

On the Reading of Heidegger – Situating the *Black*

Notebooks

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What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again how innocent they are - how often and how easily they make mistakes and go astray; in short, their childishness and childlikeness – but that they are not honest enough in their work... – Nietzsche¹

1. Introduction: The Black Notebooks and the 'Heidegger Affair'

The publication of Heidegger's *Überlegungen, Considerations*, from the years 1931-1941 (part of the so-called *Schwarze Hefte* or *Black Notebooks*),² along with the appearance of Peter Trawny's own critical monograph,³ is only the latest act in the ongoing 'Heidegger Affair' that first began almost immediately following the end of the War, in 1946-47, with discussions in the French journal *Les temps modernes*,⁴ was taken up again in the 1960s in several books and articles, including those by Paul Hühnerfeld and Guido Schneeberger,⁵ but gained real intensity in the late 1980s with critical works by Victor Farias,⁶ Hugo Ott⁷, and more recently, in the 2000s, Emmanuel Faye.⁸

From a European perspective, it is an affair that is inextricably bound to the larger issue concerning the thinking through, and the coming to terms with, the horrendous events of the 1930s and 1940s – the German dictatorship of Hitler, the outbreak and course of the Second World War, and the Holocaust – events in which European thought and culture (which need not be taken to be restricted to Europe

alone) was itself implicated and from which it cannot be entirely disentangled. In its current instantiation, in the midst of resurgent right-wing politics across Europe and rising anti-Semitism, the affair also plays into a volatile contemporary situation in which memories of those earlier events are still very much alive. From an English-speaking perspective, the affair has other elements too, since many of the reactions to it draw upon and feed back into a longstanding suspicion of European thought that takes the horrors of Europe's modern past to be rooted in the claimed failings of such thought, and in what are seen to be the illiberal prejudices and dispositions, as well as the supposed philosophical incompetence, of thinkers such as Heidegger, but also Hegel and Nietzsche.⁹

In this latter respect, the 'Heidegger affair' has provided a stage for the playing out of the antagonism of English-speaking philosophy towards so-called 'Continental' thought, and often as providing a demonstration of the assumed moral and political superiority of the sort of thinking that 'analytic' thought supposedly exemplifies – thinking that is typically presented as sober and clear in contrast to the intoxication and obscurity of the Continental (such 'analytic' thinking remains closely associated with an English-speaking milieu in spite of the European origins on which it also draws or, indeed, its contemporary European instantiations). If from a European perspective the 'Heidegger affair' is sometimes taken to show a failure of *philosophy*, then from across the Channel and over the Atlantic (and down in the Southern Hemisphere too), it is often seen to demonstrate a more specific failure of *European* or *Continental* philosophy as such.

Although the latter reading has been less explicit in many reactions to the *Considerations* than previously (but is certainly not absent), still there remains a tendency for the *Considerations* to be read in a way that takes what they contain to confirm a set of pre-existing suspicions concerning the failings of the German philosopher, the inadequacy of his philosophy, and the flawed character of the style or tradition of thinking he is taken to represent. The reading of the *Considerations* so far has thus frequently been *polemical* rather than strictly *philosophical* – it has also

often been strongly *personal* in its orientation: it is the figure of Heidegger himself, and not merely his philosophy, that is in question, and his personal actions and character are taken as directly indicating the character of his philosophical thinking. The *Considerations* have thus been taken by many to provide the 'smoking gun' that definitively demonstrates the fact of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism, and on this basis, also establishes once and for all the unacceptability of Heidegger's work within the canon of respectable thinking.

In addition to any political issues they raise, and interpretively prior to them, the reading of the *Considerations* brings into view some important questions concerning the nature of philosophical engagement – and especially concerning the role of the *personal* in philosophical thought and engagement. Here the 'personal' encompasses the person of the *philosophical author*, so that the question arises as to the relation between the author and the philosophy, but also (if less frequently addressed) the person of the *philosophical reader*, so that the question arises as to the relation between the reader and the philosophy read. In each case, part of what is at issue is the way the personal life, dispositions, affections, or prejudices – whether political or otherwise – of the person are relevant, or should be relevant, to the understanding of and engagement with the philosophical work. Some of these questions are quite general in nature – they can be said to relate to philosophical authorship and readership as such – but some also take on a more specific character that pertains to the fraught historical context in which Heidegger's work, and the reading of it, is embedded.

Both of these sets of questions are essentially *hermeneutical* in character, but their hermeneutical character, even the questions themselves, are seldom directly taken up in the discussion of the matters at stake. Indeed, the discussion of those matters is frequently conducted in a way that is strangely divorced from any attention to hermeneutic questions – in a way that can even appear hermeneutically naive. One might argue that this is not surprising – after all, is not the very term 'hermeneutics', in its contemporary philosophical usage, inextricably associated with

Heidegger's name, and so might not a suspicion of hermeneutics itself be in play here? That may be so in some cases, but not in general, and what actually seems to be at work is more to do with a narrowing of focus to the question of moral judgment. In some cases, indeed, the very attempt to turn the matter back to broader interpretive considerations is seen as evidence of a failure to appreciate the moral questions at issue. The oddity of such a reaction, of course, is that the moral does not itself stand apart from the interpretive nor from the hermeneutical, and to suppose that moral judgment can be exercised independently of such considerations may itself be viewed as a particular form of moral blindness.

Part of my aim here is briefly to take up some of these hermeneutical questions, and so to explore some of the interpretive assumptions and approaches that seem to shape so much of the reading of the *Considerations*. In addition, I want to consider the way that reading connects with broader ways of reading Heidegger's thought, and the issues that it draws to our attention. This means, however, that my focus here is not on trying to untangle the details of the *Considerations*, or engage in a forensic investigation as to Heidegger's culpability as a Nazi or an anti-Semite. My aim is not to attack Heidegger, but nor is it to defend him. Indeed, the widespread tendency to construe the debate in just these terms is part of what is philosophically problematic about it (one might well wonder as to the genuine philosophical productivity of much of that debate when it remains framed in such terms).¹⁰ Instead my concern is to direct attention back to the question as to the understanding of the philosophical ideas that are at issue in Heidegger's work, and to do this, first, by looking to the complexities of reading itself, and especially the reading of a thinker such as Heidegger – it is this that occupies the largest part of my discussion below – and, second, to look more specifically at the *Considerations* as they stand in relation to the broader development of Heidegger's thinking, and especially, how they might relate to what I have elsewhere termed the 'topological' character of that thinking.

2. *The Complexities of Reading*

(i) *Questions of Interpretive Evidence*

That Heidegger was a Nazi and that he also held anti-Semitic views are simple facts.¹¹ But they are just that, and as facts they are all *too* simple. The real question concerns the significance to be attached to these facts and how they should be interpreted. Indeed, notwithstanding a widespread tendency to assume the contrary, neither of the central terms in play here – neither Nazism nor anti-Semitism – is a term that carries a single, straightforward, and unequivocal meaning (even if much of the discussion in which these terms figure would suggest otherwise). Apart from anything else, exactly how such terms should be understood is historically dependent – one cannot make sense of what is at issue merely by assuming that what Nazism or anti-Semitism means now is identical with what it meant in 1931, 1933, or 1941, or that the connotations and significance that attach to the terms now, and that attached to them then, are the same.

Heidegger's anti-Semitism, however crude it may appear from the entries in the *Considerations*, seems fundamentally to have been based in a form of cultural anti-Semitism of a sort that was widespread in Germany and Europe before the Second World War, and did not disappear afterwards (not even from German academic circles).¹² That it was so widespread, and that it indeed continued after the War, even after the Holocaust, is partly a function of the fact that it was indeed based in ideas of *cultural* rather than *natural* difference – which is not to say that such cultural anti-Semitism might not have been assimilated to or transformed into more naturalised forms.¹³ None of this makes such anti-Semitism any more acceptable (especially since it is often unclear whether anti-Semitism, in any particular case, is indeed focussed on 'culture' or 'nature' – to say nothing of the uncertainties surrounding the distinction between the very concepts of 'nature' and 'culture' themselves), but it can make for potential differences in how one understands it as

an idea and an attitude – can make for differences, in other words, in how it is understood *philosophically*.

In the case of Nazism, it is widely recognised that Heidegger's own adherence to 'the movement' (which is itself an equivocal term in this context) was based on his idiosyncratic version of National Socialism. For a time, but only for a time, Heidegger appears to have seen the possibility of a convergence between a National Socialism derived from his own thinking and the National Socialism embodied in the person of Adolf Hitler.¹⁴ Understanding how Heidegger might have seen such a convergence to be possible is crucial to understanding Heidegger's *involvement with* the Nazis in 1930-1934, but it is also crucial to understanding his *break from* Nazism. That break cannot be set aside as merely an expression of pique or sour grapes on Heidegger's part (even if something of this was part of the personal context of that break) – certainly not if the original involvement is itself seen as philosophically grounded, and that it was philosophically grounded is surely what makes it of genuine interest and significance. Recognising the equivocal character of 'Nazism' in the Heideggerian context is thus crucial to understanding how Heidegger was complicit with Nazism, but it also renders suspect the straightforward identification of Heidegger and Nazism.

As soon as one recognises the need to clarify what is at issue in talk of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism, then the fact that Heidegger was indeed a Nazi and an anti-Semite starts to appear rather more complicated and much less straightforward. Moreover, that Heidegger was a Nazi and an anti-Semite are facts that pertain, in the first instance, to Heidegger's *biography*, but whether and to what extent they are to be taken as relevant to Heidegger's *philosophy* is not something that can simply be assumed. Even given the way in which a body of philosophical thinking can be seen to emerge out of the personal of the life of the philosopher, still one cannot move from the life to the philosophy without a degree of interpretive effort – the life is no less in need of interpretation than is the philosophy, and the

philosophy can shed light on the life just as the life can shed light on the philosophy. Interpretation does not move in only one direction.

Moreover, in trying to establish the interconnection of life and thought, what must be done is to show how the life entails certain claims or commitments (expressed in actions and decisions as well as in what is written and said), and then show that those claims and commitments are also present within the philosophy or vice versa, and how those claims and commitments entail other claims and commitments within that philosophy or within that life. The exploration of the interconnection between life and thought is thus an exploration of sets of entailments and implications – entailments and implications that need to be concretely identified – and cannot take the form merely of assuming that the general character of a life is reflected in the thought, or of the thought (or aspects of the thought) in the life.

Of course, the claims and commitments that may be taken to describe the content of a life or of a body of thought will almost always exhibit a degree of inconsistency. Indeed, neither a single life nor a single body of thought ever presents itself as a completely integrated whole – the fact that both develop over time implies as much – and both life and thought will also be characterised by indeterminacy and ambiguity. Everyone is as prone to misunderstanding themselves – at least when they turn to the conscious attempt to make sense of their life and thought – as they are also prone to misunderstanding others. Even the philosopher – even Heidegger himself – has no more authority in telling us how his or her thought is to be interpreted, than do we as interpreters of that same body of thought. A thinker's own self-explanations and self-interpretations thus merely add to the body of what is to be interpreted, providing more evidence on which interpretation must be addressed, rather than providing a definitive determination of or direction for that interpretation.

The interpretive injunction that one cannot, in interpreting a body of thinking, prioritize the facts of the life over the content of that thinking – so that the reading

that is derived from the life also needs to be supported by evidence that supports that reading in the thinking itself¹⁵ – is essentially an injunction that requires that one look to the whole body of evidence in the attempt to understand a thinker, and not merely to any one part of that evidence. This is especially important in the case of the material from the *Considerations*, and from the *Notebooks* more generally. This material is not interpretively more authoritative simply because it includes Heidegger's personal reflections. In fact, it might well be argued that the private character of the reflections that the *Considerations* contain (even if later intended for publication) means that they ought to be read in the light of the other published work, rather than the other way around. Even if one insisted that greater authority had to be attached to the *Considerations*, and that the direction of interpretation did not run from the other works to the *Considerations*, still the *Considerations* cannot be interpreted as if they stood alone, and their interpretation has to be undertaken in conjunction with the wider task of interpreting Heidegger's work as a whole – a matter on which I shall have more to say below.

Unfortunately, for much of the discussion as it has unfolded so far, not only is there a tendency for the *Considerations* to be read and interpreted apart from their location within the larger body of Heidegger's work, but most readings have tended to focus only on certain passages from within the *Considerations* – especially the same anti-Semitic passages – which then become the key for more general interpretive claims. As a result, much of the debate so far concerning the *Considerations* has tended to remain fixated on a relatively small number of passages, often apart from their wider context even within *Considerations* themselves.

Although hermeneutically problematic, this tendency for what amounts to a form of selectively focussed reading is partly a result of the nature of the *Considerations*, and of the *Notebooks*, as a disparate collection of reflections on a wide range of topics, and so as lacking the sort of over-arching thematic or organisational unity that would normally be associated with a single work. Individual passages thus lack the sort of contextual embedding that one finds elsewhere. The selectivity

that is evident here has also been encouraged by the manner in which the material from the *Notebooks* has been made public. Almost all of the passages that have drawn most attention appeared in piecemeal form prior to the publication of the *Considerations* in their entirety (the material thus originally appeared in papers and presentations on the *Considerations* that drew on specific passages – and always, of course, passages that have, at least on first reading, a highly provocative content). In similar fashion, specific anti-Semitic passages from *Anmerkungen* [Remarks] A, *Gesamtausgabe* 97, have now also appeared prior to the actual publication of the volume as a whole. Such selectivity runs the obvious danger of already implying a particular interpretive stance, without supplying the argument for it, purely on the basis of the salience it gives to the passages selected.

(ii) *Questions of Philosophical Understanding*

Although the discussion of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism is often presented as a relatively simple matter – as if it were just a matter of showing that he really was both – such a presentation is not only simple, but also a simplification. Indeed, that it is a simplification is part of what gives the issue such a sensationalist character and that enables the headline hyperbole that seems often to dominate its public discussion.

To some extent, the simplification that appears here can be seen as an expression of the often direct and immediate personal reaction that many readers of Heidegger feel in the face of the seeming discrepancy between the seeming power and insight of so many of Heidegger's major philosophical works, and the bald facts of his Nazism and anti-Semitism. Michael Dummett reports his own shock at first encountering the virulent racism and anti-Semitism expressed in Gottlob Frege's diaries.¹⁶ Many readers of Heidegger have undoubtedly experienced a similar shock, perhaps disappointment,¹⁷ and even a sense of betrayal, at what they have encountered in the *Considerations* or elsewhere, or on first learning, having perhaps already come to admire Heidegger as a philosopher, of some of the details of his

biography (perhaps not only his Nazi entanglement, or his anti-Semitism, but his duplicity, his tendency to self-aggrandizement, his exploitative relationship with women). That one might find some of Heidegger's writings and actions to be so personally offensive as to be impossible to overcome, and so as an insurmountable barrier to any philosophical engagement, is an understandable reaction that requires neither explanation nor justification. If we wish, however, to go beyond such a personal reaction, and indeed to engage philosophically, then we have no choice but to engage with the philosophical and interpretive complexities that Heidegger presents to us.

Engaging with the complexities of Heidegger's thought is all the more important given the very fact of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism. Whatever we may think of Heidegger before or after the emergence of the material in the *Considerations*, his work is an inextricable and central element in the European thought of the twentieth century, and it is so partly because it also stands in such an important relation to previous thinking – especially to the work of Kant and Nietzsche. Moreover, just as English-language philosophy cannot be entirely disentangled from European thought, so too the influence and relevance of Heidegger's thinking also goes beyond the horizons of Europe alone, and may even be said to have filtered into aspects of analytic thinking – and not only into the work of Richard Rorty. Engaging with Heidegger's philosophy requires that we try to think through his work and through the tradition of which it is a part - which means thinking Heidegger in relation to Kant and Husserl, to Arendt and Gadamer, to Foucault and Derrida – as well as the traditions that it runs alongside and even those that stand opposed to it. It also means thinking and reading his work with a sense of the historical context to which it belongs.

In this latter respect, part of what the *Considerations* surely bring home is the extent to which every philosophy is indeed 'of its time', and subject to the blindness's and prejudices of that time, just as every philosophy is also subject to the blindness and prejudices of the thinker herself. The real measure of the significance of a

philosopher is determined by the extent to which their thinking is able to transcend the blindnesses and prejudices their work will inevitably contain, and is able to continue to speak to us in our own time in a way relevant to that time. Clearly there are some thinkers whose work does not do this, and whom we therefore cannot read - and certainly cannot read with any sense of having learnt something.

Heidegger surely is such a thinker – in spite of assertions by some commentators to the contrary – and the very extent of his influence, and his embeddedness in twentieth century and contemporary thought, would seem to confirm this. One of the ironies, moreover, is that the very embeddedness at issue here is an embeddedness that connects Heidegger's thought to the tradition of twentieth century *Jewish* thinking – and not only to the work of thinkers such as Arendt, Jonas, Levinas and others, as well as Husserl, but also to such as Rosenzweig and Bubner. The close proximity of Heidegger to Jewish thinking is not only important for our understanding of those Jewish thinkers, but, perhaps even more significantly, it is also important for how we understand Heidegger's own thought. In spite of his anti-Semitism, then, it turns out that Heidegger cannot properly be read other than in a way that takes account of what might even be said to be the 'pro-Semitic' character of key elements within that thinking (and one cannot be sure what Heidegger might have thought of this 'inner connection' between his own and Judaic thought).¹⁸ Again, the simple fact of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism turns out to be less illuminating than we might have supposed, and the real picture rather more complex than is so often assumed.

Engaging with the complexities that are indeed at issue in the reading of Heidegger, and refusing the tendency to simplification, not only requires reading the Heidegger of the 'thirties and 'forties in relation to the rest of Heidegger's thought, and in a way that retains its integral connection with the larger tradition, but it also requires resisting the language of 'contamination', 'infection', and 'taint' that is so common in discussions of Heidegger's relation to Nazism and to anti-Semitism. The

effectiveness of such language depends more on the sheer emotional charge it carries than on any argumentation that it advances.

'Contamination', 'infection', and 'taint' can arise, after all, out of mere proximity, and when present, leave little or no room for compromise – that which is contaminated, if it cannot be 'purified', tends to be reviled and rejected. Not only does the language of contamination, infection, and taint provide a way of advancing the case against Heidegger himself without the need to engage in the complexities of what is at issue (and by covering over the fact of their simplification), but it also serves to promote the case against any genuine engagement with Heidegger's thought – such engagement risks the same contamination, the same infection, the same taint. It is strange to find such language – a language so characteristically employed by Nazis and anti-Semites themselves – at work in a context in which the dangers of irrationality are at the very same time so frequently warned against.

The way in which the language of 'contamination', 'infection' and 'taint' is employed here, and the desire for some sort of 'purification' of thinking that it seems to imply, itself seems tied to a tendency that not only characterises a certain type of response to Heidegger's own Nazism and anti-Semitism, but also to Nazism and the Holocaust, and even to the Second World War more generally. It is a response that involves setting these phenomena and events apart from us, absolving ourselves of any responsibility for those phenomena and events, focussing guilt and responsibility for those phenomena and events on the moral corruption of 'others'. It is just this tendency that underpins the idea, so often invoked in English speaking philosophical circles, that it was indeed *European* thought, in particular, that prepared the way for, and was complicit with, the horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust.

What is in question here is not whether one can or should make moral judgment on certain actions or decisions – there can be no question, for instance, that in regard to Heidegger's decision to commit himself to the National Socialist Revolution, that it was not merely a 'mistake', but that it was a horrendous failure of

moral as well as political judgment. Yet such judgment ought not to preclude the attempt to understand; it certainly need not rule out the possibility of engagement; and it must also imply recognition of the need for humility. There is surely nothing of which humans are capable that is not also a possibility to which we are ourselves connected just in virtue of our being human. Evil is not something *outside* or *beyond* the human, but a failure *of* the human. This is partly why the Holocaust is so horrific – it is a horror that proceeds, not from something that is *other* than human, nor from some *single person* (Hitler) or *exclusive group of persons* (the Nazis, the Germans, the Europeans) such that they could be set apart, excluded, quarantined from the rest of us, but from a possibility that belongs to human being itself, even though it is also a possibility that consists essentially in the denial and destruction of human being.¹⁹ One might add that true judgment never sets the one judged apart from the one who judges, but rather proceeds from recognition of the human character of evil as well as good – which is why all judgment ought properly to contain an element of sorrow or of compassion, even if it may be hard to recognise or to feel.²⁰

The language of 'contamination', 'infection' and 'taint', and with it the tendency to exclusionary forms of judgment, becomes especially problematic inasmuch as it readily serves to conceal our own areas of blindness, our own failings, and even our own complicity in some of the phenomena that we rightly condemn – our own *partial* complicity, though it may be said to be distant or contentious, in an event such as the Holocaust.²¹ I write this piece in Tasmania, a place that may be thought to be far from Auschwitz or Dachau. Yet Tasmania, or Van Dieman's Land, as it was known, has its own racism, its own history of genocide, its own history of human degradation and denial, some of whose roots are those out of which the Holocaust also grew. In Tasmania, one is not at all far from the camps, and all too close to the horrors that humanity is capable of enacting. Even though it may vary in extremity, and may even be seen as taking on a unique form in the Holocaust itself, inhumanity is something in which everyone and everyplace seems to have some share that is their own. No exclusive judgment then, no judgment that simply

removes those we judge from us or us from them, no judgment that does not also allow of understanding and even engagement – our engagement with Heidegger requires this as does every such case.

Not only can one not remove Heidegger from the tradition of twentieth-century philosophy, but neither can one remove Heidegger's thinking of the 'thirties and 'forties from Heidegger's own thought. If one wishes genuinely to engage with Heidegger's thinking, whether his very early or his late thought, then one cannot do so in some selective fashion, setting aside his thinking from the troublesome years prior to and during the Second World War, since to do so means to rule out an understanding of the way Heidegger's thinking might have retained continuity in spite of the problematic paths – the *Holzwege* if not *Irrwege* – on which he loses himself in that time, and rules out an understanding of how the new orientation of the post-War period emerges.²² Heidegger's thinking during the 'thirties and early 'forties is thus important precisely because of the way in which it can be seen as *transitional* – as standing between the early thinking that culminates in *Being and Time* and the later thinking of the post-War essays. Heidegger's own talk of 'another beginning' (in the *Contributions* and elsewhere) can be read, in this regard, as referring not only to the other beginning of philosophy itself, but also to the other beginning that belongs to Heidegger's own thinking. These two beginnings are necessarily connected (what Heidegger calls the *Kehre*, 'the turning', is itself the turn from the one beginning to the other), and both are perhaps more significant in the direction they give to thinking than in the possibility of their attainment.²³

Part of what surely leads Heidegger into Nazism, apart from any personal *political* tendencies, is the fact that the political crisis in which Germany found itself in the late-twenties and early 'thirties – a crisis to which many saw the Nazis as offering a direct response – coincided for Heidegger with his own philosophical crisis – a crisis that had arisen out of what can only be described as the failure of *Being and Time* and the particular philosophical direction that it embodied. Part of what occurs, as a result, is a different focus on the issue of human being that is no

longer so attentive to individual Dasein (hence the abandonment of many of the existential themes of *Being and Time*), along with a different method and style of approach (one much less geared to the sort of Kantian 'analysis' of the earlier work), along with a re-conceptualisation of time and temporality now undertaken from within a more encompassing political-cultural and historical frame – although always interpreted philosophically. In this respect, Heidegger's attempt to rearticulate the philosophical vision that is unsuccessfully and incompletely worked out in *Being and Time* partially converges with the political project that Heidegger initially identifies (in the early 'thirties) with Hitler and National Socialism. It is a vision that in its rearticulated form comes to focus on the idea of a people (*Volk*), the historical destiny of a people, and the manner of the playing out of that destiny within the history of being.²⁴ Here the history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*) is inseparable, so it would seem, from this idea of such a collective destiny.

The rethinking of time and temporality, in particular, that occurs here brings with it a rethinking of space and spatiality, and so also brings a more direct explication of a set of topological notions into view (notions that are already evident even earlier in the very idea of the clearing – *die Lichtung*). In the very early 'thirties, however, the move towards a more topological orientation is still relatively unclear. Moreover, as Heidegger's lectures on 'Nature, History, State' from 1933-1934 also show,²⁵ Heidegger's thinking about spatiality at this time is both still inadequately worked out and apparently constrained by Heidegger's own focus on the idea of a 'people'. Consequently, the idea of spatiality that appears here – in the sense other than that associated with mere quantitative extension – is in terms of the space of a people (*Raum des Volkes*).²⁶ Much of what creates problems in the 'thirties and 'forties is precisely this overshadowing of Heidegger's thinking by the idea of a people, and the understanding of the history of being associated with this – something that remains even after the entanglement with Nazism.

The rethinking of spatiality, and the move towards a more explicitly articulated notion of place, seems to emerge in Heidegger's thinking primarily

through the engagement with Hölderlin,²⁷ even if it also occurs rather slowly, and still retains problematic elements even up until the early 'forties – it is not until the lectures and essays of the late 'forties and the 'fifties and 'sixties that the topological character of Heidegger's thinking becomes an explicit element in that thinking. It is particularly important to see this move towards an explicitly topological orientation as occurring in, and developing partly out of, Heidegger's philosophical engagements in the 'thirties and early 'forties.

It is commonplace to treat any thinking that gives priority to place and space as already predisposed to the sort of exclusionary and repressive politics associated with Nazism as well as with conservative politics more generally. What we see in Heidegger in the 'thirties, however, is the beginning of a move towards a mode of topological thinking that develops as part of a move away from Nazism. Even though they have little to offer in terms of illuminating the development of a topological perspective in Heidegger's thinking – for that one must look, in particular, to Heidegger's lectures on Hölderlin, especially the river poems,²⁸ as well as to a careful reading of the *Contributions*²⁹ – the *Considerations* nevertheless provide significant confirmation of Heidegger's own critical distancing of himself from Nazism in the period from 1935 onwards. Moreover, the move away from Nazism is itself connected, as the *Considerations* also make clear, to Heidegger's developing critique of technological modernity – a critique that, as the works of the post-war period indicate, is itself closely tied to Heidegger's thinking of place.

The great paradox of modernity is that at the very same time as it offers more and more potential for improvement in the material quality of human life, it also threatens the character of those lives in fundamental ways. Like the bargain Mephistopheles makes with Faust, the price that modernity seems to demand for the material improvement it offers is the loss of what is genuinely human about that life. This is not only the view we find in Heidegger (although Heidegger's own version of this critique is little appreciated and poorly understood in much English-speaking

writing on technology), but is rather part of a deeper and more pessimistic tradition within Western thought.

Elements of this tradition can be found in Adorno and Arendt as much as in Heidegger; they are present in Nietzsche, and to some extent in Weber, as well as in Foucault; they are evident in the work of Camus and René Char; they can be discerned too in the work of more recent writers such as Richard Sennett and Zygmunt Bauman (to take but two examples), and even, from within the analytic tradition itself, in the work of Georg Henrik von Wright.³⁰ One might argue that adherents to this tradition are less commonly found in English-language thought, although Bauman and Sennett, as well as Von Wright, all write in English, and Thoreau and Emerson, as well as Blake and Wordsworth, can be seen to belong to this tradition also. The critique of modernity need not be anti-democratic nor anti-liberal (much depends, in any case, on what these terms are taken to mean – once again, the assumption of their univocity is a common if dangerous mistake), although it does sometimes manifest, in the twentieth century especially, as a rejection of a certain form of 'Americanism' – where the latter has to be understood as a term for the global culture of modernity that has, over the last hundred years or so, often been identified with the United States, and continues to be so often identified throughout much of the world outside of North America.

The critique of technological modernity that is at issue here is most definitely not the same as the anti-modernism that is often taken to be an element in Nazism – Nazism has no critique of technological modernity, and at times, as Jeffrey Herf has shown, appears actually to embrace modernity and the technological.³¹ The relation between modernity and Nazism – and between modernity and fascism – is complex. Nazism seems to be an essentially modern phenomenon, and yet it encompasses both modernist and anti-modernist elements. Heidegger seems to have viewed Nazism, initially, as providing the basis for a challenge to certain problematic aspects of modernity (there is a fundamental ambiguity in his comment about Nazism as the site for "the confrontation between global technology and modern

humanity"³²), and, later, as itself embodying many of those same aspects – as embodying what he refers to in the *Considerations*, and elsewhere, as *Machenschaft*, machination, and *Rechnung*, calculation.³³ In this way, Nazism comes to be an expression of the essence of technological modernity, an expression, in other words, of what Heidegger later names as *das Gestell*. In the *Considerations*, it becomes apparent that Heidegger views the Jews as an embodiment of technological modernity also – seeming thereby to accept uncritically the common stereotype of the Jew as the 'rootless cosmopolitan' obsessed with money. Yet neither the Jews nor the Nazis have any unique status in this regard – in the 'thirties and early 'forties, as far as the comments in the *Considerations* are concerned, Heidegger seems to find *Machenschaft* and *Rechnung* reigning almost everywhere.

The critique of technological modernity that appears in the *Considerations* is clearly, however, only a precursor to the latter thinking as expressed in essays such as 'The Question Concerning Technology' – it is not identical with it, and so has to be distinguished from it. Indeed, part of what marks out the earlier from the later critique is the way in which the former presents technological modernity as operating in and through the power of certain groups, whether they be Nazis or Jews, to take but two examples, and also as a form of humanly oriented instrumentalism. It is thus that Heidegger's anti-Semitism is not touched by his separation from Nazism – not only was his anti-Semitism of a different character from that which was to the forefront of Nazi ideology, but Heidegger's still developing critique of modernity draws, somewhat opportunistically and uncritically, upon the stereotype of the Jew as symbolic of the same technological modernity that is also supposed to be at work in Nazism.

Significantly, the critique of technological modernity that Heidegger develops after the war sloughs off many of the crudities that characterise it in the 'thirties and 'forties, and it is by that later stage also more closely and directly connected to Heidegger's more carefully worked out understanding of space and place, and their relation to being and human being. The shift can thus be connected with

philosophical shifts within the structure of the thinking at issue, and cannot, at least not without argument, be treated as merely a consequence of the change in political circumstances (which is not to say that they do not also have an impact). The discussion of technology in 'The Thing', from 1949, thus begins with an analysis of the way in which the apparent removal of distance accomplished by modern radio and television nevertheless fails to bring things near to us, since what it does is actually to obliterate the sense of both the near and the far, and in so doing also to obliterate the appearance of the thing *as* thing. This is not peculiar just to television and radio – a more fundamental claim is at work here: that the real changes brought about by technological modernity are changes brought about through changes in place and space or in the manner in which they themselves appear.³⁴ This is not something evident in the attacks on technological modernity that appear in the *Considerations*, and unsurprisingly so, since in the earlier period Heidegger had still not arrived at a developed articulation of the topology with which the later critique is so closely connected.

Like those other critiques of technological modernity that can be found in the work of Weber, Adorno, Camus and von Wright, Heidegger does not focus merely on any technological device or set of such devices, but rather on technological modernity as a mode of *ordering* of the world – a mode of ordering that he identifies as present in the system that turns the Rhine both into a source of hydro-electric power and a destination for the tourism industry. All ordering, one might say, is spatial, but the ordering of technological modernity also involves a particular form of the spatial – a form that ties the spatial to the measurable, the extended, the quantifiable, and the boundless – and that also treats the temporal as implicated within this same spatial structure. Time is convertible into space on this account, and space is convertible into time, and both are capable of conversion into the measurable and the numerical. What results, and what underpins technological modernity, is thus a form of ordering that has nothing *but ordering* as its goal, and that reduces everything to the pure orderability of quantity, measure, and number. It

is this ordering or orderability, and the drive towards it, that Heidegger calls *das Gestell*. Within it, everything appears in terms always in terms of that plethora of other elements with which it is connected, which it uses and by which it can be used, that can be transformed into it and into which it can be transformed.³⁵

Though the connection is seldom made, Heidegger's account of *Gestell*, and the manner in which it takes up everything that is as part of a globalised network of connections that constantly produces more connections, is almost identical to the contemporary vision of the connected, networked world that is part of the rhetoric of globalised capital and bureaucratized governance – a rhetoric that has also permeated academic discourse in the humanities and social sciences.³⁶ Spatial flows, unbounded connections, global networks – these are the concepts that rule contemporary thinking as they are also supposed to rule the contemporary world. Everything within that world is reducible, in principle if not always in practice, to what can be measured and quantified. The emphasis on measure, number, and quantity, and the manner in which that emphasis is expressed and developed, brings technological modernity into close proximity with modern capitalism. One might argue that technological modernity, as Heidegger understands it, is thus identical with the form taken by modern corporatized, globalized capitalism, although this would also require a rethinking of what capitalism itself might be. In this respect, the complain that Heidegger's critique of technological modernity is disconnected from any account of modern economic structures may be said to miss the extent to which the underlying structure of technological modernity as articulated by Heidegger cuts across the usual distinctions between social, political, and economic structures. Thus, even though capitalism (nor communism either) is given much attention anywhere in Heidegger's writings, this does not mean that his work has no relevance to the understanding of contemporary capitalism or that it is disconnected from all or any of the issues to which capitalism gives rise.

It is striking feature of many contemporary discussions of technology, and even of much contemporary discussion of Heidegger, that the Heideggerian critique

of technological modernity is often dismissed as deeply flawed or inadequate.³⁷ On the one hand, the fact that there is indeed much that it leaves implicit is one possible reason for this, but on the other hand, such a dismissal also appears rather short-sighted given the clear affinities of the Heideggerian critique with that larger tradition of European 'pessimism' and technological critique that, as I noted above, extends from Weber to Sennett and Thoreau to Camus. Moreover, very few of the critics of Heidegger on technological modernity attempt any detailed engagement with the details of the Heideggerian position – at least there seems little attempt to understand that critique in its own terms. It seems that it is enough merely to claim that Heidegger's account is too general and encompassing, too much concerned with the question of 'essence', too preoccupied with metaphysics, too much focussed on the technologies of the past. Almost never is there any sense of the larger context into which the critique of technological modernity fits, and certainly not of its topological character.

There is no doubt that Heidegger's critique of technological modernity during the 'thirties – developed through his analysis of the ideas of *Rechnung* and *Machenschaft*, and evident in works such as the *Considerations* – is under-developed and flawed in many respects. It often remains within a fairly conventional structure, is expressed in ways that draw on contemporary prejudices (including anti-Semitic prejudices³⁸), and is not developed as part of any more ramified or integrated set of concepts. It is only as it comes to separate itself from contemporary conventionalities and biases, and from the contingencies of circumstance, and as it is better connected with an understanding of the topology of being (thereby also connecting the calculative and quantitative with a certain mode of spatialisation and temporalisation, and, perhaps most importantly, with the refusal of bound or limit), that Heidegger's criticism of technological modernity takes on the form of a more significant critique. Yet although this development does not occur until later, it nevertheless arises out of the earlier account – and so out of the thinking that is evident in the *Considerations* among other works. Moreover, what the *Considerations*

themselves show is the way that developing critique is central to Heidegger's thinking even in the 'thirties, and is itself tied to Heidegger's engagement with as well as disengagement from Nazism. The problem of thinking through Heidegger's involvement with Nazism is not separable from the problem of thinking through the development of his critique of technology, and that also includes thinking through the way the later critique differs from the earlier even as it arises out of it. The material now evident in the *Considerations* thus ought to make clear the importance of a closer engagement with Heidegger's critique of technology as it develops across his thinking – an engagement that has, however, been all too rare up until now.

That such engagement has indeed been rare, and the dismissal of Heidegger's critique all too quick, may well indicate something about the very context in which the debate over the 'Heidegger affair' has itself been positioned. Much of that debate has been concerned, not merely to demonstrate the fact of Heidegger's political and moral culpability during the 'thirties, but more importantly, to show that his culpability extends to encompass all of his thinking, if not to *Being and Time* and before (Heidegger's *magnum opus* often seems to be accorded a degree of quarantine), then certainly to the later thinking. Some of this is explained by concern over Heidegger's failure to show remorse or properly to address the horror of the Holocaust, but it also seems connected with the aversion to the later thinking that is common among many, especially English-language, readers. The later Heidegger is often viewed as the real enemy of sober rationality, of clear thinking, and so also, of the modern, progressivist project typically associated with contemporary 'Western' societies.³⁹ Moreover, any genuine engagement with the complexities in Heidegger's own work, especially those surrounding his entanglement with Nazism and anti-Semitism, is difficult without also recognising the complexities present in our own situation – without recognising the failures and moral ambiguities to which we ourselves are prone – and such recognition is itself rare. Heidegger's Nazi sympathies and anti-Semitic attitudes thus become the focus for the attempt to remove Heidegger from academic discourse, not merely because of his sometime

failure as a human being or as a thinker, but more importantly perhaps, because of the manner in which his work offends against the belief in modernity, in 'reason', in technology, in capitalism, in 'the West' – because it offends, perhaps, against our belief in ourselves. Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism allows us to put Heidegger to one side, or apparently so, and also to put to one side his criticism and his pessimism – to put to one side the uncertainties his work raises about our own thinking, and even, perhaps, to quieten the political questions (on both the left *and* the right – if these terms any longer have meaning) to which that thinking also gives rise.

4. Conclusion: The Failures of Thinking

To reiterate the point: none of what has been said above mitigates or diminishes Heidegger's moral and personal failings, nor is it intended to do so, but it ought to make us more careful in the manner of our own judgments – and this must include the judgments we make, not only about Heidegger, but also about his philosophy, and about philosophy more broadly. It is sometimes said that what is at issue in the question of Heidegger's Nazism, and one might extend this to his anti-Semitism also, is not only his own failings as a person or a thinker, but rather a failing of philosophy itself. In this fashion, Heidegger's failings can come to be seen as philosophy's failings, and we may, as a result, find ourselves inclined to abandon philosophy, rather just the philosopher. Here is one significant area, however, where we should indeed be careful in our judgment – the seeming failure of philosophy, if failure it is in this case, cannot be taken as a reason for philosophy's abandonment.

If philosophy is understood merely as a certain institutionalised discipline, then the failure of philosophy as might be exemplified in Heidegger's case may well be taken to indicate something of the failure of a certain institutionalised and professionalised form of philosophy – but in that case, it is more a failure of such institutionalisation and professionalization than of philosophy as such. It is a failure

that surely threatens today in a way different in kind, but not necessarily in degree, from the way it threatened, and was also realised, across many disciplines in the 'thirties. Contemporary forms of academic institutionalisation and professionalization seem increasingly to be moving towards decreased capacity for independent action and decision within institutions and on the part of academics, and so also towards a diminished sense of moral agency or the capacity to resist and to dissent (tendencies evident across many societies, including those of North America, the United Kingdom and Australasia).

Yet if the heart of philosophy is just the attempt to think, then the failure of philosophy would also be the failure of thinking, and no matter how disastrous, such a failure cannot lead to the abandonment of thinking. That thinking fails, may even be inevitably given over to failure (thinking offers no guarantees), reflects the incompleteness of thinking – reflects the fact that thinking is a task that cannot be refused, but only continued. Even to countenance the abandonment of thinking is to threaten to lapse into senselessness. The underlying mistake is to suppose that we can think *without failing* – the surprise is not when our thinking fails us, then, but when it is, in some sense, successful. It is precisely because thinking is incomplete and failing – itself a function of the radicality of our finitude – that questioning and listening, as the later Heidegger so often insists, are so central to thinking. One of Heidegger's own failings in the 'thirties and 'forties is that he does not himself seem to pay sufficient heed to this, but rather places the emphasis on answer and decision (something present in the very style of his writing in that period).

The emphasis on questioning here is relevant to our attitude towards the challenge presented by technological modernity (it is partly why there can be no single or simple response here), but it is especially relevant to philosophy's relation to politics. One of Heidegger's mistakes was surely to think, like Plato, that philosophy offered a surer basis for political engagement than is available to others – that the philosopher in politics is less prone to failure than the mere politician (which is perhaps why Heidegger could imagine that he was capable of guiding even Hitler

– *Den Führer führen*). This is surely one of the vanities of philosophy – that philosophy can guide politics, that it can provide the ground for political decision. If, however, we take the recognition of the failing character of thinking as lying at the heart of philosophy, as perhaps it ought, then perhaps the proper and only role for philosophy in relation to politics can be one, not of decision, but precisely of constant questioning – of a constant reiterating of the failing and incomplete character of political thinking no less than of any other thinking.

Such questioning is not only relevant to philosophy in its relation to politics, however, but as it derives from what philosophy itself is, from what thinking might itself be, then such questioning is also central to philosophy's relation to itself. This relation is itself part of what is at issue in the attempt to think through the issues surrounding Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* – it is at issue in terms of the hermeneutical problems that surround the engagement with those works, in Heidegger's own relation to them, in their place and the place of the ideas they contain within contemporary philosophy, and in our own engagement with the *Notebooks*, with the questions they raise, and with ourselves.

¹ “On the Prejudices of Philosophers”, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1989), §5, p. 12.

² Edited by Peter Trawny, and published in Frankfurt by Klostermann, the separate volumes are: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938), Gesamtausgabe, 94* (2014); *Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39), Gesamtausgabe 95* (2014); *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939-1941), Gesamtausgabe, 96* (2014); *Anmerkungen A (Schwarze Hefte 1941-1945), Gesamtausgabe 97* (2015); *Anmerkungen B, Gesamtausgabe, 98* (not yet published).

³ Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014).

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- ⁴ Including Karl Löwith, "Les implications politiques de la philosophie de l'existence chez Heidegger," *Les temps modernes* 2 (1946), pp. 343-360.
- ⁵ See Paul Hühnerfeld, *In Sachen Heidegger* (Hamburg: Hoffman and Campe, 1959) and Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: Buchdruckerei, 1962).
- ⁶ *Heidegger et le Nazism*, trans. Mynain Bernaroch and Jean-Baptiste Grasset (Paris: Verdier, 1987).
- ⁷ Hugo Ott's *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Campus Verlag, 1988). Michael E. Zimmermann lists much of the relevant literature from the post-war discussion, up to and including the work of Ott, in Zimmermann, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 179-281.
- ⁸ *Heidegger, l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie : autour des séminaires inédits de 1933-1935* (Paris, Albin Michel, 2005).
- ⁹ An attitude exemplified in Bertrand Russell's work, and in the treatment he accords German philosophy in his *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1946), and other works – see Thomas Akehurst, "Bertrand Russell Stalks the Nazis", *Philosophy Now* 97 (2013): 20-22.
- ¹⁰ I have little doubt that, in some quarters, all of this will be taken to confirm my own supposed failure to grasp the real issues at stake here and the limitations of my philosophical approach. That this is so is itself an indication of the difficulty of trying to engage with the issues at stake here that does not give in to the simplification that is common on both sides (simplification of fact and interpretation, as well as of judgment), but also of the preference, among many readers, for turning aside from any serious attempt to think through the complications and ambiguities that are inevitably at issue (it also indicates the extent to which the contemporary debate tends often to descend into personal attack, not only with respect to the person of Heidegger himself, and to become embroiled in personal animosities). My own engagement with Heidegger has not

focussed on his Nazism and anti-Semitism, and this is so partly because my aim has not been to reconstruct Heidegger's thought in a way that somehow recaptures his own 'inner' intentions and aims (something that I think is in any case hermeneutically suspect), nor has it been simply to work within the conventional framework of contemporary Heidegger Studies. Indeed, one might even go so far as to say that Heidegger himself is of only peripheral interest to the work in which I am engaged and in which his name figures. My interest in Heidegger is and has always been determined by the extent to which it can be drawn upon in the service of thinking about a set of key philosophical issues centring on place, truth, presence and human being. Judging Heidegger's culpability as a Nazi or anti-Semite has little relevance to that project, since the project is driven, not by Heidegger's thinking as such, but by the issues themselves. Indeed, my own claim is that if we think through those issues, even drawing upon many of the insights that Heidegger's own work affords, then we arrive at exactly the contrary position to that which is associated with Nazism and anti-Semitism. One might even say that my project, far from being one that simply assumes or minimises Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism, can instead be read as setting Heidegger *against* Heidegger, aiming to show how the philosophical orientation implicit in the underlying philosophical issues at stake leads (and partly, as I argue below, leads Heidegger himself) in a direction exactly contrary to that of Nazism and anti-Semitism, as well as of other forms of oppressive and discriminatory politics, and instead towards a much more human and humane conception – a conception according to which human finitude is understood as tied to human placedness; in which the fact of human finitude is tied to recognition of human suffering; in which the ontological is seen as inextricably tied to the ethical; in which acknowledgement of limit and of failure, as well as the possibility of beginning anew, is fundamental to the possibility of a genuinely human life.

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- ¹¹ If the fact of Heidegger's Nazism has always been publicly evident, his anti-Semitism has been less so prior to the publication of *Considerations* (although it could be taken as implicit in his support for Nazism in the early 1930s) – yet it was certainly evident privately to many of his friends and colleagues, including Jaspers and Arendt (as is revealed by some of the correspondence between them).
- ¹² If I use the word "seems" here, as I elsewhere also use the term "appears", it is not because I intend the term ironically (so that "seems" means "not really"), but simply to allow for the possibility of the interpretive complications that might arise, and which, if they were to be addressed, might require further discussion and argument.
- ¹³ I have avoided using putting this in terms of the cultural as against the *racial*, since there seems to me an enormous ambiguity that surrounds the latter term. Race is often taken itself to be a naturally, or *biologically*, based notion, and yet given that the concept of race has no real natural or biological basis, it seems one cannot assign it any significant content, if one is to assign it any content at all, other than cultural.
- ¹⁴ As Ingo Farin shows in his contribution to this volume, part of what the *Considerations* demonstrate is the extent to which Heidegger does indeed move away from his early commitment to National Socialism. That does not mean, of course, that his views therefore became politically anodyne – but it does, once again, complicate the picture of Heidegger's relation to Nazism.
- ¹⁵ So, for instance, the claim that Heidegger's thinking is anti-Semitic at its core cannot be supported merely by showing that Heidegger expressed or held anti-Semitic views – and this would remain the case even if it was Heidegger himself who made that claim (which is only to say that Heidegger might misunderstand the actual implications of his thinking). What needs to be shown is that anti-Semitism is indeed at work in the thinking, and that means showing where and how anti-Semitic attitudes are actually present in, and operative upon, that thinking.

¹⁶ See Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. xii: "There is some irony for me in the fact that the man about whose philosophical views I have devoted, over years, a great deal of time to thinking, was, at least at the end of his life, a virulent racist, specifically an anti-semite. This fact is revealed by a fragment of a diary which survives among Frege's Nachlass, but which was not published with the rest by Professor Hans Hermes in *Freges nachgelassene Schriften*. The diary shows Frege to have been a man of extreme right-wing political opinions, bitterly opposed to the parliamentary system, democrats, liberals, Catholics, the French and, above all, Jews, who he thought ought to be deprived of political rights and, preferably, expelled from Germany. When I first read that diary, many years ago, I was deeply shocked, because I had revered Frege as an absolutely rational man, if, perhaps, not a very likeable one. I regret that the editors of Frege's Nachlass chose to suppress that particular item. From it I learned something about human beings which I should be sorry not to know; perhaps something about Europe, also".

¹⁷ In *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics* (New York: NYREV, 2001), pp. xii-xiii, Mark Lilla talks of his 'sense of disappointment', not only in relation to Heidegger, but apparently with regard to all the thinkers he discusses – Heidegger, Arendt, Jaspers, Schmitt, Benjamin, Foucault, Derrida, and also, of course, Plato. Lilla also stresses, however, that he has no wish to dismiss these thinkers on the grounds of their seeming political inadequacies.

¹⁸ Two works that explore this connection are Marlène Zarader, *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006) and Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Although neither of these works takes up the point directly, I would also argue that one of the key points of connection here is precisely in relation to the role of place and the topological. The connection between Heidegger and Judaic thinking is also discussed in Michael Fagenblat's contribution to this volume.

¹⁹ Hannah Arendt makes a similar point in her 1945 essay “Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility”, in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1994), pp. 121-32. There she writes “For many years now we have met Germans who declare that they are ashamed of being German. I have often felt tempted to answer that I am ashamed of being human” (“Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility”, p.130).

²⁰ If this aspect of judgment is evoked by the humanity of the one judged, then can a figure such as Hitler be said to have lost so much of their humanity that they can no longer be judged in this way – can no longer be judged with any recognition of their being as human? If this were so, however, then the evil that Hitler presents would again have been removed from the human, would become something outside of the human, and we would lose sight of it as a possibility that we possess. Perhaps the right response is not to say that we cannot judge a figure such as Hitler in the light of their being human (on the contrary, it is surely on that basis and that basis alone that we are able to judge them at all), but rather that it becomes *humanly difficult* to judge a figure like Hitler and to retain a sense of his humanity, and certainly to have any sense of compassion or sorrow that is directed toward him in that judgement.

²¹ Quite apart from the way in which German anti-Semitism and German fascism has its origins in a cultural heritage that is itself broadly shared across both Anglo-Saxon and European societies, one can also look, more specifically, to British and American support for Hitler in the 1920s and 1930s (including support from British and American industrialists in particular); to the widespread anti-Semitism present in Britain and France, as well as the United States, prior to the Second World War; and to issues concerning the Allied response to the Holocaust itself – on the latter see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment Of The Jews: America and the Holocaust* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), and Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY:

Syracuse University Press, 1995), esp. chapter 13, 'Who Shall bear Guilt for the Holocaust?', pp. 255-278.

- ²² That it is a new orientation, even though one that also remains within the framework of the topology that I have argued characterized all of Heidegger's thought (see esp. my *Heidegger's Topology* [Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006]), seems to me incontrovertible – and remains so no matter how we are disposed to rethink the shift in Heidegger's thinking that occurs during the 'thirties and 'forties.
- ²³ See my discussion of the two beginnings in "Re-Orienting Thinking: Philosophy in the Midst of the World" in Peter S. Fosl, Michael J. McGandy, and Mark Moorman (eds.), *Commonplace Commitments: Thinking Through the Legacy of Joseph P. Fell* (Bucknell: Bucknell University Press, forthcoming, 2015).
- ²⁴ See James Phillips, *Heidegger's Volk: Between National Socialism and Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); see also Laurence Hemming *Heidegger and Marx: A Productive Dialogue over the Language of Humanism* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 160-184
- ²⁵ Available in English translation in Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (eds), *Nature, History, State: 1933-1934* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
- ²⁶ See Heidegger, *Nature, History, State: 1933-1934*.
- ²⁷ See Stuart Elden, *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault, and the Project of a Spatial History* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 33-42
- ²⁸ On Hölderlin's *The Rhine* and *Germania* in 1934-35, in English as *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'The Rhine'*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014), and on Hölderlin's *The Ister* in 1941-42, appearing in English as *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- ²⁹ One of the shortcomings of my *Heidegger's Topology* is that it gives too little attention to the *Contributions* – a work that is imbued with a thoroughly topological sensibility in its constant invocation, for instance, of notions of the

'between', of the 'clearing', of time-space, of the encounter, and the 'open'. It is important not to ignore the topological resonances in these terms – to do so is to fail to heed the character of Heidegger's own language. To gloss over the topological character of that language is to refuse the real challenge of thinking that Heidegger presents to us.

³⁰ See, for instance, von Wright “Dante Between Ulysses and Faust”, in Monika Asztalos, John E. Murdoch, Ilkka Niiniluoto (eds.), in *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy (Acta Philosophica Fennica 48)* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino 1990), pp. 1-9 – among this latter group of thinkers, von Wright's work is the least well-known, although no less interesting.

³¹ See Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

³² *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 213.

³³ See, for instance, *Überlegungen XII-XV, Gesamtausgabe 96*, p. 195; *Besinnung*, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe 66* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1997), pp. 16ff.; *Geschichte des Seins 1938/40*, ed. Peter Trawny, *Gesamtausgabe 69* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1998), pp. 225ff.

³⁴ For more on this see *Heidegger's Topology*, pp. 278-303.

³⁵ See *ibid.*

³⁶ See my “Putting Space in Place: Relational Geography and Philosophical Topography”, *Planning and Environment D: Space and Society*, 30 (2012), pp. 226-242.

³⁷ See, for instance, Don Idhe, *Heidegger's Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), and also 'Can Continental Philosophy Deal with the New Technologies?', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 26 (2012), pp. 321-332.

³⁸ It is the Jews who supposedly possess a “marked talent for calculation”, *Überlegungen XII-XV, Gesamtausgabe 96*, p. 56.

³⁹ The later thinking stands in sharp contrast to the philosophically more conventional thinking evident in *Being and Time*, eschewing the usual forms of philosophical discourse, and also lapsing, as many would have it, into mysticism and poetry (a lapse that may be viewed as originating in the intoxicated years of the 1930s). However one reads the later thinking, and whether one does indeed take it as a 'lapse' into mysticism, it nevertheless remains true that the later thinking represents a direct challenge to conventional philosophical thinking in a way the early thinking does not. One might argue that one of the limitations of the later thinking is indeed Heidegger's seeming inability to respond adequately to the Holocaust. Yet one might also argue, as I have here, that part of what marks out the late from the early thinking is that the former develops out of the problematic engagement with Nazism, and partly in response to it. The early thinking, including the thinking of *Being and Time*, lacks access to the lessons of that engagement, even while it also contains elements that feed into it. The later thinking is thus especially important if we are to think through the philosophical issues that Heidegger's engagement with Nazism brings to the fore.