ON HEIDEGGER'S POLITICS IS IDEOLOGICALLY DRIVEN**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, **HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM**, 1993, p.3-4. What has been obscured in the dramatization of this "scandal," especially by those liberal humanists in the United States who have imported the European debate into the North American intellectual milieu, is the ideology informing the attack on Heidegger's discourse enabled by Farias's publication of the "facts" of Heidegger's personal adherence to and practice in behalf of German National Socialism. Whatever its intention, this negative renarrativization of the itinerary of Heidegger's thought in terms of historical anecdote has as its ideological subtext the discrediting of Heidegger's powerful interrogation of the discourse of humanism as such. More important, it also is at some level intended to delegitimate those later, more radical, demystifications of the privileged concept of Man that Heidegger's interrogation catalyzed. I mean the "postmodern" or "poststructuralist" or, as I prefer, "posthumanist" discourses that in the last decade or so have theorized the self-destruction in the 1960s of the "benign" discursive practices of humanism in behalf of specifically emancipatory purposes, especially the self-disclosure of the contradictory will to power informing its profession of "disinterested" and "free" inquiry.

### **3. THE CRITIQUE OF HEIDEGGER IS IMPLICITLY AUTHORITARIAN**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, **HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM**, 1993, p.9. Could it not be said of Heidegger's humanist critics that their monolithic indictment of his "authoritarian" ontological and sociopolitical call to follow the leader blindly constitutes an ideological strategy finally intended to obscure precisely what the sustained posthumanist interrogation of the sovereign subject has disclosed: that their invocation of "the autonomous individual," "free choice," "disinterestedness," "the rights of Man," and "Western democracy" is itself an ontological and sociopolitical ("politically correct") appeal to follow the authoritarian imperative of "a center elsewhere," a hidden essentialist imaginary?

### **4. THE CRITIQUE OF HEIDEGGER IS AN ATTEMPT TO DEFEND AMERICAN IMPERIALISM**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, **HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM**, 1993, p.9-10. Indeed, it could be argued that the recently renewed effort to delegitimize Heidegger's (as well as Paul de Man's) "antihumanist" discourse is implicated in the present massive multisituated effort to recuperate the authority humanism lost in the Vietnam decade, when, in the face of the overt complicity of the institutions of knowledge production (especially the university) in the conduct of the state's colonial war against the Vietnamese people, the students and a large segment of the American public refused their spontaneous consent to its discursive principles. It could be said, further, that this effort to discredit Heidegger's antihumanist discourse and that of the posthumanists it enabled allies itself with that interpretation of the events of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe that represents them in the global terms of the Cold War narrative: the "fall of communism" or, alternatively, the "triumph of democracy." Is it not possible to read this mounting campaign to delegitimize Heidegger's interrogation of humanism as the closure at the site of ontology of the dominant culture's effort to annul the only critical discourse that, at this historical conjuncture, is capable of resisting the planetary hegemony of the United States? I mean the (neo-)imperialism that now masks itself in the language of the Pax Americana: the "end of history" and the "coming of the new world order."

**HEIDEGGER'S INFLUENCE PROGRESSIVE****1. HEIDEGGER'S INFLUENCE HAS BEEN PROGRESSIVE**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Bingharnton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.16.  
The recent moralist attacks on Heidegger's thought systematically forget, or repress, the influence of Heidegger's texts on contemporary oppositional criticism in the convenient but dubious name of biographical anecdote, that is, "circumstantial evidence." This is precisely why it seems to me now necessary, not to defend Heidegger, but to retrieve his destruction of the onto-theo-logical tradition, especially his disclosure of the complicity of modern humanist inquiry (anthropo-logy, the third phase of this discursive history) with sociopolitical domination: not only the critique, but also the projective impulse that, however occulted, informs his destructive hermeneutics.

**2. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ISN'T LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE**

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.8-9.  
Whatever his personal politics, Heidegger's philosophical discourse, which neither "abandons itself to the past" nor aims at "progress," cannot be represented, as it is by his humanist critics, in the ideologically coded terms of the essentially metaphysical binary, conservative/liberal. To do so in the name of objectivity is to betray a recuperative metaphysical agenda, and also a political one.

## HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT LIBERATES

### 1. HEIDEGGER OFFERS A DISCOURSE OF EMANCIPATION

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.14. I will readily concede to his critics that Heidegger's version of the antihumanist project, especially in the period of the rectorate, contributed to the odious political purposes of historical Nazism. But his antihumanism clearly is far more complex than it is now being represented, and should not be used to justify an obfuscation his epochal positive contribution to a differential discourse of emancipation radically at odds with that privileged in and by the humanist tradition since the Enlightenment. The discourse he inaugurated, in its exposure of the contradictions inhering in the latter, is more adequate than existing oppositional discourses to the analysis and critique of the operations of contemporary power.

### 2. HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT IS EMANCIPATORY, EVEN IF HIS POLITICS WERE REACTIONARY

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.13. To put the project of this book positively, these essays are intended to demonstrate the continuing use value of a certain Heideggerian initiative of thinking - especially the project of overcoming philosophy - for oppositional intellectuals. Despite the politically conservative bent of his antihumanist discourse, Heidegger's destructive hermeneutics remains viable - indeed, has been rendered crucial by the historical demise of classical Marxism - to the polyvalent task of emancipation in the face of the massive "reform" movement that would re legitimate not simply the discourse of humanism and its cultural institutions, but also the discreetly repressive sociopolitical order it has always served.

### 3. HEIDEGGER EXPRESSES AN EMANCIPATORY IMPULSE

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.15. To put it positively, to "leap primordially and wholly" into the circle of the Heideggerian text is not only to encounter its contradictions but also to discover an emancipatory impulse in its solicitation of the humanist representation of being (as Being) and the affiliated relay of binary metaphors this hegemonic representation has constituted, codified, and naturalized: sovereign subject/collective subject, choosing freely/following blindly, knowledge/power, and so forth.

### 4. HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT SUPPORTS THE CRITIQUE OF REPRESSIVE PRACTICES

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.17. Heidegger's existential analytic, that is, enabled the critique of a relay of dominant cultural discourses whose metaphysical foundations were concealed in an alleged "objectivity" or a free-floating formalism. In short it made possible the disclosure of the will to power informing their recollective mode of inquiry - and their ultimate implication, however indirect, in the violent repressive sociopolitical practices of the American state.

### 5. HEIDEGGER IMPLICITLY CRITICIZES THE IDEA OF FOLLOWING A LEADER

William Spanos, Professor of English, SUNY-Binghamton, HEIDEGGER AND CRITICISM, 1993, p.8. Indeed, exposing the will to power informing metaphysics, Heidegger's text puts the very idea of following a leader who embodies the transcendental Word (Logos) under erasure, precisely in order to disable it and all those more insidiously determining discourses of the anthropological tradition which conceal their determinations - and their imperative to follow - behind the rhetoric of "truth" or, in Matthew Arnold's sedimented humanist formulation, the disinterested "discourse of deliverance."

### 6. HEIDEGGER DOESN'T REPUDIATE FREEDOM

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xiii.

Heidegger is not a "determinist." He does not believe that man's actions are completely controlled by forces outside him or that man has no effective freedom. To Heidegger man's life does indeed lie under a destining sent from out of Being. But to him that destining can itself call forth a self-orienting response of man that is real and is a true expression of human freedom.

**HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT LIBERATES** cont'd**7. HUMAN FREEDOM REQUIRES THE REJECTION OF SELF-AGGRANDIZING SUBJECTIVISM**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, *TIMELY MEDITATIONS*, 1995, p.186. Zimmerman hedges his praise of Heidegger's ecological credentials at this point, citing the above passage as indication that Heidegger "overestimated our importance" compared to that of the rest of nature. But Zimmerman overlooks Heidegger's earlier statement that humankind's fundamental questioning is "far removed from any noisy self-importance concerning the life of one's own soul or that of others" (MFL 16-17). Moreover, Heidegger was clear that giving ontological priority to human being in no way suggests that the natural world, or the material world at large, exists (solely) for our benefit. Indeed, disclosive freedom appears only in the absence of the possessive mastery that underlies such an assumption. Human being is the highest being (as opposed to the most powerful being) only to the extent that human being gains release from all self-aggrandizing subjectivism. If there is any claim to greatness in our being, it arises not from the human capacity to dominate and exploit but from the unique human capacity to dwell and disclose in a way that preserves.

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT RELEVANT TO CONTEMPORARY DEBATES**

### **1. THE KEY QUESTIONS OF THE PRESENT ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE HEIDEGGER FACED**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH MODERNITY, 1990, p.xxi.

My academic interest in Heidegger's concept of modern technology is directly tied to my personal concern about the fate of humanity and the earth in the technological age. The issues facing us today are similar to the ones which faced Heidegger half a century ago: Is a stable human community possible in a politically pluralistic world that is constantly transformed by technological innovation? Have traditional political discourse and practices been eclipsed or marginalized by technological developments in production, transportation, and communication? Are genuine individuality and freedom still possible in the technological world of nonstop producing and consuming? Do we retain any valid "measure" that would provide limits for what may be done with technological breakthroughs in areas such as genetic engineering? Are we, in short, permitted to do anything we become capable of doing. Does talk of "human progress" in connection with industrial technology obscure the fact that only certain classes, nations, races, and often only one sex of "humanity" benefit from such "progress," while many other people suffer from it? Even if we manage to avoid ecological catastrophe, will the human "spirit" be eroded by the loss of everything wild and free as the result of planetary technology? What are the psychological and social consequences of an age in which everything is evaluated and measured in terms of the human quest for control and power?

### **2. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW OFFERS A BETTER GROUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DEBATES THAN THE ORTHODOX ONE**

Vernon Pratt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Lancaster, et al., ENVIRONMENT AND PHILOSOPHY, 2000, p.79.

Theoretically, phenomenology offers a world-view that might be of more use in debates about the environment than the orthodox one it challenges with its sharp distinctions between humans and the world, and between values and facts. Phenomenology offers us care as characterising our fundamental way of being in the world, largely covered up by modern life; ourselves as bodies situated in the world, with the world itself as significant and meaningful.

## AFFIRMATIVE FRONTLINE

### 1. HEIDEGGER'S MEDITATIVE THINKING LEADS TO INDIFFERENCE TO SUFFERING

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.134.

Others assert that the "not-thinking" involved in Zen's nondualism can all too easily involve a simpleminded refusal to think, which can encourage passivity in the face of redressable injustice and misery. This passivity may be a major problem for Heidegger's "thinking," which can be read as an ontological aestheticism with little concern about concrete suffering.

### 2. HEIDEGGER'S POSITION UNDERMINES ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Richard Watson, Professor of Philosophy, Washington University, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Louis Pojman, ed., 2001, p.163-4.

A difficult question that arises for advocates of this position is whether or not humans can be activists. For example, near-total passivism seems to be suggested by Michael Zimmerman in his approving summation of what he takes to be Heidegger's admonition to the Western World: Only Western man's thinking has ended up by viewing the world as a storehouse of raw material for the enhancement of man's Power.... [A] new kind of thinking must ... pass beyond the subjectivistic thinking of philosophy-science-technology.... Heidegger indicates that the new way must "let beings be," i.e., it must let them manifest themselves in their own presence and worth, and not merely as objects for the all-powerful Subject.

### 3. PERMUTATION - YOU CAN ACCEPT THE KRITIK AND STILL ACT

Hanspeter Padrutt, psychiatrist, Daseinanalytisches Institut, Zurich, HEIDEGGER AND THE EARTH, Ladelle McWhorter, ed., 1992, p.31.

Once in a while the conceptual interplay of theory and praxis is put against this attempt. From the philosophical point of view the so-called practical or political dimension of the attempt is rejected, whereas from the ecological point of view the so-called theoretical, philosophical dimension is rejected. But deeper reflection and decisive action do not need to contradict each other. Those who shield themselves from the political consequences might one day be confronted with the fact that no decision is still a decision that can have consequences. And those who believe that they need not bother about thinking fail to recognize that no philosophy is also a philosophy e.g., a cybernetic worldview -- that also has consequences.

### 4. HEIDEGGERIAN CRITICISM CAN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE NUCLEAR AGE

J. Fisher Solomon, UCLA, DISCOURSE AND REFERENCE IN THE NUCLEAR AGE, 1988, p.241.

Time and again Heidegger condemns as ignoble any contemplation of the kind of concrete political dilemmas that require negotiation and compromise. This is the way of weakness, of the social horde, of a pulsing desire for security. The Heideggerian hero, who looks more and more like Nietzsche's superman, rejects all security to open himself to Being, to shatter himself upon the unknown. But we have already done that by opening up the unfamiliar world of the atom. It is now time for the unheroic activity of coping with our own discoveries. To put this another way, the Heideggerian critique cannot lead us to a realistic political criticism. Poetry is not going to solve the concrete problems of the nuclear age.

### 5. HEIDEGGER REMAINED ANTHROPOCENTRIC

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.213.

One important difference between the two is that while deep ecologists maintain that humanity is a part of life on Earth, Heidegger, like many other anti-Darwinian conservatives, held that humans are not animals. In fact, he argued that the modernity's "naturalistic humanism" was the final, nihilistic stage of Aristotle's definition of humans as rational animals. Because of this attitude, his former student, Karl Lowith, accused him of perpetuating the anthropocentrism and dualism so characteristic of the metaphysical and theological traditions which he purported to overcome.

**AFFIRMATIVE FRONTLINE cont'd****6. HEIDEGGER FAILS TO UNDERSTAND THE REAL WORLD**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.180.

But I do not think that quietism is the main danger of Heidegger's thought. For I would argue that a Heideggerian activism risks equal danger. It is not simply a matter of rejecting the passive for the active mode. It is a matter of moving beyond Heidegger's utopian idealism toward an understanding of the forces, structures, passions, and desires at work in the real world. (Admittedly, the world in question is the "ordinary world" not Heidegger's "extraordinary" world.) The danger, in short, lies in the tendency of Heidegger's utopianism to obscure this world, enveloping it in a utopian haze. Heidegger is a poor guide for those who want to grasp how the "ordinary" world operates. His archaizing idealism tempts one into ignoring the forms of social, economic, and political power at work within it. If this sounds like a defense of an intelligent empiricism against Heidegger's utopianism, this is indeed what it is.

**7. HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT IS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.56.

Hence, the rudiments of a "collectivist" interpretation of the social ontology of Being and Time are to a certain extent confirmed by the category of resolve. However, as we have already noted, the political implications of this social ontology are anything but benign given the unabashedly elitist motifs that inform the existential analytic. The de facto separation of human natures into authentic and inauthentic is radically undemocratic. The political philosophy that corresponds to this ontological dualism suggests that human beings are divided by nature into leaders and followers. Indeed, this authoritarian conviction was a longstanding precept of the German mandarin intelligentsia and was well reflected in the traditional class divisions of German (especially Prussian) social structure. By celebrating this division between human types and their capacities, Heidegger in effect merely codified in ontological form a time-honored commonplace of German authoritarian political thought.

**8. HEIDEGGER'S POLITICS WERE INHERENTLY TOTALITARIAN**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.89.

The political object of Heidegger's speech is clear. The shallowness of bourgeois life -- evident, for example, in the fact that knowledge is shorn of essential ties to the Volksgemeinschaft -- can only be radically overcome via the wholesale integration of life in a society of total mobilization. The multiple fragmentations and divisions of bourgeois society -- those of political parties, classes, academic disciplines, and competing value-claims -- can be resolved only by recourse to a total state. Since Heidegger fully shares the conservative revolutionary critique of liberal democracy, not only does he have no reservations concerning a totalitarian alternative; he in fact perceives the latter as a form of political deliverance. The various Bindungen he emphasizes in the address -- labor service, military service, and service in knowledge -- aim at the creation of an all-encompassing, total state in which the (modern) specialization of competences is abolished and all pursuits are integrated by a common goal: the realization of the historical-spiritual destiny of the German Volk.

**9. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY LEADS TO NIHILISTIC PASSIVITY**

Stanley Rosen, Penn State philosopher, *NIHILISM*, 1969, p.135-6.

This mandate, despite its parious and even nihilistic character, with the danger it brings of the destruction of the human race, also reveals the sense of Being as Historicity. It reveals the sense of Being as presence-and-absence, but also as temporal process which, in completing each stage, "clears the stage" for new possibilities for which man, and the exemplary authentic thinker, can only wait. To attempt to accelerate by political action the demise or completion of our present parlous stage would be to surrender to its intrinsic nihilism, for nihilism is the will to will, the will to dominate Being instead of letting it be. Nihilism is both man's forgetting of Being and the gift of Being. Being gives man nihilism, yet man is the agent of nihilism. Hence the strange conclusion that to act against nihilism is to act against Being, and so to perpetuate nihilism. This is the ontological conclusion of the long revolt against Platonism, in the version given its decisive shape by Nietzsche and Heidegger. In his desire not to do violence to Being, man is violated by Being. Having identified action with radical destruction, or a purifying self-laceration, the ontological nihilist retreats into total inaction.

**AFFIRMATIVE FRONTLINE cont'd****10. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM WAS THE ESSENCE OF HIS THOUGHT**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE POLITICS OF BEING**, 1990, p.102.

With the incorporation of the category of "the destiny of a historical Volk" into the very heart of his theory of the history of Being, Heidegger undertakes a final retreat from the quasi-solipsistic, Kierkegaardian theory of subjectivity advanced in *Being and Time*. Not only is the question of Being thoroughly historicized; but now the very posing of the question has become inseparable from the capacity of a collective megasubject--a historically situated Volk-- to heed Being's call. Given the influence of the conservative revolutionary critique of modernity on Heidegger, as well as his own longstanding conviction concerning the innate superiority of Germany as a nation of "poets and thinkers," it is clear that his theoretical justification of the "inner truth and greatness of National Socialism"--far from being a random biographical error--was rooted in the essence of his thought.

**11. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM STEMS FROM HIS CRITIQUE OF RATIONALISM**

Allan Bloom, Professor of Philosophy, University of Chicago, **THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND**, 1987, p.311.

Thus it was no accident that Heidegger came forward just after Hitler's accession to power to address the university community in Freiburg as the new rector, and urged commitment to National Socialism. His argument was not without subtlety and its own special kind of irony, but in sum the decision to devote wholeheartedly the life of the mind to an emerging revelation of being, incarnated in a mass movement, was what Heidegger encouraged. That he did so was not a result of his political innocence but a corollary of his critique of rationalism.

**12. HEIDEGGER PHILOSOPHY IS STERILE BECAUSE IT BYPASSES SCIENCE**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE POLITICS OF BEING**, 1990, p.123.

But as Lowith has observed: Philosophical reflection on the whole of what exists in nature, which is the world . . . cannot merely "pass science by" without falling into the void. It is easily said, and it would be a relief, if philosophical thought were to dwell beyond what is provable and refutable; if, however, the realm of "essential thinking" were to surpass all proof and refutation, then philosophy would have to do neither with truth nor with probability, but rather with uncontrollable claims and allegations.

**13. HEIDEGGER REINFORCES TECHNOLOGICAL DOMINATION**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE POLITICS OF BEING**, 1990, p.165-6.

Since the doctrine of the history of Being has already banished all categories of practical reason from its theoretical purview, we are left with two complementary extremes that combine to produce the image of a totally reified world from which there can be no escape -- for, strictly speaking, there are no "social actors" left to alter its course. On the one hand, there is the implacable advance of technology itself, which "can never be stopped"; on the other hand, there is a wholesale devaluation of the possibilities for human action, which has the performative consequence of encouraging a total submission to fate. In the last analysis, Heidegger's theory ends up reinforcing the logic of technological domination it claims to oppose: technology is ontologized as the modern condition humaine, and our historical capacities for resisting or reshaping this fate are written off a priori as merely a further expression of the nefarious and omnipresent "will to will."

## HUMANISM

### 1. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM SHOWS THE DANGER OF ANTIHUMANISM

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.61.

Political and conceptual problems notwithstanding, I shall argue that radical ecologists can learn from Heidegger's philosophy. Challenging modernity's notions that nature is merely raw material for enhancing human purposes and that humans are nothing more than clever animals struggling to survive and to prosper, Heidegger maintained that we must understand human existence in terms of its relation to a transcendent dimension that confers on humankind the responsibility not only for preserving itself, but also for caring for all entities. His own misdirected political views and actions, however, remind us of the dangers involved in any antihumanist critique of modernity's universalistic, emancipatory aims.

### 2. IN VIEWING NAZISM AS A FORM OF HUMANISM, HEIDEGGER IGNORED VITAL DISTINCTIONS

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.114.

Claiming that humanism animates all modern political ideologies, including liberal capitalism and communism, Heidegger finally concluded that Nazism, too, was a type of "humanism." Heidegger's method of "abstracting by essentializing," as Habermas has put it, ignores important differences among the above-mentioned political systems, including the fact that both liberalism and communism were manifestations of the emancipatory impulse of modernity, whereas National Socialism condemned modernity outright. Moreover, the idea that Nazism was a type of humanism shocks those who define humanism as a doctrine promoting universal human rights, human autonomy, and individual worth.

### 3. HEIDEGGER'S ANTI-HUMANISM IS MISGUIDED AND IRRESPONSIBLE

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.7.

Whatever its chronology, the use of "humanism" to mean a crude anthropocentric and technocratic use of the planet in strictly human interests (often socially unspecified) has its contemporary origins in Martin Heidegger's Brief über den Humanismus (Letter on Humanism), written in 1947, which gained favor among the postwar French philosophes of the existentialist and later postmodernist vintage. Heidegger's very flawed and sinister Brief is a masterpiece of misinterpretation and irresponsible reasoning.

### 4. IT WAS ONLY HEIDEGGER'S RESIDUAL HUMANISM THAT KEPT HIM FROM BEING A COMPLETE NAZI

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.141.

But this interpretation of Heidegger's "error" goes awry on an essential point: it is undoubtedly the case that Heidegger's residual reliance on the tradition of Western metaphysics, instead of abetting his allegiances to the National Awakening of 1933, prevented him from identifying tout court with the genocidal imperialism of National Socialism - for example, with aspects of Nazi doctrine such as "racial thinking." Thus, even at those precarious moments of the Rectoral Address where Heidegger is tempted to fully merge his thought with National Socialist ideology, it is his fidelity to the legacy of Western humanism - here, the category of "the Greek beginning" - that prevents him from losing touch with the authentic impulses of his early philosophy.

### 5. HEIDEGGER'S VIEW OF HUMANISM IS OVERLY NARROW AND TECHNOCRATIC

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.10.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, both forms of humanism - the Renaissance and the Enlightenment - melded into what I shall call an 'enlightened humanism' that united Renaissance aestheticism with Enlightenment rationalism, an outlook that pervaded the thinking of most socialists. The formidable prestige of enlightened humanism remained triumphant for a century, despite the assaults that were directed against it by mystics, romantics, and nationalists, all of whose ideas converged in the proto-fascistic volkisch movement of the fin de siècle. In the postwar era it is due in no small part to Martin Heidegger's anti-Enlightenment and anti-rational tract, 'A Letter on Humanism' (1947) that the word 'humanism' has acquired its present-day pejorative meaning as an amoral, narrowly anthropocentric and ugly technocratic outlook.

**HUMANISM cont'd****6. HEIDEGGER NAZISM INTIMATELY RELATED TO REJECTING OF UNIVERSALISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.106.

Heidegger will express a similar thought five months later, this time in a public context, when, in view of the upcoming plebiscite called by Hitler (ex post facto) on Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, he implores his student audience: "Let not doctrines and 'ideas' be the rules of your Being. The Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its law." According to Heidegger's logic, the greatness of the National Socialist movement is ultimately irreducible to a given set of intellectual precepts or "ideas." It is not so much "ideological," but existential, rooted in the authenticity of the Führer as an individual, historically existent Dasein. In this sense, Heidegger would have undoubtedly seconded Carl Schmitt's proclamation that "On this day [January 30, 1933] one can say that 'Hegel died'"—viz., the idea of the German Rechtsstaat as an entity based on universal principles and norms.

**7. NAZISM HAS MAINLY HISTORICAL, NOT PHILOSOPHICAL, ROOTS**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.12.

But do such arguments - which derive from Heidegger's critique of Western reason qua onto-theology - possess genuine explanatory value? Can Nazism really be explained as a result of the "completion of metaphysics" and the "forgetting of Being" - as Heidegger contends - or are there a series of more proximate, concrete, historico-empirical causes that better account for its success in Germany during the interwar years? If, as Lacoue-Labarthe suggests, National Socialism is indeed ultimately the product of a determinate philosophical paradigm - humanitas, the "ontology of subjectivity," the "will to will" - how then can one account for its flourishing in Germany as opposed to so many other nations where that paradigm has also been predominant? Finally, isn't a more telling characteristic of those nations that did voluntarily succumb to the lure of fascism (e.g., Italy, Spain) their concerted rejection of the values of "enlightened modernity" - above all, the political values of the tradition of civic humanism - rather than the perverse apotheosis of such values suggested by Lacoue-Labarthe?

## MODERNITY

### 1. HEIDEGGER SHOWS THAT THE TOTALIZING CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY IS ECOFASCIST

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.62.

Years ago, discovering that Heidegger offered a similar diagnosis of and alternative to modernity's various ills, I proposed that he be regarded as an intellectual antecedent of deep ecology. Only later did I fully understand that Heidegger's interpretation of modernity was in many (though not all) respects consistent with National Socialism, which condemned capitalism and communism alike for causing the destruction of "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*), "homeland and people" (*Heimat und Volk*). Having become aware of the reactionary aspect of Heidegger's thought, most deep ecologists have stopped citing him as an intellectual predecessor. Moreover, they have become much more cognizant of the fact that a totalizing critique of modernity could inadvertently lend support to incipient forms of ecofascism.

### 2. HEIDEGGER SAW MERCY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS PART OF "DEGENERATE MODERNITY"

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.114.

Heidegger supported the Nazi regime for years, never unequivocally apologized for such support, and never publicly expressed regret about the victims of Nazism. At least for a time, he approved of the harsh measures that the Nazis used to complete the "revolution." Mercy for the weak and concerns about human rights had to be abandoned as symptoms of a degenerate Christianity and modernity.

### 3. NAZI ORIENTATION WAS PREMODERN, NOT MODERNIST

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, BENEATH THE SURFACE, Eric Katz, et al., eds., 2000, p.173.

Though I myself once drew similar conclusions, I am skeptical of them today. For one thing, even though National Socialism made use of modern industry and technology, its social and cultural orientation were largely premodern. Although the Nazis may have been influenced by the "totalizing" tendencies that emerged in the French Revolution, they were clearly opposed to Enlightenment views of human progress, especially those views which emphasized the sanctity and freedom of each individual person.

### 4. HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY IS SIMPLY RECYCLED ROMANTICISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.166-7.

In the end, Heidegger's critique of modernity ends up by retracing the well-worn path already trod by the German romantics: "poetic transcendence" is abstractly counterposed to the ills of modern world consumed by the imperatives of technical reason. Thus, "To 'dwell poetically' means: to stand in the presence of the gods and to be involved in the proximity of the essence of things." This is Heidegger's solution to an age of (double) "affliction": an age that is caught between "the no-longer of the gods that have fled and the not-yet of the god to come."

### 5. HEIDEGGER WAS SEDUCED TO NAZISM BY ITS CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.105-6.

In part, many of the virtues of National Socialism were deduced by Heidegger ex negativo: they pertained more to what National Socialism was against than what it advocated in a positive sense. Among these components must be numbered its disdain for democratic institutions, political parties (it always strove to present itself as a "movement" rather than as a political party in the traditional sense), "intellectualism," bourgeois egalitarianism, aesthetic modernism, and "cosmopolitanism." In sum, the movement seemed in many ways to be the legitimate political heir to the conservative revolutionary critique of Western modernity with which Heidegger identified in so many crucial respects.

### 6. HEIDEGGER'S CULTURAL CRITIQUE LED TO NAZISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.74-5.

As Franzen observes, there is little doubt that a vitalist preference for danger, risk, and excess, coupled with a pronounced distaste for conditions of bourgeois "everydayness," may be counted as among the "most important ingredients of the mentality of National Socialism." Nor would it take Heidegger himself long to draw the logical political conclusions from this program of cultural critique.

**MORAL/ETHICAL APPEALS**

- HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGY IS DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE ITS LACKS SOCIAL OR MORAL CONTEXT

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology, THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY, 1990, p.56-7.  
Ironically, Heidegger was among the very few to acknowledge that Western philosophy had origins - indeed, a fecund arche - that are worthy of exegesis (although one may hesitate to follow all of his "woodpaths").  
"Ontology" wears a fearsome visage when it lacks a social and moral context, and the concept of "Being" has lost contact with reality by being subtly assimilated to subjective strategies of dealing with reality like Heidegger's.

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**SCIENCE**

- WE NEED TO DEVELOP A PROPER RELATIONSHIP TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.254.  
All the things that modern science and technology have created are to a greater or lesser extent indispensable. We cannot attack science and technology blindly, and try to do away with them. This, too, would be self-destructive. It is foolish to condemn science and technology as the work of the devil. Yet suddenly and unaware of what is really going on we find ourselves firmly shackled to our scientific and technical devices and realize that we have fallen into bondage to them. Yet, in Heidegger's view, we also can act otherwise. We can use scientific and technical devices properly and keep ourselves free from them in such a way that we may let go of them any time. We can affirm the unavoidable use of these devices and at the same time deny them the right to dominate us and lay waste our very own Being.

## TECHNOLOGY

### 1. TECHNOLOGICAL DOMINATION IS DUE TO A DEARTH OF REASON

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.167.

Heidegger's theory of technology ultimately collapses under the weight of its own self-imposed conceptual limitations. And thus, the intrinsic shortcomings of his theoretical framework prevent him from entertaining the prospect that the problem of technological domination owes more to the dearth of reason in the modern world rather than an excess. For in modern life, the parameters of rationality have been prematurely restricted: formal or instrumental reason has attained de facto hegemony; practical reason – reflection on ends -- has been effectively marginalized. Instead of the "overcoming" of reason recommended by Heidegger, what is needed is an expansion of reason's boundaries, such that the autonomous logic of instrumental rationality is subordinated to a rational reflection on ends.

### 2. HEIDEGGER MORAL OBTUSENESS UNDERMINES CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.168.

The ultimate proof of the bankruptcy of Heidegger's later thought -- including the critique of technology that represents an integral moment thereof -- may well be contained in a relatively obscure remark from his 1949 lecture series, "Insight into That Which Is." For it is this observation that perhaps best reveals the "leveling" tendencies inherent in his theory of the "destiny of Being," his incapacity for making rational sociohistorical judgments, as well as his insensitivity to the suffering of the victims of Nazism. According to Heidegger: Agriculture is today a motorized food industry, in essence the same as the manufacture of corpses in gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the blockade and starvation of countries, the same as the manufacture of atomic bombs. That Heidegger can in good conscience equate mechanized agriculture with the genocidal politics of the Nazis is not only a monumental non sequitur in historical reasoning; it suggests a fundamental incapacity for both moral and theoretical discernment. It is at this point that his thought fully regresses behind the standards of the healthy human understanding that he treated with unremitting condescension throughout his life. This judgment, far from representing a momentary lapse, is wholly consistent with the "leveling gaze" of the theory of Seinsgeschick in general, viz., its endemic propensity for equating incomparables. Ironically, here we see metaphysics at its purest: a theoretically conditioned insensitivity to the concrete specificity of the phenomena of contemporary historical life. Above all, Heidegger's observation proves shocking insofar as it signifies a calculated regression behind the received standards of twentieth-century morality, which have been "indexed" in relation to the unspeakable crimes of the Holocaust.

### 3. HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS THE SUPERIORITY OF NAZISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.144-5.

The attempt to explain the essence of National Socialism as an outcome of Seinsgeschichte, therefore, must be traced back to the afore mentioned strategy of denial. For by virtue of this strategy, Heidegger perversely succeeds in rendering the failings of other nations "equiprimordial" with the misdeeds of Nazism. For be they communist, democratic, or fascist, they, too, have equally succumbed to the afflictions of "technological nihilism" and the "forgetting of Being." As such, nonfascist regimes constitute no "essential" improvement over National Socialism - which, by virtue of its "confrontation between global technology and modern man," at least had the merit of staging a heroic struggle against nihilism. According to this contorted, Heideggerian vision of Heilsgeschichte (the history of salvation), Nazism's failure symbolizes the tragedy of modern humanity in general in its struggle with the realities of technological nihilism. In the end, the philosopher of Being leaves us with a perverse nostalgia for an essentialized version of Nazism - our century's last chance in the long struggle against nihilism.

### 4. HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY RESULTS IN ULTIMATE PASSIVITY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.142.

Even the critique of technology for which Heidegger's later work has become known remains essentially unserviceable for the ends of human emancipation. Instead, it proves a prescription for human inaction and passivity: in light of our fate of total Seinsverlassenheit, all we can do is await the "god" who will "save us" and initiate the "other beginning."

## **TECHNOLOGY cont'd**

### **5. HEIDEGGER TRIES TO BLAME TECHNOLOGY FOR THE SINS OF NAZI GERMANY**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM**, 1992, p.141.

Moreover, the attempt to redeem the later Heidegger at the expense of the early Heidegger runs the risk of playing into the philosopher's own complex strategy of intellectual subterfuge in the postwar period. And in this regard it is important to realize the paramount role played by the theory of Seinsgeschichte in Heidegger's own psychology of denial. For doesn't this doctrine - which instructs that all occurrences in the world of human affairs have their ultimate source in the activities of an unnameable, higher power - conveniently serve to deny all individual and collective historical responsibility? If it is true, as Heidegger claims in "Überwindung der Metaphysik," that it is Western metaphysics and the technological nihilism it promotes (das Gestell) that is responsible for the events of contemporary history, then what sense would it make to hold the German people accountable for the untold destruction of the Second World War - for millions of civilian deaths, the enslavement of entire peoples, and, to be sure, the Holocaust? If "error," which Heidegger ontologically ennobles as "Irrnis," is in truth produced by the unpredictable "seedings" of Being, then one would be foolish to await a word of contrition from the philosopher himself. For the flipside of Heidegger's later abandonment of a "philosophy of the subject" is a renunciation of the category of personal responsibility in toto. Thus, Heidegger's own "error" has also been "sent" by Being.

### **6. HEIDEGGER'S PERSPECTIVE OFFERS NO GROUNDS FOR OPPOSING THE HOLOCAUST**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, **RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY**, 1995, p.170. Indeed, technophobia, followed to its logical and crudely primitivistic conclusions, finally devolves into a dark reactionism - and a paralyzing quietism. For if our confrontation with civilization turns on passivity before a 'disclosing of Being', a mere 'dwelling' on the earth, and a letting things be', to use Heidegger's verbiage - much of which has slipped into deep ecology's vocabulary as well - the choice between supporting barbarism and enlightened humanism has no ethical foundations to sustain it. Freed of values grounded in objectivity, we are lost in a quasireligious antihumanism, a spirituality that can with the same equanimity hear the cry of a bird and ignore the anguish of six million once-living people who were put to death by the National Socialist state.

### **7. HEIDEGGER USED HIS CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY TO RATIONALIZE THE HOLOCAUST**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, **RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY**, 1995, p.170. Considering the time, the place, and the abstract way in which Heidegger treated humanity's 'Fall' into technological 'inauthenticity' - a 'Fall' that he, like Ellul, regarded as inevitable, albeit a metaphysical, nightmare - it is not hard to see why he could trivialize the Holocaust, when he deigned to notice it at all, as part of a techno-industrial 'condition'. 'Agriculture is now a motorized (motorisierte) food industry, in essence the same as the manufacturing of corpses in the gas chambers and extermination camps,' he coldly observed, 'the same as the blockade and starvation of the countryside, the same as the production of the hydrogen bombs.' In placing the industrial means by which many Jews were killed before the ideological ends that guided their Nazi exterminators, Heidegger essentially displaces the barbarism of a specific state apparatus, of which he was a part, by the technical proficiency he can attribute to the world at large! These immensely revealing offhanded remarks, drawn from a speech he gave in Bremen in 1949, are beneath contempt. But they point to a way of thinking that gave an autonomy to technique that has fearful moral consequences which we are living with these days in the name of the sacred, a phraseology, that Heidegger would find very congenial were he alive today.

### **8. HEIDEGGER BELIEVES WE CAN COME TO ABIDE WITH TECHNOLOGY**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, **TIMELY MEDITATIONS**, 1995, p.216. Heidegger's description of the "wonderfully simple and relaxed" way we may come to abide with technology recalls, and reverses, Max Weber's gloomy assessment may, pace Weber, learn to wear technology "like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." Learning this comportment allows us to escape fate's decree that "the cloak should become an iron cage." Many theorists of technology, such as Jacques Ellul, follow Weber's lead in yielding to pessimism and cynicism. This attitude follows necessarily from their philosophic assumptions. Not unlike Heidegger, Ellul defines technology (or rather technique) as the pursuit of "absolute efficiency." Ellul also proposes that the only hope of escape from the clutches of technology comes from "an increasing number of people" who are determined to "assert their freedom." However, for Ellul, as for Weber, freedom remains a metaphysical concept tied to subjectivity and control. Hence the hopelessness of Ellul's and Weber's prognosis. Neither the pessimism or cynicism of the naysayers nor the heroic self-assertion or complacency of the yeasayers is called for. We may say both "yes" and "no" to technology.

**TECHNOLOGY cont'd****9. MODERN TECHNOLOGY IS ALSO A MANIFESTATION OF BEING**

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxviii.

Modern technology, like ancient techne, from which it springs - and like science and metaphysics, which are essentially one with it - is a mode of revealing. Being, through its manner of ruling in all that is, is manifesting itself within it. That which has come to fruition in Descartes and in all of us, his modern successors, not only took its rise long before in a temporal sense. It also took its rise long in advance from beyond man (QT 14). For in its fulfillment Heidegger sees the holdingsway of a "destining" or "sending forth" of Being, that has come upon man and molded him and his world (QT 24).

**10. HEIDEGGER DOESN'T CALL FOR TECHNOLOGY TO BE DONE AWAY WITH**

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxxv.

In this twofoldness of Enframing as danger and saving power, and not in any merely human effort, lies the possibility that technology may be overcome. This does not mean that technology will be done away with. It means, rather, that technology will be surmounted from within itself, in such a way as to be restored to and fulfilled in its own essence. The unconcealment, the truth, concealed in the rule of technology will flash forth in that very concealing. Being will reveal itself in the very ongoing of technology, precisely in that Bashing. But not without man. For man is needed for this as for every revealing of Being. Man must come to that place where, through language, through thinking, this revealing may come to pass. Yet man cannot bring it about, and he cannot know when it will take place.

**11. HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY INCLINED HIM TOWARDS NAZISM**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, HEIDEGGER'S CONFRONTATION WITH MODERNITY, 1990, p.xvii.

First, the recent disclosures about the nature and extent of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism led me to examine critically the interpretation of that episode offered by Heidegger and his defenders, who claimed that it was a brief and unfortunate episode unrelated to his thinking. In fact, however, Heidegger's decision to support National Socialism was deeply related to his political and philosophical understanding of Germany's situation in the early twentieth century. He did not regard himself as an "ordinary" reactionary, however, nor later as an "ordinary" Nazi, contending that such people were incapable of understanding the metaphysical issues involved in the question of modern technology. Rather, he believed that only a gifted and high-minded thinker could comprehend the metaphysical origins of the deadly "symptoms" afflicting Germany.

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT NOT ENVIRONMENTALLY BENIGN**

### **1. HEIDEGGER MAINTAINS A JUSTIFICATION FOR HUMAN DOMINATION OF NATURE**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.201. Deep ecologists are sometimes suspicious of Heidegger's claims about the uniqueness of humanity's capacity for understanding being, for Western society has always justified its domination of nature by portraying it as inferior to what is "uniquely" human: soul, rationality, spirit, language. Such suspicions are fueled by Heidegger's claim that there is something worse than the destruction of all life on Earth by nuclear war.

### **2. HEIDEGGER MAINTAINS HUMAN EXCEPTIONALISM**

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.185. Heidegger, as Zimmerman notes, also supports a nonanthropocentric approach to the earth and the world. This is absolutely true, and has obvious ecological merit. But Heidegger does not suggest that we replace anthropocentrism with biocentrism. Biocentrism, intrinsic to most deep-ecological perspectives, relegates the human species to the same status as all other organisms." Despite his fervent attack on subjectivism and humanism, Heidegger firmly maintains human exceptionalism. He maintains this exceptionalism because of human being's unique disclosive capacities; "it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence" (ID 31 - 32; see also BT 28, 35). Animals, Heidegger writes, cannot engage in the "work" - philosophical, artistic, or political - in which the disclosure of Being in thought, word, or deed occurs. And this incapacity of beasts arises for one simple reason: "they lack freedom" (PT 109). Our capacity for disclosive freedom makes our sojourn here on earth exceptional, however brief this sojourn is in cosmic or evolutionary terms.

## "RELEASEMENT" UNDESIRABLE

### 1. EMPHASIS ON RELEASEMENT RESULTS IN ULTIMATE PASSIVITY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.147.

As we suggested earlier, the essential thinking of the later Heidegger promotes an "eclipse of practical reason." For his post-Kehre reformulation of the relation between Being and Dasein rebels so fervently against the voluntarist dimension of his own earlier thinking that the very concept of "meaningful human action" is seemingly rendered null and void. If the early Heidegger attempted to rally Dasein to "decisiveness" (Entschlossenheit), the thought of the later Heidegger appears at times to be a summary justification of human passivity and inaction (Gelassenheit) - so prejudicially is the balance between Sein and Mensch struck in favor of the former term. Thus, in the later Heidegger, the campaign against practical reason develops along a two-fold front: not only is the concept of Being grossly inflated, but the powers of human reason and will are correspondingly devalued.

### 2. RELEASEMENT COULD DEGENERATE INTO PASSIVITY

Leslie Paul Thiele, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida, TIMELY MEDITATIONS, 1995, p.91. I am not suggesting that disclosive freedom is without its own dangers. Negative liberty is apt to degenerate into license and the disintegration of community; positive liberty into tyranny and totalitarian control; postmodern liberty into apathy and despair in the face of an inescapable and normalizing web of power, or alternatively into the anarchic self-aggrandizement of one who, in the face of this power, embraces an unbounded self-creation. Disclosive freedom, no doubt, has its own susceptibilities and pathologies. Openness to the mystery of Being might degenerate into fatalism, and releasement toward things might deteriorate into passivity.

### 3. HEIDEGGER CULTIVATES DEBILITATING PASSIVITY

Alan Megill, University of Iowa, PROPHETS OF EXTREMITY, 1985, p.180.

Heidegger inculcates a quietism. This quietism is dangerous: those who think that the forces of technology lie utterly beyond human control are likely to find that this is in fact the case; those who believe that only a god can save them will likely need such salvation.

### 4. HEIDEGGER'S RADICAL PASSIVITY LEADS TO POLITICAL IMPOTENCE

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.194-5.

This conviction leads in Heidegger to a radical passivity, to the notion that we ought to let beings be. Heidegger's position has political implications, though it denies its own political nature, for it amounts to nothing less than an acceptance – indeed, a confirmation -- of the existing social and political order.

### 5. "LETTING BE" ENSURES SOCIAL STAGNATION

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.169.

Basically, this interpretation of a technological interrelationship reflects a regression - socially and psychologically as well as metaphysically - into quietism. Heidegger advances a message of passivity or passivity conceived as a human activity, an endeavor to let things be and 'disclose' themselves.

### 6. HEIDEGGER FAILED TO "LET THINGS BE"

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.169-70. 'Letting things be' would be little more than a trite Taoist and Buddhist precept were it not that Heidegger as a National Socialist became all too ideologically engaged, rather than 'letting things be', when he was busily undoing 'intellectualism,' democracy, and technological intervention into the 'world'.

## "RELEASEMENT" UNDESIRABLE cont'd

### 7. RELEASEMENT ALWAYS ALSO ENTAILS CONCEALMENT

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.119.

"Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be," observes Heidegger, in an initial formulation of his later philosophical doctrine of Gelassenheit or "releasement." This greater philosophical willingness (a type of philosophical Ent-schlossenheit or "un-closedness") to "let beings be the beings they are" presumably yields greater fidelity to the "Being of beings" as such. It thus represents a first significant step toward a solution to the Seinsfrage; whereas in the case of philosophical thought from Plato onward, the Being of beings was essentially covered up or concealed by the distortional influence of various philosophical "first principles": the "idea," the "cogito," "substance," "monad," "the transcendental subject," "spirit," etc. However (and what follows constitutes a crucial admission by Heidegger), insofar as letting beings be always lets beings be in a specific way - that is, because letting be is itself always perspectival or selective - its very manner or disclosing beings also conceals them. Thus, every act of unconcealment is simultaneously an act of concealment. Or as Heidegger himself expresses this thought: "Precisely because letting be always lets beings be in a particular comportment which relates to them and thus discloses them, it conceals beings as a whole."

### 8. IT'S NECESSARY TO GO BEYOND HEIDEGGER'S "LETTING BE"

George Kateb, political theorist, Princeton, THE INNER OCEAN, 1992, p.149.

For nuclear readers of Heidegger, letting things be is only auxiliary to becoming protectively attached to existence as such. An enlarged receptivity that is not merely passive attaches us to many more particulars than we customarily notice, and we may rejoice in what we allow ourselves to take in, in a poetically active receptivity. Yet, whatever Nietzsche or Heidegger may say, the horror and the obscenity crowd in again and shove themselves forward; their existence cannot be denied or made glamorous. Existence is not confined to the beautiful. Condemnatory judgments will inevitably be made. Feelings of disgust and horror must shake the soul. But just because the earth is inessential, contingent, not necessary, just because there could have been earthly nothingness - to leave aside the philosophically disputable idea of literal universal nothingness - one must finally attach oneself to earthly existence as it is, whatever it is, and act to preserve it, not just because of its beauty and in spite of its suffering and wickedness, just as we are not allowed to jeopardize it for the sake of any value or purpose that arises within it.

### 9. RELEASEMENT UNDERMINES MEANINGFUL HUMAN ACTION

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.154-5.

Once again following the lead of Jaspers, it would thus seem entirely correct to characterize the philosophy of the later Heidegger as a "philosophy of heteronomy." For its chief concern seems to be that of proving that human existence is a condition of perpetual ontological bondage to the unpredictable destining of the powers of Being. Yet, as a philosophy of heteronomy the theory of Seinsgeschick threatens to turn the notion of "meaningful human action" itself into a non sequitur. For if our projects are conditioned a priori by the random twists and turns of the "destining of Being," there would no longer be even a minimal causal relation between our intentions and the outcome of our worldly undertakings. As heteronomously "fated," our actions would be bereft of the slightest degree of coherence and intelligibility. It is indeed at this point that Heidegger's antisubjectivism reveals its essentially self-defeating character: for it seems that the philosophical cure (antihumanism, "openness to the mystery," "Gelassenheit") proves worse than the disease ("metaphysical thinking," "the will to will," etc.).

**HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGY IS UNINSIGHTFUL****1. HEIDEGGER INAPPROPRIATELY REJECTS THE TRUE CONCERN OF ONTOLOGY**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.187. Heidegger professed to break, root and branch, with what he took to be 2,500 years of Western philosophical thought - that is to say, in fact, with traditional ontology itself. Far from producing a new ontology, he subverted ontology by using traditional categories like 'Being' and 'Time' to radically redefine its appropriate concerns. From Plato's time onward, Heidegger contended, ontology had steadily focused on an elaboration of the ultimate foundations of temporal phenomena, be those foundations Platonic 'forms', Aristotelian substance, the Cartesian subject, materialism's matter, or contemporary science's energy. Heidegger's complaint, let me emphasize, is not worth a pfennig as criticism, for these traditional foci were and still should be the real concerns of ontology, regardless of whether one agrees with a specific ontological view such as Plato's or Descartes's.

**2. HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGY IS SIMPLY METAPHYSICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.187. In his Being and Time (1927), the work that made his reputation in Germany and abroad and that he dedicated to Husserl 'in friendship and admiration', Heidegger's jargon freights psychological notions with an 'ontological' perspective that only superficially resembles ontology as an inquiry into the nature of reality. In fact, Heidegger essentially intellectualized his regional provincialism and reactionism into a metaphysical psychology- much more than a philosophy - and made intellectual history by transforming moods and sentiments into categories.

## **HEIDEGGER EXAGGERATES "BEING"**

### **1. FOCUS ON BEING REVEALS A HATRED OF THE HUMAN**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM**, 1992, p.145-6.

And in a similar spirit, Sartre will inquire: "How can we ground praxis, if we treat it as nothing more than the inessential moment of a radically non-human process? How can it be presented as a real material totalisation if the whole of Being is totalised through it?.... But any philosophy which subordinates the human to what is Other than man, whether it be an existentialist or Marxist idealism, has hatred of man as both its basis and its consequence."

### **2. FOCUS ON BEING REVEALS A SCORN FOR THE HUMAN**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM**, 1992, p.145.

Both Gorz and Sartre correctly recognized the dangers of the "history of Being" as a philosophy of heteronomy. Both realized that such a doctrine threatens to suppress the conceptual parameters through which alone freedom can be thought. Nor can such a theory be of much value for addressing the problem of the intelligibility of history. Ironically, both thinkers learned about the perils of a philosophical hypostatization of Being via their respective encounters with "Marxist scholasticism": that is, with Soviet Marxism qua "diamat." As such, they were acutely aware of the ethico-political repercussions of a philosophical doctrine in which human existence is viewed as a function of a primordial ontological destiny - be it the destiny of "matter" or the destiny of "Being." Both realized that the basic impulse guiding such a doctrine could only be a hidden scorn for things human. Here, both the inverted idealism of the "dialectics of nature" and Heidegger's exaltation of Being qua absolute *transcendens* - to be sure, unlikely bedfellows - betrayed a similar longing: a premodern desire to have quit with the project of human autonomy, the "democratic invention," the "self-institution of society."

### **3. THE EMPHASIS ON BEING RESULTS IN HISTORICAL MYSTIFICATION**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, **THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM**, 1992, p.142.

I would like to suggest that the bankruptcy of Heidegger's later philosophical program - ironically, that phase which his French defenders peculiarly deem most worthy of redemption - lies precisely in its philosophically overdetermined capacity for historical mystification: thus, from the standpoint of "the history of Being" questions of historical intelligibility cannot be raised. And from this perspective, it seems that the later philosophy of Being, instead of representing a triumphant "overcoming" ("Überwindung") of his early philosophy of existence, in truth constitutes a distinct regression.

### **4. LOSS OF BEING ISN'T KEY TO CONTEMPORARY ALIENATION**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology, **THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY**, 1990, p.128.

Today, what we misname "home" is not a place, but a residence that often is as transient as the cheap commodities that circulate through our lives and like the jobs we tentatively occupy as rungs in the climb up the corporate ladder. The traditional ecological home to which I have alluded was largely created by woman - though not without the oppressions and insults that man inflicted on her. There she played the indispensable role of giving it life, continuity, and care. If we are homeless, today, it is less because we have lost our "openness" to "Being" as Heidegger might say, than because we have degraded woman and home, reducing her to a "homemaker" and reducing home to a plastic ranch-house in a sanitized suburb.

### **5. HEIDEGGER'S PURSUIT OF BEING NEGLECTS ETHICAL DUTY TOWARD OTHERS**

J.G. Merquior, King's College, London, **FROM PRAGUE TO PARIS**, 1986, p.225.

According to Levinas, It was not enough to condemn, like Heidegger, the ontological oblivion of technological civilization: one should also stop looking for being as such, for every ontology brings about a tyranny of sameness; all theory of being is violent, both because it is 'theory' and because it deals with 'being', with the One as a mask of the Same. The only way to save a true respect for the other(s) is to insist on ethics, the realm of duty towards others, instead of pursuing ontology-a point missed by Heidegger because, with his 'pagan' peasant roots, he remained ensnared in the cautious, possessive love for sameness characteristic of agrarian culture, and therefore had no grasp of the value of infinite alterity so strong in Jewish piety and in the Jew's long experience of exile and outsidership.

**HEIDEGGER EXAGGERATES "BEING" cont'd****6. THE EMPHASIS ON BEING LEADS TO TOTAL PASSIVITY**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.147.

As we suggested earlier, the essential thinking of the later Heidegger promotes an "eclipse of practical reason." For his post-Kehre reformulation of the relation between Being and Dasein rebels so fervently against the voluntarist dimension of his own earlier thinking that the very concept of "meaningful human action" is seemingly rendered null and void. If the early Heidegger attempted to rally Dasein to "decisiveness" (*Entschlossenheit*), the thought of the later Heidegger appears at times to be a summary justification of human passivity and inaction (*Gelassenheit*)—so prejudicially is the balance between Sein and Mensch struck in favor of the former term.

**7. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK MEANINGFULLY ABOUT BEING**

Stanley Rosen, Penn State philosopher, *NIHILISM*, 1969, p.45.

I have been arguing that ontological speech, in the sense attributed to it by those who follow Heidegger's distinction between the ontological and ontic, is in fact silence. Ontologists of this type wish to talk about Being as distinct from beings, and speech will simply not permit this. If this is a defect of speech, and the significance of speech is in the deepest and final sense relative to silence, then there is no reason for what we say or for whether we speak at all, other than the mere fact, although there is equally no reason to keep silent. The result is absurdism or nihilism. Therefore no reason can be given which would justify our falling into such desperate straits. Every fundamental ontological speech of the type in question is not just self-refuting but self-canceling. It is exactly as if the fundamental ontologist had never spoken (except, unfortunately, for the practical effects of his speech).

## **ONTOLOGICAL FOCUS UNDESIRABLE**

### **1. HEIDEGGER'S PRIORITY OF ONTOLOGICAL OVER ETHICAL IS LINKED TO HIS NAZISM**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.109-10.

This idea has been criticized by Emmanuel Levinas, who says that ontology forces the Other to conform to the identity posited by the subject, whereas ethics demands that I conform or accede to the ethical demands of the Other. For Heidegger, ontology meant the study of humanity's openness for the self-manifesting of things, but at times Levinas seems to define ontology in a way that corresponds to what Heidegger meant by metaphysics – an anthropocentric, subjectivistic ways of understanding things. Yet Levinas's concern with ethics and his mistrust for Heidegger's ontology is important when we recall the grim political consequences of Heidegger's belief that National Socialism was "a complete transformation of our German Dasein," a revolutionary ontological shift, which -- renouncing the ethical limits of democratic modernity, Judaism, and Christianity -- would establish a new ethos to save Germany from modernity.

### **2. HEIDEGGER SAW NAZISM AS EMBODYING THE NEEDED ONTOLOGICAL SHIFT**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.113-14.

By 1932, Heidegger concluded that Germany could be saved from Bolshevism only by Adolf Hitler, who knew the shortcomings of Enlightenment modernity, including capitalism, communism, democracy, liberalism, rationalism, commercialism, and cosmopolitanism; who appreciated the enduring relationship between a Volk and its soil; who understood the hardness, ruthlessness, and sacrifice required of a Volk resolved to make a new beginning out of the ashes of defeat. By submitting to Hitler's leadership, Germans would supposedly align themselves with the ontological shift needed to save the spirit of the West and to preserve nature from devastation. This shift was not to be understood as a "progressive" moment, but rather as tapping into the elemental ontological power that made possible the creation of a new world in which things could show themselves at least momentarily in their richness, splendor, and danger.

### **3. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IS LINKED TO HIS BELIEF IN ONTOLOGICAL DECLINE**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, BENEATH THE SURFACE, Eric Katz, et al., eds., 2000, p.178.

The political problems with his thought can be traced to two major factors: first, his linguistic racism and nationalism; second, his view that Western history involves ontological degeneration, which ends in the materialism and naturalism that are essential to all modern political ideologies. During the past decade, I have looked for a way of understanding human existence that, on the one hand, avoids nationalism and racism, but that retains what is valid about Heidegger's idea of the transcendent dimension of human existence and nature; and, on the other hand, affirms the progressive dimension of modernity, but that acknowledges its destructive attitude toward the natural world and its dissociative attitude toward the human body, emotions, and the female.

### **4. HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGICAL EMPHASIS LED HIM TO NEGLECT THE ETHICAL**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.73-4.

Regrettably, as John D. Caputo has observed, Heidegger neglected to take seriously enough the Jewish and Christian claim that human existence, by dint of its association with and dependence on the transcendent, also must take upon itself the enormous moral responsibility of living according to a law that runs counter to natural human inclinations. Enthralled by the Greek fascination with the aesthetic, that is, with encouraging and encountering the manifestness of things, Heidegger neglected the Jewish and Christian preoccupation with the moral, that is, with being responsible for the ontical well-being of the Other. Resolving to do the "hard" and "dangerous" things needed to let being reveal itself anew, the Nazi Heidegger turned a blind eye to the suffering of those who were crushed in this brutal process.

**ONTOLOGICAL FOCUS UNDESIRABLE cont'd****5. HEIDEGGER'S PREFERENCE FOR ONTOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OVER SURVIVAL SHOWS HIS ANTHROPOCENTRISM**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, MINDING NATURE: THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ECOLOGY, David Macauley, ed., 1996, p.74.

We may approach the issue of what Heidegger may teach today's radical environmentalists by examining an issue about which they and Heidegger would profoundly disagree. Heidegger claimed that there is a greater danger than the destruction of all life on earth by nuclear war. For radical environmentalists, it is hard to imagine anything more dangerous than the total destruction of the biosphere! Heidegger argued, however, that worse than such annihilation would be the totally technologized world in which material "happiness" for everyone is achieved, but in which humanity would be left with a radically constricted capacity for encountering the being of entities. This apparently exorbitant claim may be partially mitigated by the following consideration. If human existence lost all relationship to transcendent being, entities could no longer show themselves at all, and in this sense would no longer "be." Who needs nuclear war, Heidegger asked rhetorically, if entities have already ceased to be? For many environmentalists, such a question reveals the extent to which Heidegger remained part of the human-centered tradition that he wanted to overcome. By estimating so highly human Dasein's contribution to the manifesting of things, Heidegger may well have underestimated the contribution made by many other forms of life, for which the extinction of humankind's ontological awareness would be far preferable to their own extinction in nuclear war!

**6. VIEWING ESTRANGEMENT FROM BEING AS WORSE THAN NUCLEAR WAR IGNORES THE INTERESTS OF NON-HUMAN NATURE**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, CONTESTING EARTH'S FUTURE, 1994, p.120.

Deep ecologists might agree that a world of material human comfort purchased at the price of everything wild would not be a world worth living in, for in killing wild nature, people would be as good as dead. But most of them could not agree that the loss of humanity's relation to being would be worse than nuclear omnicide, for it is wrong to suppose that the lives of millions of extinct and unknown species are somehow lessened because they were never "disclosed" by humanity.

## **HEIDEGGER'S DISCOURSE FLAWED**

### **1. HEIDEGGER USES OBSCURE LANGUAGE TO MASK HIS CONFUSION**

Walter Kaufmann, Princeton philosopher, FROM SHAKESPEARE TO EXISTENTIALISM, 1980, p.339.  
 "Language is the house of Being," says Heidegger; but in truth his language is the house in which he hides, and his Gothic terminology is like a row of towers that frightens us away while it gives him a feeling of security. His philosophy is like a castle that, though certainly not beautiful, stands out from a generally dull landscape and catches the eye. We should not dream of settling down beneath it to spend our lives, like Kafka's K., in futile efforts to penetrate the mysteries that, more often than not, are expressions of confusion rather than profundity.

### **2. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHER JARGON REVEALS HIS AUTHORITARIANISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.20.

For the "mimesis of fate" promoted by Heidegger's imperious and presumptive use of philosophical terminology reveals the latently authoritarian tendencies of his thought in general. Or, as Sollner concludes, "the authoritarian sense or non-sense of Heideggerian philosophy lies in its jargon and its linguistic gestures."

### **3. HEIDEGGER'S CATEGORIES ARE BASED ON LINGUISTIC CONFUSIONS**

A.J. Ayer, Professor of Philosophy, University College, London, LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC, 1946, p.43-4.

In general, the postulation of real non-existent entities results from the superstition, just now referred to, that, to every word or phrase that can be the grammatical subject of a sentence, there must somewhere be a real entity corresponding. For as there is no place in the empirical world for many of these "entities," a special non-empirical world is invoked to house them. To this error must be attributed, not only the utterances of a Heidegger, who bases his metaphysics on the assumption that "Nothing" is a name which is used to denote something peculiarly mysterious, but also the prevalence of such problems as those concerning the reality of propositions and universals whose senselessness, though less obvious, is no less complete.

### **4. TURN - HEIDEGGER'S DISCOURSE WAS BANKRUPT**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.189. It is necessary to tear off Heidegger's linguistic mask - one that hides the 'authentic' face of postmodernism generally - if we are to get to the essentials of the Heidegger-Derrida connection. The ease with which Heidegger's language permits him to engage in circular reasoning; his typically mystical recourse to 'silence' as the mode of discourse for 'conscience'; his contradictory emphasis on personalism on the one hand and the subordination of individual inclinations to the collective 'destiny' of the 'Volk', on the other - all can be examined only in a book-length account of Heideggerian thought.

## **RETHINKING FAILS**

### **- HEIDEGGER'S RETHINKING LEADS TO NOWHERE**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.53.

According to the formidable Heidegger interpretation set forth by Reiner Schurmann, the antinormativism of fundamental ontology is in truth an antifoundationalism: it represents a thoroughgoing assault against philosophical "essentialism," i.e., against all metaphysical doctrines in which fixed, eternally valid meanings are proclaimed. In Schurmann's view, Heidegger understands Being as something inherently "polyvalent" which must be thought of as an "ever-new event." Heidegger's significance as an ethical thinker thus lies in the fact that he devalues the "teleological model of action." This means that action (and by implication, politics) can have no final goal or purpose: the Heideggerian Holzwege are "paths that lead nowhere."

**HEIDEGGER ANTI-DEMOCRATIC****1. HEIDEGGER REJECTED DEMOCRACY**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.125.

"Nowadays, a little too much fuss is made over the Greek polis," remarks Heidegger; that is, the Greek polis as the historical origin of the democratic idea. Instead, all Heidegger can find to admire about the polis as a political entity is the primacy of "rank and domination," the traces of that same Fuhrerprinzip he wishes to see transposed to the modern political context.

**2. HEIDEGGER EXTOLLED A NEW RULING CLASS**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.127.

Consequently, for Heidegger, "The authentic idea of the state must necessarily be antiliberal, requiring . . . a new ruling caste which can lay the foundations for the coming of a new kind of man, the superman." Even then, of course, there was the real danger that "the many" would remain immobilized in their inauthentic torpor, failing to recognize the prospects for historical greatness awaiting them. Thus, the Fuhrerprinzip, as it manifested itself in Heidegger's own philosophical theory, far from being an expendable, subaltern component, took on the role of a sine qua non, the indispensable key to the authentic unfolding of history as the "history of Being."

**3. HEIDEGGER'S REJECTION OF DEMOCRACY IS BRAZENLY ELITIST**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.46.

The political philosophical implications of this theory are as unequivocal as they are distasteful to a democratic sensibility. On the basis of the philosophical anthropology outlined by Heidegger, the modern conception of popular sovereignty becomes a sheer non sequitur: for those who dwell in the public sphere of everydayness are viewed as essentially incapable of self-rule. Instead, the only viable political philosophy that follows from this standpoint would be brazenly elitist: since the majority of citizens remain incapable of leading meaningful lives when left to their own devices, their only hope for "redemption" lies in the imposition of a "higher spiritual mission" from above. Indeed, this was the explicit political conclusion drawn by Heidegger in 1933. In this way, Heidegger's political thought moves precariously in the direction of the "Fuhrerprinzip" or "leadership principle."

**4. HEIDEGGER'S ANTIMODERNISM MADE HIM ANTIDEMOCRATIC**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane University, BENEATH THE SURFACE, Eric Katz, et al., eds., 2000, p.182.

Some proponents of Earth-based religiosity, like many other people faced with the trials and tribulations of modern life, yearn for a simplified tribal life in closer proximity to the land. Wilber, however, cautions against giving in to such yearnings, since doing so would encourage the regression to prepersonal modes of awareness and the rise of corresponding authoritarian social structures that would undermine the positive achievements of modernity, including individuated personhood and constitutional democracy. Heidegger was antimodern in being antidemocratic and in denying a developmental view of history; moreover, he was neopagan in rejecting the biblical tradition and in calling for the arrival of new gods to generate a new world to replace the nonworld of technological modernity. Nevertheless, in calling for the Germans to repeat ancient Greece's generation of a world, he was asking them to prepare for a new encounter with the transcendent, that is, with the being of entities that transcends even the gods.

## **HEIDEGGER WAS AN AUTHORITARIAN**

### **1. HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT IS ESSENTIALLY AUTHORITARIAN**

Walter Kaufmann, Princeton philosopher, *FROM SHAKESPEARE TO EXISTENTIALISM*, 1980, p.360. Although Heidegger suggests at the end of the Introduction that he is condemned to endure in perplexity and that this is the human condition in our time he really ends by "proving" this point with a quotation from Holderlin. It may be objected that the final quotation is merely a pleasant stylistic device. But does Heidegger ever entertain the possibility that Holderlin or Sophocles, Heraclitus or Parmenides might be mistaken about anything? His attitude toward these men is invariably one of humility before authority. Any criticism of the pre-Socratics is out of the question. It is assumed that they, living so near the beginning of Western thought, knew what we do not know and would like to know. When Heidegger explores the nature of man, he gives us a translation of the wonderful second chorus from Sophocles' *Antigone* and then interprets it. He proceeds exactly like a theologian who cites Scripture.

### **2. HEIDEGGER WAS AN INTELLECTUAL AUTHORITARIAN**

Walter Kaufmann, Princeton philosopher, *DISCOVERING THE MIND: NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER, AND BUBER*, 1980, p.189.

Heidegger's thinking is deeply authoritarian. His insistence that he was engaged in existential ontology or fundamental ontology as well as the proliferation of strange labels helped to immunize his discourse against the obvious charge that it was absurdly dogmatic and apodictic. Any appeal to evidence or rival observations and interpretations was discounted in advance. So was empirical research as a matter of principle. All this is as different from Nietzsche as can be and, of course, also from Goethe. Heidegger, like Kant, did not admit hypotheses into philosophy, demanded certainty, and purchased the semblance of it through extreme obscurity.

### **3. HEIDEGGER GLORIFIED VIOLENCE**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.126.

Thus, in Heidegger's metaphysical schema, violence takes on the character of an ontological imperative; it is an essential means possessed by the Führer elite to combat the forces of everydayness and routine, whose predominance prevents the posing of the question of Being. However, what comes through unmistakably in this philosophical glorification of violence are the patent affinities between Heidegger's *Gewalt-tatige*-the "shock-troops of Being," as it were—and the National Socialist rhetoric of *Sturm und Kampf*. Whatever its intrinsic philosophical merit, this theory of a creative elite who are "apolis" and "without statute" cannot help but strike one as a fanciful but crude, post festum justification of the Nazi Führerprinzip and its train of illegalities. As devoid of any underlying moral or legal restraints, Heidegger's glorified image of a Führerstaat zealously underwrites the totalitarian claims of the ruling elite. The elevated metaphysical terms of discussion cannot mask the ease with which his approach lends itself to abuse: despite Heidegger's qualification that "rulers alone" must rule, the theory represents carte blanche for authoritarian licentiousness.

### **4. HEIDEGGER'S EXISTENTIALISM VENERATES POWER**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.108-9.

Toward the end of a long discussion of the intellectual origins of Nazi imperialist geopolitical doctrines, Neumann offers the following observations: What is left as justification for the [Grossdeutsche] Reich? Not racism, not the idea of the Holy Roman Empire, and certainly not some democratic nonsense like popular sovereignty or self-determination. Only the Reich itself remains. It is its own justification. The philosophical roots of the argument are to be found in the existential philosophy of Heidegger. Transferred to the realm of politics, existentialism argues that power and might are true: power is a sufficient theoretical base for more power. Germany lies in the center, it is well on its way toward becoming the mightiest state. Therefore, it is justified in building the new order. An acute critic has remarked about [Christoph] Steding [author of the 1938 work, *The Reich and the Sickness of European Culture*]: "From the remains of what, with Heidegger, was still an effective transcendental solipsism, his pupil constructs a national solipsism."

## HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT TOTALITARIAN

### 1. HEIDEGGER'S POLITICAL VIEWS DESTROY CHECKS ON TOTALITARIANISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.128-9.

According to a charitable reading of Heidegger's doctrine of Sernspolitik -- his theory of the integral interrelationship between creators, the yolk, and the state as viewed from the standpoint of the history of Being -- the philosopher is merely advocating a theory of national self-determination to be based on the "higher powers" of poetry, philosophy, and statesmanship; a doctrine that, thus understood, is essentially unobjectionable. In truth, however, the historical and conceptual bases of Heidegger's theory are decidedly more complex. They are inseparable from his acceptance of the (proto-fascistic) conservative revolutionary critique of modernity, including the imperialist vision of Germany as "master of Mitteleuropa"; from a systematic devaluation of all conceivable institutional checks vis-a-vis the eventuality of totalitarian state power; and from a glorification of the ideals of authority, hierarchy, and rank that in its essentials is indistinguishable from the Nazi Führerprinzip itself. When these systematic aspects of his philosophical theory are in turn viewed against the background of the philosopher's own numerous observations and asides in support of Germany's National Revolutionary course in the 1930s, the portrait of the man and the thinker that emerges is far from innocent. Philosophy and politics are not related in a contingent or nonessential fashion. Instead, as our theoretical reconstruction has attempted to show, they exist as communicating vessels.

### 2. HEIDEGGER MADE POLITICS TOTALITARIAN BY MAKING IT METAPHYSICAL

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.117.

Though we may readily accept and even welcome Heidegger's claim that works of art reveal the truth or essence of beings ("The work [of art] . . . is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to be present at any given time," observes Heidegger; "it is, on the contrary, the reproduction of the thing's general essence"), we must question the attempt to transpose aesthetico-metaphysical criteria to the realm of political life proper. Is it in point of fact meaningful to speak of the "unveiling of truth" as the *raison d'être* of politics in the same way one can say this of a work of art or a philosophical work? Is not politics rather a nonmetaphysical sphere of human interaction, in which the content of collective human projects, institutions, and laws is articulated, discussed, and agreed upon? Is it not, moreover, in some sense dangerous to expect "metaphysical results" from politics? For is not politics instead a sphere of human plurality, difference, and multiplicity; hence, a realm in which the more exacting criteria of philosophical truth must play a subordinate role? And thus, would it not in fact be to place a type of totalitarian constraint on politics to expect it to deliver over truth in such pristine and unambiguous fashion.

### 3. HEIDEGGER'S COMMUNITARIAN STATISM WAS TOTALITARIAN

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.116.

Many similar objections to Heidegger's political philosophy have been raised by Karsten Harries in his essay on "Heidegger as a Political Thinker": Unfortunately this project [i.e., the extension of Heidegger's analysis of the work of art to the state] became intertwined with a rejection of the modern conception of the state, with its separation of the ethical and the political, of the private and the public, separations which are difficult to reconcile with the kind of unity and self-integration demanded by Heidegger's conception of authenticity. Recalling Nietzsche's hope for a creative resurrection of Greek tragedy, Heidegger calls for a state which would be a "repetition" -- in his sense of the word -- of the Greek polis, a state which would assign man his ethos, his place as member of a genuine community. It is this romantic conception of the state with its fusion or confusion of the political and the social which we must question. The attempt to restructure the modern state in the image of the polis will tend towards totalitarianism.

### 4. EXISTENTIALIST REJECTION OF REASON SURRENDERS TO TOTAL STATISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.130.

As a disillusioned former student would write of his fallen mentor shortly after the Rectoral Address: Existentialism collapses in the moment when its political theory is realized. The total-authoritarian state which it yearned for gives the lie to all its truths. Existentialism accompanies its collapse with a self-abasement that is unique in intellectual history; it carries out its own history as a satyr-play to the end. It began philosophically as a great debate with western rationalism and idealism, in order to redeem the historical concretion of individual existence for this intellectual heritage. And it ends philosophically with the radical denial of its own origins; the struggle against reason drives it blindly into the arms of the reigning powers. In their service and protection it betrays that great philosophy which it once celebrated as the pinnacle of western thinking.

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT NIHILISTIC**

### **1. HEIDEGGER'S EMBRACE OF NAZISM REFLECTS HIS MORAL NIHILISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.65.

The consequences of this decisionistic "ethical vacuum," coupled with the prejudicial nature of Heidegger's conservative revolutionary degradation of the modern life-world, suggests an undeniable theoretical cogency behind Heidegger's ignominious life-choice of 1933. In its rejection of "moral convention" -- which qua convention, proves inimical to acts of heroic bravado -- decisionism shows itself to be distinctly nihilistic vis-a-vis the totality of inherited ethical paradigms." For this reason, the implicit political theory of Being and Time -- and in this respect, it proves a classical instance of the German conservative-authoritarian mentality of the period -- remains devoid of fundamental "liberal convictions" that might have served as an ethicopolitical bulwark against the enticement of fascism. Freed of such bourgeois qualms, the National Socialist movement presented itself as a plausible material "filling" for the empty vessel of authentic decision and its categorical demand for existential-historical content. The summons toward an "authentic historical destiny" enunciated in Being and Time was thus provided with an ominously appropriate response by Germany's National Revolution. The latter, in effect, was viewed by Heidegger as the ontic fulfillment of the categorical demands of "historicity": it was Heidegger's own choice of a "hero," a "destiny," and a "community."

### **2. HEIDEGGER'S VIEW OF AUTHENTICITY IS NIHILISTIC**

Stanley Rosen, Penn State philosopher, NIHILISM, 1969, p.100.

For these reasons it would be a contradiction in terms if Heidegger were to give a positive, "doctrinal" content to his analysis of the existential process of authenticity. Heidegger's silence in this respect is consistent, but it also reveals the necessarily nihilistic implications of his thought. Put bluntly, no one can say anything to anyone about what constitutes genuine choice in a specific situation. It therefore becomes impossible to prevent total suspension of judgment. The Christian may say, "judge not, lest ye be judged," because of the eternal presence of an eternal judge. But the Heideggerian becomes indistinguishable from the nihilist, who says that "everything is allowed," because part of the Christian doctrine has been wedded to a resolute self-reliance in the absence of all gods.

### **3. HEIDEGGER'S ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME NIHILISM LED TO ITS ACCEPTANCE**

Stanley Rosen, Penn State philosopher, NIHILISM, 1969, p.101.

In more concrete terms, Heidegger began his journey as a student of Christian theology and Aristotle's metaphysics. His response to the nihilism of post-Nietzschean Europe, and specifically to the political situation following the First World War, led him to a reinterpretation of Nietzsche. Heidegger radicalized the significance of Zarathustra's revelation that "God is dead," making use of elements from Christianity, Greek philosophy, German thought, and the spiritual despair of the decades culminating in the Nazi rise to power. His intention was to overcome European nihilism by setting the stage for a new understanding of "the question of Being." In my opinion, it is clear that the development of an ontology of historicity was conditioned by Heidegger's response to the political and social events of 1919 and thereafter.

## **HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IN INTRINSIC TO HIS THOUGHT**

### **1. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM WASN'T JUST A PERSONAL FAILURE**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.203-4. In assessing the suitability of calling Heidegger a fore runner of their movement, deep ecologists should recall that he used his own philosophy to support National Socialism, and in a manner that was more enduring and profound than his self-justifying postwar statements would suggest. Indeed, he continued to speak well of that movement more than twenty years after World War II. His affiliation with Nazism cannot be explained as a personal failure, for he believed that the movement's "inner truth and greatness" was consistent with his own critical view of modernity. He regarded democracy, capitalism, socialism, scientific rationalism, consumerism, and "progressive" views of history in general as the culmination of Europe's long decline from its glorious beginning in ancient Greece. For him, National Socialism was an effort to counter modern progress, which he viewed as a degenerate, nihilistic process that was devastating the Earth and darkening the world. To restore the rank, order, and distinctions obliterated by industrial modernity, a radical revolution was needed, a "second beginning" equal in power to the beginning initiated by the ancient Greeks. Jettisoning ethical standards consistent with the Jewish, Christian, socialist, and liberal democratic traditions, he had no moral basis for challenging the decisions made by those who portrayed themselves as the gods' forerunners. Unfortunately, those people later turned out to be mass murderers. By the late 1930s, he concluded that the historical form taken by National Socialism, including its crude naturalistic, biological, and racist views, was another expression of technological modernity, but he never abandoned his conviction that there was a great potential at the core of the movement.

### **2. HEIDEGGER CONTINUED TO BELIEVE NAZISM WAS RIGHT IN THEORY**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.126.

Heidegger at first viewed National Socialism in Nietzschean terms as an authentic overcoming of European nihilism; that is, as a radical historical response to "the decline of the West." And although his disillusionment with the actual practice of the movement dates roughly from 1936, until the end of his life he continued to believe (as he avows in the concluding pages of *Einführung in die Metaphysik*) in the "inner truth and greatness of National Socialism" - that is, when the movement is understood from the superior vantage point of "the history of Being."

### **3. HEIDEGGER WAS AN ENTHUSIASTIC NAZI**

Arthur Herman, Professor of History, George Mason, THE IDEA OF DECLINE IN WESTERN HISTORY, 1997, p.341.

As rector of the University of Freiburg, Heidegger threw himself into the National Socialist revolution with enthusiasm. His activities on behalf of the Nazi regime that, even after 1945, he could not bring himself to repudiate are now well documented.

### **4. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM DERIVED FROM HIS VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE**

Stanley Rosen, philosopher, Penn State, NIHILISM, 1969, p.121-2.

During Heidegger's brief tenure as rector of Freiburg University, he delivered a number of speeches and official pronouncements which may fairly be described as an effort to justify national socialism by assimilating the terms of his own philosophy to those of the popular Nazi vocabulary. One of the most useful attempts by a student of the period, J-P. Faye, to demonstrate this point seems to be virtually unnoticed by English writers. In his analysis of Heidegger's language, Faye shows, for example, how Heidegger accommodated to the rhetoric of the vulgar and to that of the academic community depending upon the occasion, and how his own rhetoric permitted him to introduce revolutionary and demagogic political idiom into theoretical speeches. The least one can say is that the ease with which Heidegger succeeded in accommodating the teaching of Being and Time to the resolute choice of Hitler and the Nazi party provides us with an essential clue to the political philosophy implicit in his ontological analysis of human existence.

### **5. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHOWS HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM WASN'T INCIDENTAL**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.8. But given the results of the new biographical researches into Heidegger's past -- which have established that Heidegger's National Socialist sentiments, far from being an episodic phenomenon in the philosopher's life, continued to haunt his thinking at least until the mid-1940s -- it has become increasingly difficult to avoid the conclusion that Heidegger's Nazi experience stood in an "essential" relation to his philosophical project as a whole.

## HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IN INTRINSIC TO HIS THOUGHT cont'd

### 6. FARIAS'S STUDY OF HEIDEGGER IS BRILLIANT

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.171. Farias's extraordinary, brilliantly researched study of Heidegger covers his repellent ideas, career, and attempts at subterfuge after Hitler's collapse - and the academic enterprise of his acolytes to see this self-anointed Führer of National Socialist philosophy as more than an ideological miscreant. No less is Farias's book an indictment of Heideggerian mandarins, big and small, in the academy today.

### 7. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM WASN'T AN INCIDENTAL MISTAKE

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.95.

Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism has often been described as a misunderstanding or an error that had little to do with his basic philosophical orientation. But as Franzen observes: Such a misunderstanding and error were only possible because of those "consonances," hidden and manifest, between National Socialist ideology and Heidegger's philosophy.... Only because so many "depth-dimensions" in Heidegger's thought -- in Being and Time and then in his investigation of the "history of Being" -- were related to those of the National Socialist worldview could Heidegger fall victim to the illusion that National Socialism was something greater and larger than it was in fact.

### 8. HEIDEGGER STRESSED THAT THOUGHT CAN'T BE DIVORCED FROM ACTION

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.33.

Although an understanding of Heidegger's political thought should in no way be reduced to the concrete political choices made by the philosopher in the 1930s, neither is it entirely separable therefrom. And while the strategy of his apologists has been to dissociate the philosophy from the empirical person, thereby suggesting that Heidegger's Nazism was an unessential aberration in the hope of exempting the philosophy from political taint, this strategy will not wash for several reasons. To begin with, Heidegger's philosophy itself would seem to rule out the artificial, traditional philosophical separation between thought and action. In truth, much of Being and Time is concerned with overcoming the conventional philosophical division between theoretical and practical reason; a fact that is evident above all in the "pragmatic" point of departure of the analytic of Dasein: "Being in-the-world" rather than the Cartesian "thinking substance." More importantly, though, what is perhaps the central category of Heidegger's existential ontology – the category of "authenticity" -- automatically precludes such a facile separation between philosophical outlook and concrete life-choices.

### 9. HEIDEGGER SAW A PROFOUND LINK BETWEEN NAZISM AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.75.

In a 1936 conversation with Heidegger outside of Rome, Karl Lowith expressed his disagreement with recent reports alleging that there was no intrinsic connection between Heidegger's philosophy and his political option for National Socialism. Instead, Lowith suggested that his former mentor's "partisanship for National Socialism lay in the essence of his philosophy." Heidegger agreed with Lowith "without reservation, and added that his concept of 'historicity' was the basis of his political 'engagement.' Lowith's description of his "last meeting with Heidegger" is fascinating not only for the crucial information it supplies toward a proper understanding of the philosopher's political biography. It also contains a striking confirmation by Heidegger himself that his political convictions evolved directly from his philosophy; and that, moreover, it is the concept of "historicity," as elaborated in Being and Time, that specifically accounts for his "engagement" on behalf of the National Socialist cause. While Heidegger's claim is far from unambiguous, there is one interpretation that seems to recommend itself above all others.

### 10. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM WAS GROUNDED IN PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTION

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.65-6.

The aporetic nature of Heideggerian decisionism is thus indicated by its "negative" and "positive" dispositions. Both determined, in a complementary manner, Heidegger's partisanship for the National Socialist cause. For this was a partisanship that was carefully grounded in premeditated philosophical conviction. The "negative" side lies, as we have just seen, in a nihilistic historical opportunism that promotes unprincipled conformity with whatever choices are presented under given historical conditions. It is this side as well that mandates the a priori rejection of "bourgeois" political forms -- liberalism, constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, etc. -- and predisposes Heidegger toward a choice of "extreme" solutions: since bourgeois life-forms -- represented by the Existenzialien of "everydayness" -- are discounted in advance as degraded and profane, only radical alternatives to this thoroughly prosaic order of life will suffice.

**HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IN INTRINSIC TO HIS THOUGHT cont'd****11. HIS NAZISM REFLECTED THE INNERMOST TENDENCIES OF HEIDEGGER**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.66.

Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism – which was of the order of deep-seated, existential commitment -- was far from being an adventitious, merely biographical episode. Instead, it was rooted in the innermost tendencies of his thought. This claim in no way entails the assumption that Nazism is somehow a necessary and inevitable outgrowth of the philosophy of Being and Time. It does suggest, however, that the politics of the Nazi movement emphatically satisfied the desiderata of authentic historical commitment adumbrated in that work.

**12. THE SINCERITY OF HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM IS UNDENIABLE**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.91-2.

Heidegger's commitment to the National Socialist program of radical social reform as articulated in the Rectoral Address can be seen in both his future conduct as Rector as well as in the numerous political articles and speeches he composed during his year in office. In this respect, there can little doubt concerning the sincerity of his support for the policies of the new regime. As he says at one point, "The National Socialist Revolution brings the total transformation of our German Dasein.... Let not propositions and 'ideas' be the rules of your Being. The Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its law." As his former student, Herbert Marcuse, would later comment about these lines: such a claim is "actually the betrayal of philosophy as such and of everything it stands for." What Marcuse found incomprehensible about this and similar claims was how this matchless interpreter of the Western philosophical tradition could come to view the National Socialist movement as the positive culmination of this intellectual heritage.

**13. HEIDEGGER SUPPORTED NAZIS EVEN AFTER THEIR ABUSES WERE CLEAR**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.130.

As these lines were composed, the German army stood in ruins before Stalingrad, and there could no longer be any doubt about the gruesome nature of Hitler's Endlösung to the "Jewish question": the entire Jewish population of Germany had been forcibly removed, and the reports from the death-camps had already made the rounds among the civil population. That the world conflagration alluded to by Heidegger had been unleashed by Germany itself -- specifically, by a political movement that Heidegger had once vigorously and wholeheartedly supported--which thus represented the "cause" of the catastrophe rather than its "solution," is a fact that -- appallingly -- seems beyond the pale of the philosopher's powers of historical comprehension.

**14. HEIDEGGER CONTINUED TO BELIEVE IN THE POTENTIAL OF NAZISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, *THE POLITICS OF BEING*, 1990, p.98-9.

That Heidegger continued to adhere even after the war (and very likely, until the end of his life) to the distinction between the original historical potential of National Socialism as a "countermovement" to nihilism and its subsequent factual degradation is evidenced by the following unguarded admission in "The Rectorate 1933-34": "I saw in the movement that had come to power the possibility of an inner gathering and renewal of the Volk and a way for it to find its western-historical [geschichtlich-abendlandischen] destiny." Similarly, when questioned as late as 1966 in the Spiegel interview about the paean to the "greatness and glory of the [National] Awakening" with which the Rectoral Address concludes, Heidegger simply confesses, "Yes, I was convinced of that."

## HEIDEGGER EMBRACES DESTRUCTIVE IRRATIONALISM

### 1. HEIDEGGER WAS INFATUATED WITH IRRATIONALITY

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.43-4.

The peculiar aversion of the call to discursive articulation thus seems to indicate little more than a willful obscurantism on Heidegger's part. That Heidegger seeks to make a virtue out of the call's incommunicability, that he goes out of his way to laud its "conspicuous indefiniteness," suggests a deliberate infatuation with the forces of unreason. Whereas the ethos of modernity makes a virtue out of insights that can be linguistically redeemed, and thereby subjected to the approval of the senses communis, Heidegger disappoints us by dogmatically regressing behind the terms of this program. In fundamental ontology, the idea of the senses communis is flatly degraded to the "publicness" of the "They" – in Heideggerian parlance, a term of derision from which no conceivable good can emerge. In his thought, the metaphor of the "light of reason" has no place. We are once more provided with evidence for Tugendhat's claim concerning the predominantly "nonargumentative and evocative" character of Heideggerian discourse.

### 2. HEIDEGGER'S REJECTION OF LOGIC INVITES FANATICISM

Walter Kaufmann, Princeton philosopher, FROM SHAKESPEARE TO EXISTENTIALISM, 1980, p.356-7. The great philosopher, like the great poet, has a vision. Philosophy is not all analysis and scrutiny and intellectual anatomy. Precisely the greatest philosophers have often sold carefulness short because it mattered less to them than did the spirit's fight. They were concerned above all else with something they had seen, or were still seeing--something that seemed to them to belong to a higher order than all mere analysis. Analysis might come afterward, or might be used as a steppingstone: it can never become a substitute for vision any more than criticism can take the place of poetry. But Heidegger fails to see that his disparagement of logical scrutiny and his scorn of "the cheap acid of mere logical acumen" open the floodgates to fanaticism, superstition, and stupidity.

### 3. REJECTING PROPOSITIONAL TRUTH IS AN OPENING TO ABSOLUTE EVIL

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.118-9.

This breakthrough (as we have already indicated) is to be achieved via Heidegger's conception of truth as "unconcealedness." But in the end, one cannot but doubt whether the overall losses are not greater than the partial gains. For the rash dismissal of the idea of propositional truth at the same time entails a wholesale rejection of the truth/untruth dichotomy; the net result being that Heidegger has rendered himself intellectually (and morally) defenseless against the "absolute historical evil" of the twentieth century: the genocidal imperialism of German National Socialism. Heidegger is not merely defenseless in face of this evil' but remains sufficiently deluded to defend its true "inner potential" even at a point where the horrific truth of the movement was unveiled for all to see.

### 4. HEIDEGGER CRITIQUE OF PROPOSITIONAL TRUTH LED TO POLITICAL ERROR

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.120-1.

However promising Heidegger's ontological critique of the traditional philosophical ideal of propositional truth may have been it ultimately founders in consequence of his inability to distinguish between "truth" and "error." In fact, as a result of the radicalism with which Heidegger seeks, from the standpoint of the history of Being, to re-pose the question of philosophical truth he comes to perceive the inseparability of truth and error explicitly as a gain in metaphysical profundity. In point of fact, however, it is precisely the complacency with which he allows this fundamental intellectual distinction to blur into meaninglessness that accounts for his egregious errors of political judgment. Just as the Nietzschean superman is "beyond" the traditional moral divide between good and evil, so Heidegger's political judgments -- by virtue of a claim to greater metaphysical profundity -- are able to imperiously disregard all conventional, modern standards of political and intellectual judgment.

### 5. HEIDEGGER'S NAZISM SHOWS THE DANGERS OF POLITICAL IRRATIONALISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.106.

However, another undeniable factor in Heidegger's enthusiasm for the movement was his personal attraction to Hitler as an archetypal embodiment of charismatic leadership. In this connection, the following exchange between Heidegger and Karl Jaspers in June 1933 may be of more than merely anecdotal import. To the latter's query, "How could you think that a man as uncultivated as Hitler can govern Germany?" Heidegger responds: "It's not a question of culture. Take a look at his wonderful hands!" When understood within the framework of Seinspolitik, the meaning of this claim is clear: existential qualifications are more important than intellectual ones. It would be unfair to overburden with theoretical significance an offhand conversational remark made by Heidegger. But in a far from trivial sense, Heidegger's response is superbly illustrative concerning the pitfalls involved in employing "irrationalist," existential criteria in the formulation of political judgments.

**HEIDEGGER EMBRACES DESTRUCTIVE IRRATIONALISM cont'd**

## 6. A HEIDEGGERIAN REJECTION OF REASON TO NAZISM AND SOCIAL DARWINISM

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.4.

The critique of metaphysics just described is of Heideggerian provenance. It is a critique of reason that, in its radicality and inattention to nuance, threatens to become a defeatism of thought. Its fundamental tendency is one which, whether one turns to the romantics, to Nietzsche, or, more recently, to the work of Jacques Derrida, has become a central figure of the counter-enlightenment spirit: an attempt to undo the triumph of "Socratism" by reasserting the primacy of poesis vis-a-vis the predilection for intellection on which "civilization" has been based. But as Manfred Frank reminds us: "Postmodernism and antimodernism perfidiously join hands. This is also the case with 'logocentrism': [Ludwig] Klages and the new anti-intellectualism [Geistfeindlichkeit] of our day agree in the affect against the achievements of western 'rationality'." Frank fears - not unjustifiably - that the historical precedents for replacing reason with vitalistic imperatives - usually based on variants of the Nietzschean "will to power" - are especially ominous: "Let us indeed not forget that from Nietzsche to social Darwinism and National Socialism, struggle [Kampf] was viewed as a desirable means of salvation from 'modern ideas,' as was 'the health of the nation in face of the disintegrative influence of modernity.'"

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT POLITICALLY REACTIONARY**

### **1. HEIDEGGER WAS A REACTIONARY ELITIST**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.189. In such passages Heidegger is already, as early as in *Being and Time*, insinuating a 'leadership principle' into his 'ontology'. What is unambiguous is that he is a reactionary elitist, for whom the 'They' - bluntly, the Nietzschean 'herd' - is the inauthentic raw material of the authentic few, most notably the German reactionary mandarins who are guided by conscience, guilt, care, and a heroic stance toward the certainty of death.

### **2. HEIDEGGER IS AN OVERRATED REACTIONARY**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.186. Today's academic investment in Heidegger (as well as in Foucault and -- Derrida) is so immense that anyone who challenges Heidegger's status as the 'greatest philosopher' of the twentieth century risks garnering opprobrium verging on defamation. Yet the emperor, in fact, is wearing very few clothes indeed. Far from being a significant philosopher, Martin Heidegger is not only grossly overrated as a thinker but he is one of the most reactionary on the spectrum of Weltanschauung thought.

### **3. HEIDEGGER WAS A CONSISTENT GERMAN NATIONALIST**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.186-7. More pretentious and mystical than his acolytes are prone to acknowledge, Heidegger was a product of south German provincialism." The trajectory of his ideas from the 1920s to his last works in the 1970s situates him in what Fritz Stern has called a Kulturreligion that embraced nationalism . . . for it insisted on the identity of German idealism and nationalism. The essence of the German nation was expressed in its spirit, revealed by its artists and thinkers, and at times still reflected in the life of the simple, unspoiled folk.... Common were the lamentations about the decline of the German spirit, the defeat of idealism by the forces of realism in politics and of materialism in business.

### **4. HEIDEGGER'S QUASI-RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM LEAD TO NAZISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.33.

As Lowith observes: Whoever . . . reflects on Heidegger's later partisanship for Hitler, will find in this first formulation of the idea of historical "existence" the constituents of his political decision of several years hence. One need only abandon the still quasi-religious isolation and apply [the concept of] authentic "existence" --always particular to each individual--and the "duty" which follows from it to "specifically German existence" and its historical destiny in order thereby to introduce into the general course of German existence the energetic, but empty movement of existential categories ("to decide for oneself," "to take stock of oneself in face of nothingness," "wanting one's ownmost destiny," and "to take responsibility for oneself") and to proceed from there to "destruction" now on the terrain of politics.

### **5. HEIDEGGER EXTOLLED GERMAN NATIONALISM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.129-30.

And in his Heraclitus lectures of the same year, Heidegger reaffirms his delusory conviction -- against a massive weight of historical evidence to the contrary -- that Germany and the Germans represent the only force capable of redeeming the West from a fate of impending catastrophe: "the Germans and they alone can save the West for its history," he declaims. "The planet is in flames. The essence of man is out of joint. Only from the Germans can there come a world-historical reflection -- if, that is, they find and preserve 'Germanness' [das Deutsche]."

### **6. HEIDEGGER WAS A STRONG CULTURAL NATIONALIST**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.94.

And though Heidegger may not have shared the Nazi emphasis on race, he, too, was convinced that Germany and the Germans occupied a special niche in world-history -- they had a "destiny" to fulfill. Thus, only German Kultur, as opposed to the Zivilisation of the Western nations, offered the prospect of a true revival of the "Greek beginning." His belief in a special affinity between German language and culture and that of the ancient Greeks was one shared by many of his countrymen since the end of the eighteenth century. When viewed from this perspective, there was unquestionably an inner conceptual logic behind his "enlistment" for the National Socialist cause in the 1930s.

## **HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT DESTROYS FREEDOM**

### **1. HEIDEGGER REJECTED INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS**

Michael Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy, Tulane, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, Fall 1993, p.209-10. Heidegger also favored abandoning individual rights. Speaking in favor of the Nazi "revolution" that would save Western civilization from extinction, he proclaimed that "The individual by himself counts for nothing." Hence, he was silent while thousands of German socialists, communists, liberals, and other "un-German" types were rounded up into concentration camps near Freiburg. After the war, moreover, he refused to comment on the Nazi's murder of millions of Jews and other "vermin." During difficult times, he apparently concluded, difficult things have to be done. If Manes' radical views prevail during a time of "ecological scarcity," what would happen to selfish, ecologically unenlightened people who refused to "abandon" their inalienable rights? Would they be rounded up and possibly eliminated so that the Earth could recover from the effects of the "human cancer" now afflicting it?

### **2. HEIDEGGER'S LATER PHILOSOPHY IS ANTITHETICAL TO FREEDOM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE TERMS OF CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1992, p.139.

Consequently, it is difficult to disagree with the verdict expressed by the philosopher Hans Blumenberg concerning Heidegger's later work: "The absolutism of 'Being' is in truth only the continuation of medieval results by other means." By "medieval results" Blumenberg is referring to the shackles of scholastic ontology, whose static categorical hierarchies closely mirror those of the social milieu whence it emanates. And in this respect, Heidegger's later recourse to the doctrine of Seinsgeschick constitutes a deliberate regression behind the potentials for human autonomy and freedom that are provided by the modern age. As Blumenberg explains, in Heidegger's work: "The [modern] epoch appears as an absolute 'fact' - or better: as a 'datum'; it stands, sharply circumscribed, outside any logic, adapted to a state of error [Irrnis], and in spite of its immanent pathos of domination (or precisely on account of it) finally permits only the one attitude that is the sole option that the 'history of Being' leaves open to man: submission."

### **3. HEIDEGGER REJECTS LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND DEMOCRACY**

Murray Bookchin, Institute for Social Ecology co-founder, RE-ENCHANTING HUMANITY, 1995, p.168. 'Authenticity', it can be said without any philosophical frills, lay in the pristine Teutonic world of the tribal Germans who retained their ties with 'the Gods', and with later peoples who still tried to nourish their past amidst the blighted traits of the modern world. Since some authors try to muddy Heidegger's prelapsarian message by focusing on his assumed belief in individual freedom and ignoring his hatred of the French Revolution and its egalitarian, 'herd'-like democracy of the 'They', it is worth emphasizing that such a view withers in the light of his denial of individuality. 'The individual by himself counts for nothing', he declared after becoming a member of the National Socialist party in 1933. 'The fate of our Volk in its state counts for everything.'

### **4. THE EMPHASIS ON BEING DESTROYS HUMAN FREEDOM**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.153.

Consequently, the major problem with Heidegger's later philosophy is that the doctrine of Being, in its oppressive omnipotence, causes the conceptual space in which freedom can be meaningfully thought to all but disappear. In light of this fact, Jaspers' verdict concerning Heidegger's inability to grasp the nature of human freedom -- "Heidegger doesn't know what freedom is" -- becomes readily intelligible. For according to the theory of the "destining of Being," all the worldly events we experience undergo a prior, other-worldly, metaontological determination.

### **5. FREEDOM IS INDISPENSABLE TO MEANINGFUL HUMAN LIFE**

Richard Wolin, Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Rice, THE POLITICS OF BEING, 1990, p.154.

The project of human freedom, incessantly belittled by "essential thinking," receives its inspiration from the conviction that "it is more honest, courageous, self-clairvoyant, hence a higher mode of life, to choose in lucidity than it is to hide one's choices behind the supposed structure of things." In this respect, the concept of freedom, as it has been handed down to us on the basis of the Greek ideal of autonomic or self-rule, represents an indispensable touchstone of the Western tradition: it has become a sine qua non for the ideal of a meaningful human existence. And thus, in a far from trivial sense, we view a life led under conditions of "unfreedom" as a life deprived of an essential prerequisite for the fulfillment of human potential. It would be a life bereft of those autonomous capacities of decision and choice on the basis of which alone we are able to identify and define our projects as our projects. We are of course simultaneously defined by a preexisting network of values, institutions, and belief-systems, which have themselves been shaped and handed-down by the members of a given community or group. Yet, it is our capacity to "choose in lucidity" as to which among these would endow our projects with direction and significance that forms the indispensable basis of a meaningful human life.

**PERMUTATION: KRITIK AND ACT****1. WE NEED TO ENGAGE IN BOTH CALCULATIVE AND MEDITATIVE THINKING**

Joseph Kockelmans, Penn State philosopher, HEIDEGGER AND SCIENCE, 1985, p.254.

This ambivalent attitude In regard to modern science and technology, which says at the same time yes and no, corresponds to the two modes of thinking we have referred to earlier. Calculative thinking will help us to use our resources effectively; meditative thinking will help us in making certain that technicity will not overpower us. Meditative thinking will thus make it possible for us to come to a freedom in regard to things that lets beings be (Gelassenheit), by maintaining an openness to the mystery that is hidden in modern technicity.

**2. HUMANS SHOULD NEITHER TOTALLY IDENTIFY WITH NOR TOTALLY REPUDIATE TECHNOLOGY**

William Lovitt, Professor of German, Cal State-Sacramento, introduction to Martin Heidegger's THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS, 1977, p.xxxiii.

Man needs above all in our age to know himself as the one who is so claimed. The challenging summons of Enframing "sends into a way of revealing" (QT 24). So long as man does not know this, he cannot know himself; nor can he know himself in relation to his world. As a consequence he becomes trapped in one of two attitudes, both equally vain: either he fancies that he can in fact master technology and can by technological means - by analyzing and calculating and ordering - control all aspects of his life; or he recoils at the inexorable and dehumanizing control that technology is gaining over him, rejects it as the work of the devil, and strives to discover for himself some other way of life apart from it. What man truly needs is to know the destining to which he belongs and to know it as a destining, as the disposing power that governs all phenomena in this technological age.