

Prophets and Promises

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Continental thought has reached a crucial and decisive point in its history. I here suggest that we make a decision that will alter the course of continental thinking—in particular, of phenomenology and hermeneutics—and thereby also the nature of the guidance that we shall offer to our culture and our world. Some of the most recent comments made by the major representatives of continental thought—namely, Jacques Derrida and Hans-Georg Gadamer—have caused me great concern and, frankly, I am worried. I fear that if we continue in the directions of thought that are now being promoted by our most esteemed representatives, we shall be suggesting to our culture and our world that relativism, nihilism, and hopeless despair are all that we can foresee. As I have looked back at the writings of Derrida and Gadamer that are most salient to my concern—the works that seem to supply the clearest steps toward their conclusions that I find so troubling—I have discovered a common element: Heidegger. Derrida and Gadamer, despite the vast differences in both their approaches and their areas of research, have both appropriated distinctive features of Heidegger's thought that ultimately serve to undermine the possibility of any honest, healthy, and positive option when it comes to matters of human praxis.

I argue that there are two good reasons for calling into question the authority of Martin Heidegger. I argue, first, that he was not a trustworthy scholar, historian of ideas, or philologist; this is seen in his misreading of Aristotle and St. Thomas. I argue, second, that our acceptance of Heidegger as an authority—our unquestioning “acknowledgment” that he was one of the greatest philosophical minds of the twentieth century—has blinded us to the historical fact that he intentionally misdirected the course of phenomenology;¹ this is seen in his misconception of the notion of intentionality. Close analysis of some crucial passages in Heidegger's reasoning, passages in which he is discussing the fundamentals of his so-called “phenomenology,” reveals errors that proved decisive in his misdirection of honest phenomenological research. My arguments resolve into a critique of the view of human nature with which Heidegger leaves us.

Heidegger's Misreading of Aristotle and St. Thomas

Once they got their hands on the *Topics* and the *Analytics*, the thinkers of the late Middle Ages finally saw the point of all the fuss that Aristotle had made about being careful with definitions. For our present purpose, what is most important is how these thinkers dealt with words having to do with essence and existence.² We cannot here follow the fascinating controversy that raged around these concept-words, from St. Thomas to Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent, for that is an extremely lengthy study of its own. But to sum up only one result of only one line of thinking in this controversy, we can say this: To draw the conceptual distinction

between essence and existence results in a creature that has been separated from God as the effect of His act of creation. Armand Maurer remarks that "This notion of existence enjoyed considerable popularity in the later Middle Ages, and it was sometimes opposed to St. Thomas's doctrine of existence as the act of being."³ For St. Thomas, the existence of a creature "is the act that turns a possible essence into an actual being."⁴ It is crucial that we here note that, for St. Thomas, existence is an activity, an *act*, or *action*. Some theologians who opposed St. Thomas did so by arguing that existence is not an action but a state or condition bestowed upon creatures by God, a divine gift of existence given to the creature that already has its essence. So on the one hand we have existence as an act (a *unified*, self-identical act) in which essence is involved (St. Thomas), and on the other hand we have the distinction between essence and existence.

Enter Heidegger, who says, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (91):

The problem of the relationship between essence and existence is resolved in the Thomistic school by saying that in an actual being the what of this being is a second *res*, something else for itself as over against the actuality; thus, in an actual being we have the combination or composition, *compositio*, of *two realities*, *essentia* and *existentia*. Therefore, the difference between essence and existence is a *distinctio realis*.

Heidegger is wrong. St. Thomas acknowledges no "*distinctio realis*." Either Heidegger did not understand St. Thomas (or even Aristotle) correctly, or he has willfully misrepresented St. Thomas's position. As Maurer explains: "In itself, the essence of a creature has no reality, for without existence it is nothing. Neither is the existence of a creature a being or reality, but it is the act that turns a possible essence into an actual being."⁵ What Heidegger has done here is to (mis)conceptualize the distinction between essence and existence through a misrepresentation of what is perhaps the most central notion of Thomistic thought. He has said that there exists a real distinction between essence and existence, and he cites St. Thomas as his authority. But St. Thomas in fact denies such a distinction. This distinction appears in Heidegger's "phenomenology" as the famous *ontologische Differenz*, which provides him with the starting point and conceptual foundation for all of his thinking, from *Being and Time* to the end of his days. This distinction between essence and existence, a distinction that Heidegger has drawn on the basis of a misconception or misrepresentation of the Aristotelian and Thomistic notion of essence, will also provide Heidegger and all of those who have followed him with their chief reason for rejecting Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. Let us listen to what Heidegger says about this ontological difference (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 78):

This difference has to do with the distinction between beings and being. The ontological difference says: A being is always characterized by a specific constitution of being. Such being is not itself a being. But here what it is that belongs to the being of a being remains obscure.

Of course there will be obscurity if the investigation begins with the denial of anything to investigate. Without the act of existence, there is no "real" essence—there exists no being, no entity, that might enjoy existence, and there is nothing there that can "belong to the being of a being." So by inserting a wrongheaded notion of essence into the medieval problematic, Heidegger has led us into into a baffling wilderness of ideas where nothing can make any sense whatsoever. Moreover—and far more significantly—once Heidegger has drawn this distinction, he has (again) a creature that has been separated from God as the effect of His act of creation. The human being stands (thrown) on one side of creation, and God, with His acts of creation, stands on the other, with no possible link between the two.

Let us next consider the following passage from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (86):

We shall see that these different names for *Sachheit*, or thingness—*quidditas* (whatness), *quod quid erat esse* (Wesen, essence), *definitio* (circumscription, definition), *forma* (shape, figure, aspect, look), *natura* (origin), names for what Kant calls reality and what Scholasticism, too, designates most frequently as *essentia realis*—are not accidental and are not based merely on the desire to introduce alternative names for the same thing. Rather, to all of them there correspond different aspects in which thingness can be regarded, specific basic conceptions of the interpretation of the essence, the thingness, and thus the being of a being in general. At the same time it becomes visible in the corresponding Greek terms that this interpretation of thingness goes back to the way Greek ontology posed its questions. Greek ontology becomes comprehensible in its fundamental orientation precisely thereby.

Even cursory scrutiny reveals that this entire passage is bombast, pure and simple.⁶ Absolutely nothing has been said in this paragraph. We should ask just how well Heidegger does in fact comprehend the Greek ontology he is not saying anything about. On the preceding page he had just said this (85): "That which each being, each actual being, has already been is designated in German as the *Wesen* [in English as the essence]. In this *Wesen*, to *ti en*, in the *was*,⁷ there is implied the

moment of the past, the earlier.” Aristotle’s Greek for what we (misleadingly) call “essence” is not “to ti en”—it is “to ti en *einai*,” that which was *to be*. This is a crucial point and a glaring omission. Heidegger is standing up there telling his students, and telling us, that Aristotle said *this*, and that this implies *that*. He then proceeds to utter more seeming profundities about being. But he has not even given us the proper Greek—in fact, he has given us the improper Greek in order that he can make his point, just as he gave us an improper reading of St. Thomas’s notion of essence so that he could make his point. This is not a typographical error, nor could it be an editorial oversight. No Greek scholar, and no competent philologist, would ever, *could* ever, commit such an error. In the case of such a central Aristotelian notion, such an error is simply inconceivable.⁸

In the same work (and lecture course), Heidegger writes:

The result of the foregoing clarification was that intentionality is not an objective, extant relation between two things extant but, as the comportmental character of comporting, a determination of the subject [*als der Verhältnischarakter des Verhaltens eine Bestimmung des Subjekts*]. The comportments are those of the ego. They are also commonly called the subject’s experiences. Experiences are intentional and accordingly belong to the ego, or, in erudite language, they are immanent to the subject, they belong to the subjective sphere.⁹

Such a view of intentionality is clearly wrong. Intentionality is not entirely, exclusively a determination of the subject. Heidegger has here misrepresented the most fundamental principle of phenomenology, the intentionality of consciousness. Experiences do not belong to the ego. Experience is the activity of existence (as St. Thomas explained) through which the subject (Aristotle’s substantial soul¹⁰) constitutes itself as a “self” and the object of its intentional activity as phenomenon. Heidegger has got it precisely backwards. He really did fail to understand Husserlian phenomenology. He just didn’t get it.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche gives aphorism 173 of the third book the heading, “To be deep and to seem deep”:

To be deep and to seem deep.—He who knows himself to be deep strives for clarity; he who would like to seem deep to the masses strives to achieve obscurity. For the masses regard as deep whatever they cannot see the reason for; the masses are so fearful and go so unwillingly into the water.¹¹

For several decades we, the masses, have allowed the obscurity of Heidegger’s thought to impress us. We have let ourselves be deceived, in a big way, and it is embarrassing. But there it is. It is high time we all acknowledged that the emperor has no clothes.¹² And this is a particularly crucial time, as I said before. We are currently facing so many global crises that we would have trouble listing them all on a blackboard. We have to assume our responsibility and make decisions that are going to determine the course of the future in dramatically evident ways. Heidegger holds us back here. He not only obscures our field of vision and thought, but in following him we wind up in a position where “only a god can save us.” We wind up disempowered and fearful, shuddering in a world over which we have no control whatsoever.

Critics have long pointed out that Heidegger’s treatment of other philosophers is not especially helpful in coming to understand the actual thought of those philosophers, but this has been regarded as legitimate. After all, should not such a great mind and scholar engaged in creative thinking be allowed to appropriate the thought of others and eclectically pick and choose whatever parts of that thought might prove helpful in the articulation of his or her own, new thought? I think we would all agree that, yes, we should be allowed to do this. Indeed, is not building on the ideas of others the very nature of solid research? But that is not what Heidegger is doing. He is misrepresenting the thoughts and positions of other thinkers, and he is doing so in a manner that serves his own philosophical purpose.

What is more, this philosophical purpose is sinister. Karl Löwith has demonstrated at length and in detail how Heidegger formulated and articulated his philosophy to provide support for his Nazism.¹³ As Tom Rockmore explains in his superb summary of the history of the reception of Heidegger’s thought in France, “Heidegger’s Nazism and the French Debate”:

Löwith’s analysis is a clear attempt to understand Heidegger’s Nazism as following from Heidegger’s position, and his position as the expression of the historical situation, in Hegelian terms as the times comprehended in thought. Löwith contradicts two points maintained by all subsequent defenders of Heidegger: Löwith denies that Heidegger’s philosophy can be understood other than through its social and political context. Accordingly, he contradicts in advance the well-known “textualist” approach, especially prevalent in French circles, to Heidegger’s writings without reference to the wider social, political and historical context in which they arose. He further denies the “official” view of Heidegger’s National Socialism—most prominently represented in the French debate by Fédier and Aubenque, and from a different perspective by Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe—

which tends to minimize, even to excuse, Heidegger's turn towards Nazism as unfortunate, temporary and above all contingent with respect to Heidegger's thought.¹⁴

This is the legacy that Heidegger has bequeathed us all. Recall what I said above about the ontological distinction. Once Heidegger has drawn this distinction, he has (again) a creature that has been separated from God as the effect of His act of creation. Human being here—God, with His acts of creation, over there. As it happens, of course, despite whatever variety of mysticism any of his apologists might like to read into his work, Heidegger was an announced atheist, so what we wind up with is disempowered, inactive human being over here, activity of creation—or of revealing, or showing itself, or appearing—over there. We are powerless. We can do nothing. We just have to sit here and wait, hoping that maybe we will be saved by some ontologically distinct god that we do not really believe in. Sadly, this is where Gadamer now finds himself. In a recent interview, Gadamer has come to speak just like the broken Heidegger of the notorious 1966 *Der Spiegel* interview:¹⁵

Technological progress has become our destiny, for better or worse. Which political system to set up to control technology? Democracy? I don't know. However, were I to say what in my opinion has been decisive, then I would say that this century has invented a weapon whereby life can destroy itself. This is the worrisome situation we are facing. If one doesn't acknowledge this, then current American politics becomes unintelligible. We can still dream that, eventually, some superior power will rescue us. Maybe this power is God.¹⁶

We see here some indication of the extent to which the passivity of Friedrich Cristoph Oetinger's pietism permeates Gadamer's hermeneutics, effectively disabling it from taking any active role in human praxis.¹⁷ This is the perfect complement to Heidegger's misreading of St. Thomas. Let us take a look now at how Heidegger has infected the thought of Derrida.

Heidegger's Misdirection of the Course of Phenomenology

What I have just claimed is that at the basis of Heidegger's thought sits a disempowered, cowering subject, and that Heidegger's thought, when it says anything at all, speaks always in despair. But there is certainly more to Heidegger's thought than merely that, and for the past fifty years this other component of Heidegger's thought has occupied a central position in French philosophy and cultural analysis. This other aspect is, of course, the critique of modernity.¹⁸ Two

major targets of this critique that our French colleagues have found especially deserving of attack have been (i) the so-called "metaphysical subject" and (ii) the completion of the project of modernity as the technological globalization guided by the exploitative colonializing ideology of American liberal democracy—a.k.a., McDonald's at Disneyland. Heidegger's motives for identifying McDonald's as a target are clearly different than those of our French colleagues—even a jet-lagged comparison of Paris with Los Angeles really does have to make you wonder whether there is not something in what they are saying, whereas Heidegger was just bummed out and bitter that his side didn't win the war. But for the purpose of our present discussion their respective motives are not as important as the fact that success in attacking this second target (McDonald's) seems to be contingent upon success in attacking the former target—that is, the metaphysical subject. Our French colleagues have, it seems to me, appropriated Heidegger's *Destruction* of this subject with no significant alteration. In other words, the "subject" that Derrida talks about is the one that he gets from Heidegger.¹⁹

In conversation with Professors Walter Brogan, Thomas Busch, John D. Caputo, and Dennis Schmidt, Jacques Derrida recently spoke of the universality of what he calls "the messianic structure":

When I insisted in *Specters of Marx* on messianicity, which I distinguished from messianism, I wanted to show that the messianic structure is a universal structure. As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting for someone to come: that is the opening of experience. Someone is to come, is *now* to come. Justice and peace will have to do with this coming of the other, with the promise. Each time I open my mouth, I am promising something. When I speak to you, I am telling you that I promise to tell you something, to tell you the truth. Even if I lie, the condition of my lie is that I promise to tell you the truth. So the promise is not just one speech act among others; every speech act is fundamentally a promise. This universal structure of the promise, of the expectation for the future, for the coming, and the fact that this expectation of the coming has to do with justice—that is what I call the messianic structure.²⁰

Recall that, for Heidegger, the proper completion of modernity, which would have given us the proper manner in which to handle technology, could have been achieved neither by a totalitarian state (Russia) nor by a democratic state (America), but only by the National Socialist State of Germany.²¹ In this state, the will of the individual can exist, is *allowed* to exist, only in membership with the

will of the state as a whole, the proper purpose of which is to express the spirit of the people, the *Volksgeist*—or, more precisely, *der Geist des deutschen Volks*—as directed by the leader of the people, *der Führer*. The metaphysics of nazism dictates that the individual with a will can exist only as a member of the National Socialist State. We wind up with a view of human nature that preserves the will, which is clearly essential to the National Socialist agenda, while at the same time avoiding the dreaded pitfall of voluntarism that seems necessarily to accompany the “metaphysical subject” of modernity. We wind up, in short, with that same disempowered, cowering subject, who can only sit there and wait, and who can gain power and will only in the context of the National Socialist state.²²

This is the view of human nature, and the concept of human subjectivity—without the Nazi state (one hopes)—that Derrida has appropriated from Heidegger. It is a disempowered little wimp of a thing that just has to sit there and wait for the messiah—just as Heidegger sat, and Gadamer sadly now sits, huddled and cowering at the threat of a technological world that is banging on their door and that they simply cannot understand. It is the waiting for the messiah *in the realm of moral and political action* that is the issue here. Derrida has always, with laudable consistency, denied the possibility of choosing and deciding. The following passage from John P. Leavey’s “Preface” to his translation of Derrida’s *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* is well worth quoting at length here:²³

Non-choice runs throughout Derrida’s texts. In “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” concerning the “two interpretations of interpretation,” that which “dreams of deciphering” the truth or origin and that which “affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism,” Derrida says he does not believe “that today there is any question of *choosing*.”²⁴ Or again, in “The Ends of Man,” there is no “simple and unique” choice between two forms of deconstruction, either Heidegger’s deconstruction of ontotheo-logy by means of its own language or the structuralist way—by “affirming absolute rupture and difference.” “A new writing must weave and intertwine the two motifs.”²⁵ This logic of non-choice is the very foundation, if there is one, of Derrida’s enterprise. It is the notion of the undecidable—that which, *by analogy*, Derrida says—cannot be decided. By analogy because, as Sarah Kofman notes, undecidability has a reference to decidability, a reference that must be “crossed out.”²⁶

The undecidable²⁷ takes into itself this non-choice, as well as the figure of the ellipsis. Derrida says in “Form and Meaning”:

*There is, then, probably no choice to be made between two lines of thought; our task is rather to reflect on the circularity which makes the one pass into the other indefinitely. And, by strictly repeating this circle in its own historical possibility, we allow the production of some elliptical change of site, within the difference involved in repetition; this displacement is no doubt deficient, but with a deficiency that is not yet, or is already no longer, absence, negativity, nonbeing, lack, silence. Neither matter nor form, it is nothing that any philosopheme, that is, any dialectic, however determinate, can capture. It is an ellipsis of both meaning and form; it is neither plenary speech nor perfectly circular. More and less, neither more nor less—it is perhaps an entirely different question.*²⁸

The undecidable’s logic is that of the ellipsis of the circle, a deformed, decentered circle. Along with the circle, this logic of the undecidable, of *différance*, unhinges the point, line, and space and time themselves:

*différance already suggests a mode of writing (écriture) without presence and absence—without history, cause, arche, or telos—which would overturn all dialectic, theology, teleology, and ontology. This mode of writing would exceed everything that the history of metaphysics has conceived in the form of the Aristotelian **gramme**: the point, the line, the circle, as well as time and space themselves.*²⁹

This logic of “*différance*” is what animates, finally, the early text of Derrida translated here, his *Introduction* to Husserl’s *The Origin of Geometry*. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida says what can also be said of this *Introduction*: “Here as elsewhere, to pose the problem in terms of choice, to oblige or to believe oneself obliged to answer it by a *yes* or *no*, to conceive of appurtenance as an allegiance or nonappurtenance as plain speaking, is to confuse very different levels, paths, and styles. In the deconstruction of the arche [the proto-], one does not make a choice.” Even more important for our purposes is the line just before this. Derrida says: “*That is why a thought of the trace [différance] can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it.*”³⁰ In other words, Derrida is as much a phenomenologist as not, is as much a structuralist as not, an

atheist as well as thinker of the sacred,³¹ as neither. Choices need not be made here, in fact, cannot be made!

So Derrida is only being consistent when he now tells us that choices cannot be made in the realm of the social and political. We now see where this line of thinking takes us when we follow it all the way to the living arena of human praxis, where the failure to choose, the inability to decide, the refusal *to take action* can result only in the most disastrous of consequences. The celebration of the play of *différance* may be fine and good when this is only play with words. But when the trace will be written in the blood of our children, it's time to get serious.

In *The Gift of Death*, Derrida writes:

I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others. *Every other (one) is every (bit) other [tout autre est tout autre]*, every one else is completely or wholly other. The simple concepts of alterity and of singularity constitute the concept of duty as much as that of responsibility. As a result, the concepts of responsibility of decision, or of duty, are condemned a priori to paradox, scandal, and aporia. Paradox, scandal, and aporia are themselves nothing other than sacrifice, the revelation of conceptual thinking at its limit, at its death and finitude. As soon as I enter into a relation with the other, with the gaze, look, request, love, command, or call of the other, I know that I can respond only by sacrificing ethics, that is, sacrificing whatever obliges me to also respond, in the same way, in the same instant, to all the others.³²

I disagree. I do not believe that "the concepts of responsibility of decision, or of duty, are condemned a priori to paradox, scandal, and aporia." A state of aporia is a state of paralysis characterized by the inability to choose a course of action. I believe that responsible political behavior demands that such choices be made by each and every individual, and that each and every individual bears the responsibility for his or her choice. I thought Sartre was quite clear about that.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida tells us this:

The necessary disjointure, the de-totalizing condition of justice, is indeed here that of the present—and by the same token the very condition of the present and of the presence of the present. This is where deconstruction would always begin to take shape as the thinking of the gift and of undeconstructible justice, the undeconstructible condition of any deconstruction, to be sure, but a condition that is itself *in deconstruction* and remains, and must remain (that is the injunction) in the disjointure of the *Un-Fug*. Otherwise it rests on the good conscience of having done one's duty, it loses the chance of the future, of the promise or the

appeal, of the desire also (that is its "own" possibility), of this desert-like messianism (without content and without identifiable messiah), of this also *abyssal* desert, "desert in the desert," that we will talk about later (167), one desert signaling toward the other, abyssal and *chaotic* desert, if chaos describes first of all the immensity, excessiveness, disproportion in the gaping hole of the open mouth—in the waiting or calling for what we have nicknamed here without knowing the messianic: the coming of the other, the absolute and unpredictable singularity of the *arrivant as justice*.³³

If I understand Derrida correctly—and I must confess I find it somewhat difficult (to be deep and to seem deep?)—I have to disagree. I do not believe that justice is something that we have to sit and wait for. Justice is not the awaited "arrivant." Justice is not the messiah.

In *The Philosophy of the Limit* (the expression she employs in referring to Derrida's deconstruction), Drucilla Cornell suggests that "the postmodern should be understood as an allegory and that, as such, it represents an ethical insistence on the limit to 'positive' descriptions of the principles of modernity long-elaborated as the 'last word' on 'truth,' 'justice,' 'rightness,' etc. . . [and] expresses the desire for a beyond to the current definition of Enlightenment ideals." As she explains further:

Because I have advocated that the "postmodern" is an allegory, we can now understand yet another dimension of my choice of the word "configuration." An allegory necessarily involves figures and figurations, in this case, that depict the limit of institutionalized meaning and established communitarian norms. . . . To summarize, then, I portray a configuration which gives body to the allegory of the ethical limit on any "positive" normative description of what constitutes modernity. Even if this "limit" is not to be understood as a "new" historical period, even if the ethical configuration I offer cannot be rigidly separated from the "modern," it can still help us think about justice and legal interpretation differently from the conceptions that have dominated analytic jurisprudence and critical social theory. As we will see, for marginalized groups, this is a difference that makes a difference.³⁴

I agree that we "must think about justice and legal interpretation differently from the conceptions that have dominated analytic jurisprudence and critical social theory." We must deconstruct these conceptions. Cornell later remarks: "the care

for difference needs a generosity that does not attempt to grasp what is other as one's own. The danger of certainty is that it turns against the generous impulse to open oneself up to the Other, and to truly listen, to risk the chance that we might be wrong. The move to non-closure, then, can and should be understood ethically."³⁵ We must remain always mindful and respectful of the difference of the Other when we make our political decisions. And decide we must. Derrida suggests that we wait for a messiah. Gadamer is sitting in Heidelberg waiting, perhaps, for God.

An alternative route, and one that might enable us to engage in action that will at least have some hope of allowing us to lead our lives as responsible human beings, has long been available to us. But when Heidegger misled us, we lost sight of that other route. Many of Husserl's students were concerned about what Heidegger was doing in Freiburg and Marburg in the 1920s—they even wrote to one another about the possibility of all getting together and confronting Husserl to shake him and wake him up so that he would see what Heidegger was doing. But that never happened, and Husserl was left later to lament, in conversation with and letters to his students, that Heidegger never really understood phenomenology.

On page two of its Spring/Summer 2001 Customer Catalogue, Humanity Books (Amherst, New York) offers the following excerpt from Catherine Clément's *Martin and Hannah. A Novel*:

Elfriede had limited herself to reciting the facts, sadly, without rage. Her pain-filled eyes seemed to say: *Understand that we are all guilty. Mankind is like that. It is not us. It is not I. It is not he. It is others, all the others, even the victims.* Elfriede's voice had contained no note of accusation. Nothing but an unbearable compassion. . . .

"I cannot let you get away with that," said Hannah. "Who did the killing? The Jews or the Germans? I refuse to be considered a 'guilty party.' Absolutely not. It's a question of the categorical imperative and the moral law, Elfriede."

"Morality, philosophy. Do they serve any purpose? What philosopher could have prevented those horrors?"

The obvious answer is: Martin Heidegger, the most influential philosopher in Germany in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. Yet instead of lecturing and teaching against Nazism, he refashioned phenomenology to suit his own purpose in support of Nazism. He taught this subverted and propagandized "phenomenology" to thousands of students, philosophically legitimizing the Nazi regime. In

a lecture course he gave in Marburg in the Summer Semester of 1925 (the first German edition of the text of this lecture appeared in 1979 and has recently been translated into English as *History of the Concept of Time*³⁶), Martin Heidegger announced:

This serves to bring the task of philosophy since Plato once again to its true ground, inasmuch as it now gives us the possibility to do research into the categories. As long as phenomenology understands itself, it will adhere to this course of investigation against any sort of prophetism within philosophy and against any inclination to provide guidelines for life. Philosophical research is and remains atheism, which is why philosophy can allow itself as much; this arrogance is the inner necessity of philosophy and its true strength. Precisely in this atheism, philosophy becomes what a great man once called the "joyful science." [*fröhliche Wissenschaft*]

Husserl died four years before Edith Stein, the student who had preceded Heidegger as Husserl's assistant, was tracked down and arrested by the Gestapo in the Netherlands and shipped back to be gassed and cremated at Auschwitz.³⁷ The only students of Husserl who had ever really been taught how properly to pursue phenomenological research, and who remained alive and working after 1945, found themselves scattered and academically and politically powerless to carry on the tradition in any effective way.³⁸ Only now, over fifty years later, have we recovered and regrouped sufficiently to carry on the tradition of honest phenomenological research.

If we are to redirect phenomenology back onto its true path—the path that leads us through continuing discoveries and ongoing revelations of the meaning of human experience—we must start by reestablishing the core of meaningful human experience that Heidegger so brutally savaged. We must reestablish the existence of a "substantial" subject. This will entail rethinking the nature of substance along proper phenomenological lines. This work remains in progress.³⁹

Notes

1. And thereby most continental thought for over half a century. My conclusions are, therefore, somewhat more pointed than Christopher Macann's when he writes (in his Introduction to *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments, Volume IV: Reverberations*, ed. Christopher Macann [London and New York: Routledge,

1992], 11):

No philosopher has done more than Heidegger not just to identify and characterize this kind of conformist irresponsibility (which is never more evident than in our larger and more impersonal institutions) but also to expose its hidden strength, the grounds for its almost universal dominion. It "was" always the "they" who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been "no one." (SZ, S. 127) "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself." (SZ, S. 128) "And because the 'they' constantly accommodates the particular Dasein by disburdening it of its Being, the 'they' retains and enhances its stubborn dominion." (ibid.)

2. Stephen F. Brown offers a superb brief summary of some of the difficulties faced by the philosophers and theologians who were trying to construct an adequate theological language in this period: "Theology and Philosophy," in F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg, eds., *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 267—87. The following excerpt is especially pertinent to our discussion (276—67):

Boethius followed Augustine's linguistic lead in his own theological writings, declaring: "Idem est . . . 'ousian' esse quod essentiam" and "Est . . . hominis quidem essentia, id est 'ousia.'" (*Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, 3) It was also apparently out of deference to Augustine that in his Trinitarian work, *Quomodo trinitas unus deus ac non tres dii*, Boethius employed the word *substantia* 95 times for the Greek *hypostasis* and used *persona* once only.

Linguistic struggles and choices such as these were an essential part of patristic efforts to defend and explain Christian teachings. Because of attacks or misunderstandings, early Christian writers and translators were continually obliged to resolve issues of language and interpretation, and even to coin new words, in order to express as well as they could in human terms the realities of faith. Such mutable terms as *substantia*, *essentia*, and *persona* were part of the linguistic inheritance bequeathed to medieval theologians by the Fathers. Different Latin translators of the texts of councils or the works of the Greek Fathers did not always agree in their translations of key concepts. The need for theological precision led Augustine, as

we have seen, to prefer *essentia* to the well-established *substantia* and *substantia* to the well-established *persona* in discussions of the Trinity. These complex patristic debates about language initiated a tradition of Trinitarian studies that influenced some medieval authors to preserve the terminology of Augustine and Boethius, and others to persist with the vocabulary of Tertullian and the earlier period.

The very method of the medieval *quaestio*, which posed different biblical, patristic, and other authorities against one another in order to raise a question that stimulates reflection and calls for resolution, forced theologians to reinterpret various conflicts among these authorities and to look beyond the words to the meanings and realities toward which the words were pointing. The same patristic author might mean exactly the same thing when he used the word *substantia* as another Father intended when choosing the word *essentia*; or he might wish, by using the term *substantia*, to convey the same meaning as intended by another's use of *persona*. Such linguistic complexity is underscored in letter 204 of St. Anselm: "Hac necessitate patres catholici, quando loquebantur de illis tribus [Patre, Filio, et Spiritu Sancto], clegerunt nomina quibus iros tres nominare possent pluraliter; Gracci quidem nomen substantiae, Latini vero nomen personae; sed ut omnino quod nos ibi intelligimus per personam, hoc ipsi et non aliud intelligent per substantiam. Sicut ergo nos dicimus in deo unam substantiam esse tres personas, ita illi dicunt unam personam esse tres substantias, nihil a nobis diverse intelligentes aut credentes." (*Ep.* 204; [DH25] V4:96)

Similar difficulties concerning *essentia*, *substantia*, *natura*, and *persona* arose in discussions of the mystery of Christ as both God and man. What terms could be found to express as adequately as possible this special union and unity of God and man that would not make Christ merely a combination of human and divine persons, or one person who only appears to have, but does not really have, a divine and a human nature?

3. Armand A. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1962), 212. This is the second volume of the four-volume *History of Philosophy* written under the general editorship of Etienne Gilson. (NIHIL OBSTAT: Francis A. Orbin, C.S.B., CENSOR DEPUTATUS; IMPRIMATUR: James C. McGuigan, D.D., ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO)

4. Maurer, 210.

5. *Ibid.*, 210.

6. It would sound even more impressive if you were an undergraduate student listening to the lecture. Albert Hofstadter offers this in his "Translator's Preface" to *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), xi:

The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, a translation of *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, is the text of a lecture course that Martin Heidegger gave at the University of Marburg in the summer of 1927. Only after almost half a century did Heidegger permit the text of the course to be published. *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, edited by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, appeared, for the first time, in 1975 as volume 24 of the multivolumed Martin Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe* presently in preparation (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann).

In the Editor's Epilogue, which follows the text, Professor von Herrmann explains that the book was composed, under Heidegger's direction, by putting together Heidegger's manuscript of the lectures and his typewritten copy, including his marginalia and insertions, with a contemporaneous transcription of the lectures by Simon Moser, a student in the course. The editor made decisions regarding a number of matters such as the division into parts and their headings; the treatment of insertions, transformations, changes, expansions, and omissions; and the inclusion of recapitulations at the beginning of lecture sessions. The resulting work is therefore only one possible version of the 1927 lecture course. But it is surely a very ample one, containing almost the whole of what was spoken and also much of what was not spoken at the time.

This volume represents the way in which Heidegger himself visualized the printed shape of these early lectures. Whatever imperfections the present text may contain, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* is a work of major importance, indispensable for obtaining a clear outlook upon the ontological-phenomenological region toward which Heidegger was heading

when he prepared *Being and Time*, of which this is the designed and designated sequel. In it, one form of the Heideggerian Kehre took place—a turning-around, from concentration upon the human being as Dasein, which in older thought was concentration upon the subject, to the passionately sought new focusing upon—not any mere object correlative to a subject but—being itself.

7. The German text (*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* [Gesamtausgabe Band 24] [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975], 120: "Es liegt in diesem Wesen, τὸ τί ᾗν, in dem war,...."

8. As we shall see, this Aristotelian formulation is of the highest importance. The two formulations most frequently used to express the notion of "essence" are τί ἔστι and τὸ τί ᾗν εἶναι, "what is" and "that which was to be"—we could also say "what was to be." The identity of these two expressions has profound implications for the temporal character of intentionality.

9. Part One, Chapter One, § 9, (b) "The ontological constitution of perception. Intentionality and transcendence," 61. Heidegger continues the discussion of the nature of intentionality for the remaining five or six pages of the section (eight pages in the German text). In his third-to-last paragraph Heidegger states that the view he has articulated—namely, that it is a natural tendency of Dasein "to start by taking every being—whether something extant in the sense of a natural thing or something with the mode of being of the subject—as an extant entity and to understand it in the sense of being extant"—"is the basic tendency [*Grundtendenz*] of ancient ontology." (66; German text, 92). It is most certainly not the "basic tendency" of Aristotelian ontology, according to which the cognizing, intending subject is an instance of *ousia*, the spiritual form of which is in part derived from the "object" of the act of cognition. See Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., "Aristotle and Aquinas on Cognition," in Richard Bosley and Martin Tweedale, eds., *Aristotle and His Medieval Interpreters* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), 103–123. This wrongheaded view of intentionality, by the way, precludes from the outset the possibility of empathy.

10. On the substantiality of the soul according to (the school of) Aristotle, see Werner Jaeger's classic study, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, tr. Richard Robinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1934; second ed. 1948).

11. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, Band III, ed. Karl Schlechta (Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1980), 144 (my translation):

Tief sein und tief scheinen. – Wer sich tief weiß, bemüht sich um Klarheit; wer der Menge tief scheinen möchte, bemüht sich um Dunkelheit. Denn die Menge hält alles für tief, dessen Grund sie nicht sehen kann: sie ist so furchtsam und geht so ungern ins Wasser.

12. I had written this line before I discovered Tom Rockmore's outstanding paper. On pages 67–68 he writes:

The French debate offers a particularly interesting example of the delicate relation between thought and its context. With the exceptions noted, it is distinguished by its concern even now to defuse the problematic relation between Heidegger's thought and politics by arguing for a discontinuity between Heidegger's early and later position in order to "save" his thought and—in so far as the French discussion is dependent on Heidegger's theory—itsself. Yet Heidegger only turned against one form of Nazism, not Nazism as such. To fail to see this point, to conflate his withdrawal from the historical form of National Socialism with an unproven rejection of the essence of a movement Heidegger continued to embrace, is to overlook the emperor's new clothes.

Now French philosophers are not less intelligent or well-informed than those elsewhere. How can we explain their reluctance to see that the emperor has no clothes on? I believe that the reason lies in a persistent, unhealthy degree of identification of contemporary French philosophy with Heidegger's position, which literally forms its horizon. We can formulate what is clearly an existential predicament in the form of a paradox: to the extent that the horizon of contemporary French philosophy is constituted by Heidegger's thought, it cannot examine Heidegger's link to Nazism without putting itself into question, that is without simultaneously criticizing the Heideggerian position. In a word, Heidegger's French connection prevents, or impedes, the French thinkers from perceiving that the emperor has no clothes.

One of the points I am trying to make in the present paper is, I suppose, that

Derrida has become the emperor's tailor. Rockmore continues:

Despite Heidegger's oft-cited claim that when French philosophers begin to think they think in German—or by implication think about Heidegger, or even within the ambit of Heidegger's thought—it indicates that French thought will be even more robust, and accordingly able to grow in new and different ways, when it has finally examined its own Heideggerianism. For to the extent that Heidegger still forms the horizon of French philosophy, to appreciate the limits of his thought is to go beyond Heidegger and hence beyond French philosophy. But this move beyond Heidegger is, however, necessary if French thought is to advance beyond its present level.

13. See also Domenico Losurdo, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War: Community, Death, and the West*, tr. Marells and Jon Morris (New York: Humanity Books, 2001).

14. In Christopher Macann, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments, Volume IV: Reverberations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 42.

15. See "Only a god can save us: *Der Spiegel's* interview with Martin Heidegger," *Philosophy Today* (Winter 1976).

16. Gadamer, "Vi racconto questo secolo aggrappato al Titanic," an interview with A. Gnoli and F. Volpi, tr. Giorgio Baruchello: http://sol.falco.mi.it/db900/inter...zioni/Questo_secolo_aggrappato.htm. The Italian text:

Il progresso tecnico è diventato il nostro destino, net bene e nel male. Quale sistema politico assegnare alla tecnica per contenerla? La democrazia? Chissà. Ma se dovessi dire che cosa ai miei occhi è stato decisivo, risponderei che questo secolo ha inventato un'arma mediante la quale la vita sul pianeta può annientare se stessa. Questa la situazione inquietante cui siamo esposti. Senza tenere conto di ciò, non si capisce nulla dell'attuale politica americana. Possiamo ancora sognare che alla fine una qualche potenza ci salverà. Forse questa potenza è Dio.

17. See Giorgio Baruchello, "Pietist Prejudice in Gadamer's Misreading of Vico" (not yet published).

18. In fact, the central themes of this critique of modernity were already laid out by Nietzsche, and the dissection of Cartesian subjectivity was carried further by Husserl. These are subjects for other papers or books.

19. Rockmore, 37:

French Heideggerianism is a flourishing industry, perhaps the most important contemporary source of studies of Heidegger's thought in the world today. Within France, Heidegger's influence has in the meantime penetrated in other directions as well. It is no exaggeration to say that at present Heidegger and Heidegger alone is the dominant influence, the master thinker of French philosophy, and that his thought is the context in which it takes shape and which limits its extent. It is, then, no wonder that in the recent resurgence of controversy about Heidegger's link to Nazism French philosophy has tended to equate the attack on Heidegger with an attack on French philosophy.

20. Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 22—23.

21. In this regard, we have to listen to Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut. They have analyzed this critique of modernity in depth, and they have scrutinized and critically assessed the various ways in which their French neo-Heideggerian colleagues—most notably, Beaufret, Lacoue-Labarthe, Finkielkraut and Derrida—have been forced to engage in (admittedly ingenious and amazingly nimble) intellectual gymnastics in order to retain that portion of Heidegger's critique they find valuable while at the same time not having to commit themselves to the one thing that Heidegger was clear on—namely, that National Socialism is the proper, and the only, political path to follow if we are to establish that connection with technology that will complete the task of modernity by once and for all demolishing the metaphysics of subjectivity. Ferry and Renaut's little book, *Heidegger and Modernity*, is necessary reading here. (Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *Heidegger and Modernity*, tr. Franklin Philip [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990]) The following must here be quoted in its entirety, despite the length (65—68):

In addition to the view of an internal correspondence between Nazism and modernity Heidegger's thought includes a second

view of the relation between them, one that produces a tension with the former view and may be one of the keys to the complex relation between Heidegger's thought and National Socialism. For, parallel to the reading analyzed, Heidegger always saw in the Nazi endeavor the search for a third term irreducible to either Western democracies or Soviet collectivism. His 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which describes the globalization of technology as the "spiritual decline of the earth," conjures up the pincers of East-West conflicts in which Europe is caught: "From a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same; the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man." [n.32: Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 37] A disconcerting passage when read together with the view expressed in the earlier passages [n.33: Yet it is in no way isolated. The lectures on Hölderlin from the summer term of 1942 make "Bolshevism" merely "a variant of Americanism." (*Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 53, 86) The same thing appears again in his "Only a God Can Save Us," 55.], for this time Heidegger manifestly sees adequacy of response to global technology as a sign of decadence and seems to appeal to a third term, which is neither democracy nor collectivist totalitarianism, to counter this decadence: he of course sees this third term in National Socialism, whose "greatness" and "inner truth" would lie in a relation to technology different from, for example, the one described in his lecture on Nietzsche concerning Germany's defeat of France in 1940. Against the various political systems in both the East and the West that merely express the unleashing of technology, Nazi Germany thus offers a solution, and this is expressed in a lecture on Heraclitus in the summer of 1943: "The planet is in flames, the essence of man is out of joint. World-historical thinking can come only from the Germans—if, that is, they find and preserve 'the German essence' (*das Deutsche*)."[n.34: Martin Heidegger, *Heraclit* (1943), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 55 (1979), 123. (trans. Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger and the Nazis," *New York Review of Books* [16 June 1988]: 45) Nicolas Tertulian quotes this passage in a relevant article on Heidegger's references to Nazism in his lectures after his resignation from the rectorate. (*Quinzaine littéraire* [15—31 December 1987])

What is the logic of this second and *seemingly* quite different view of the significance of National Socialism? Here Heidegger points up the idea that the existing political systems of liberal

democracy in the West and collectivism in the East constitute merely the two political forms taken by the domination of subjectivity: "Only because and insofar as man actually and essentially has become subject is it necessary for him, as a consequence, to confront the explicit question: Is it as an 'I' confined to its own preferences and freed into its own arbitrary choosing, or as the 'we' of society?" Thus, in short, both the individual in a liberal society as well as the power and rights of the collective that oppose him in the East are figures of subjectivity, and as such they belong to the modern age: "Only where man is essentially already subject does there exist the possibility of his slipping into the aberration of subjectivism in the sense of individualism. But also, only where man *remains* subject does the positive struggle against individualism and for the community as the sphere of those goals that govern all achievement and usefulness have any meaning." [n.35: Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture," 132—33]

We are thus obliged to note that, though in this second view (*which does not follow the first chronologically but remains in constant tension with it*) the issue is one of "corresponding" politically to the demands of technology and hence of completed metaphysics, the purpose cannot be to fulfill these demands: that is being carried out in the East as well as the West, "Americanism" and the "Communist movement" being equally, Heidegger was to say in 1966, "determined by planetary technicity" [n.36: Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," 55.]; rather, the point here is less to see "the situation of man in the world of planetary technicity as an inextricable, inescapable destiny" than to "help man as such achieve a satisfactory relation to the essence of technicity"; and, declared Heidegger in 1966, "*National Socialism did indeed go in that direction.*" [n.37: Ibid., 61.] Certainly, Heidegger immediately made it clear that "those people, however, were far too poorly equipped for thought to arrive at a really explicit relation to what is happening today and has been under way for the past three hundred years," but it remains no less true that, considered in its "truth," the Nazi movement was on the right track: that of fashioning a "free relation to the technological world," a relation capable of counteracting "Americanism," i.e., the flooding of the products of technology all over the earth, which has turned into "a world market," in which, Heidegger says, what threatens us is of course less the "American" as such than how the "American

flood" expresses "the unexperienced nature of technology." [n.38: Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?" 113] In this sense, stresses Heidegger, "Americanism is something European." (ibid., 153) The term comes from Rilke, whose *Letters to Muzot* Heidegger quotes: "Now there are intruding, from America, empty and indifferent things, sham things, the trompe-l'oeils of life. . . . A house, as the Americans understand it, an American apple or a wine stock from over there have *nothing* in common with the house, the fruit, the grapes into which the hope and thoughtfulness of our forebears had entered. . . ." (ibid., 113)

And pages 84–88:

We have already stated how Heidegger's deconstruction of the metaphysics of subjectivity led him to lump liberalism and communism together in the same model, for both seemed to him two possible faces—one individualistic, one collectivistic—of the same world of technology. [n.4: It is interesting to note that, in a rather similar way, Max Weber's thinking could give rise in some people's minds to the myth of an "end of ideologies" owing to a confusion of liberalism and socialism in the ideal type of bureaucracy.] And from this perspective Heideggerianism sounded the theme of a defense of Europe and particularly Germany as "the middle empire" opposed to the two essentially identical expressions of the will to will represented by the United States and the Soviet Union. Here we should cite in its entirety the passage from his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* that we have already quoted in part:

"This Europe, which in its ruinous blindness is forever on the point of cutting its own throat, lies today in a great pincers, squeezed between Russia on one side and America on the other. *From a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same: the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man.* At a time when the furthest corner of the globe has been conquered by technology and opened to economic exploitation; when any incident whatever, regardless of where or when it occurs, can be communicated to the rest of the world at any desired speed; when the assassination of a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo can be "experienced" simultaneously; when time has ceased to be anything other than velocity

instantaneousness, and simultaneity and time as history has vanished from the lives of all peoples; when a boxer is regarded as a nation's great man; when mass meetings attended by millions are looked on as a triumph—then, yes then, through all this turmoil a question still haunts us like a specter: What for?—Whither?—And what then?

The spiritual decline of the earth is so far advanced that the nations are in danger of losing the last bit of spiritual energy that makes it possible to see the decline (taken in relation to the history of Being), and to appraise it as such. This simple observation has nothing to do with *Kulturpessimismus*, and of course it has nothing to do with any sort of optimism, either; for the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the transformation of men into a mass, the hatred and suspicion of everything free and creative, have assumed such proportions throughout the earth that such childish categories as pessimism and optimism have long since become absurd." [n.5: Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 37—38. (emphasis added)]"

We have seen how these leitmotifs of Heidegger's thinking in 1935 could tally—from the very foundation of his philosophy (it is *from the metaphysical point of view* that Russia and America are considered identical)—with major aspects of the conservative revolution. What we need to understand now is how a translation of this passage into the language of today may provide virtually intact, for an important segment of a leftist intelligentsia yearning for Marxism, the necessary intellectual instruments for resuscitating the defunct figure of the critical intellectual: Central Europe is no longer just Germany; more extensive in both the West and the East (up to the borders of the Soviet Union), it may again be the scene of military activity that is both anti-American and anti-Soviet. Finally realizing that Soviet bureaucracy was not a degenerate worker state but a totalitarian and even stratocratic empire, the "Heideggerian left" can hang onto the main thing: the idea that on the whole American pseudoliberalism is no better, that there are two faces of totalitarianism: George Orwell's *1984*, of course, but also Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The payoff is the chance to condemn, no longer on the basis of Marx but of Heidegger, the economic exploitation of the world, the false values of the

industrial culture (Bernard Tapie is the boxer Heidegger is talking about, and Madonna draws the masses) in a decline where people are threatened with a loss of "life with thought" and thus with a descent into a human herding together that is called "barbarism" from the viewpoint of a radical exteriority beyond optimism or pessimism.

Like Marxism in other times, this neo-Heideggerianism still has the advantage of what Karl Popper called "verificationism"; it is enough to open the newspaper, to look at television, or to listen to the radio, to find the myriad signs and symptoms that confirm a thesis that nothing, really, could falsify. That the media *also* have an informative role, that the birth of ephemeral stars *also* means a decrease in master thinkers and messianic ideologies, that conflicts are settled to a degree, or that the political culture become more democratic: so many objections that can be dismissed with a flick of the hand, so many signs of a freedom that an impeccably Heideggerian logic finds only too easy to prove inauthentic, thoroughly caught up as it is in the world of technology and enframing.

The debate cannot be settled by *facts*: in deciding between essentially unfalsifiable visions of the world, it is of no avail to set the empirical against the empirical. The most one can do is examine their internal coherence and subsequent effects. From this viewpoint, it is first of all clear, as we have noted, that this criticism of technology as the global concretization of an idea of man as *consciousness* and *will* implies, like it or not, a deconstruction of democratic reason and hence, in some sense, of humanism. It is also clear, however, that Heidegger's thinking, even fixed up this way, continues in some odd way to misfire because of its one-dimensionality. Just as, on the strictly philosophical level, it leads to lumping the various facets of modern subjectivity together in a shapeless mass and to judging that the progression from Descartes to Kant to Nietzsche is linear and in fact inevitable; just as, on the political level, it leads to the brutal inclusion of American liberalism *in the same category* with Stalinist totalitarianism.

22. After all, as Nietzsche tells us, "man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will." (*On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale [New York: Vintage Books, 1969], 163; Third Essay, Section 28) As Rockmore writes (42—43):

At the outset of the French debate, the opposition between Löwith on the one hand and De Gandillac and Towarnicki on the other already symbolizes the two basic alternatives in their respective readings of Heidegger's Nazism as either necessary or contingent. All other later debate, both within and without the French context, only varies, but does not fundamentally modify, these two main options. Obviously, these two extremes are incompatible. Since Löwith traces Heidegger's actions to his thought and Heidegger's thought to the historical context, Löwith disputes Towarnicki, who regards Heidegger's link to National Socialism as temporary, regrettable and unmotivated by the underlying position; and Löwith disputes as well De Gandillac's assertion that Heidegger was unaware of what he did.

The disagreement gave rise to a debate. In the debate Weil, who correctly qualifies Towarnicki's article as a plea for Heidegger, intervenes against the necessitarian thesis, whereas De Waelhens defends the contingency view. Weil criticizes Heidegger for a supposed failure to assume responsibility for his acts and as the sole important philosopher who took up Hitler's cause. But he denies the necessitarian thesis on the grounds that even by Heideggerian standards the link between Heidegger's thought and National Socialism is illegitimate. According to Weil, what he incorrectly calls Heideggerian existentialism is intrinsically defective since it leads to a decision in general, but not to any particular decision. From this perspective, Weil claims that Heidegger has falsified his own thought in merely pretending a *contrario* that a political decision could be derived from his apolitical thought. Although it is correct to point to the open-ended quality of Heidegger's view of resoluteness, this does not impede the derivation of a political consequence from another aspect of Heidegger's position, such as his conception of authenticity.

23. Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, tr. John P. Leavey, ed. David B. Allison (Stony Brook: Nicholas Hays, Ltd., 1978), 5–7.

24. Leavey, n.15: In *L'Ecriture et la difference*, 427–28; ET: in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 265–66.

25. Leavey, n.16: "The Ends of Man," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 30, No. 1 (1969), 56. A French version of this article was published in Derrida's *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972). The above citations occur on 162–63.

26. Leavey, n.17: Sarah Kofman, "Un philosophe 'unheimlich,'" in *Ecarts: Quatre Essais Apropos de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Fayard, 1973), 148, n. 1. The whole essay of Kofman is invaluable for "understanding" Derrida.

27. Leavey, n.18: "It was necessary to analyze, to put to work, in the text of the history of philosophy as well as in the so-called 'literary' text ... certain marks ... which I called by analogy (I emphasize this) undecidables, i.e., simulative units, 'false' verbal, nominal or semantic properties, which escape from inclusion in the philosophical (binary) opposition and which nonetheless inhabit it, resist and disorganize it, but without ever constituting a third term, without ever occasioning a solution in the form of speculative dialectics." (*Positions*, 58; ET, 36)

28. Leavey, n.19: "La Forme et le vouloir-dire: note sur la phénoménologie du langage," in *Marges*, 207; ET in *Speech and Phenomena*, 128.

29. Leavey, n.20: "Ousia et grammè: note sur une note de *Sein und Zeit*," in *Marges*, 78; ET: "'Ousia and Gramme': A Note to a Footnote in *Being and Time*," tr. Edward S. Casey, in *Phenomenology in Perspective*, ed. F. J. Smith (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970), 93.

30. Leavey, n.21: 62.

31. Leavey, n.22: E. Donato in "Structuralism: The Aftermath," 25, sees *Of Grammatology*, along with Foucault's *The Order of Things*, as "the only quest for time past and time regained that a fundamentally atheist [my emphasis] epistemological configuration might offer." Also see on this Mikel Dufrenne, "Pour une philosophie non théologique," in his *Le Poétique*, 2nd revised and enlarged ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973), 7–57. On Derrida and the sacred, see Henri Meschonnic, *Le Signe et le poème* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 401–92.

32. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, tr. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 68.

33. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, tr. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 28.
34. Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 11–12.
35. *Ibid.*, 57.
36. Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, tr. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 80. The passage concludes the final paragraph of Chapter Two, “The Fundamental Discoveries of Phenomenology, Its Principle, and the Clarification of Its Name,” § 8, “The principle of phenomenology,” (b) “Phenomenology’s understanding of itself as analytic description of intentionality in its apriori.”
37. Edith Stein’s Ph.D. dissertation, supervised by Husserl, was a phenomenological investigation of empathy. See *Edith Stein, On the Problem of Empathy*, tr. Waltraut Stein. The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume Three, third revised edition. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989)
38. Look, for example, at the life of Ingarden. See my *Roman Ingarden’s Ontology and Aesthetics* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), esp. Chapter One.
39. As part of my *Aesthetic Genesis* (in progress).