

Heidegger's "Nazism" as Veiled
Nietzscheanism and Heideggerianism:
Evidence from the *Black Notebooks*

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To read the reviews, the publication of Heidegger's *Reflections*, from 1932-1941 (GA 94-96), under the ominous, descriptive subtitle, the *Black Notebooks*, has affirmatively settled the hoary old debate concerning whether there is a substantial link between Heidegger's philosophy and his biographical Nazism. However, I would argue that the *Reflections* so far do very little to add to this link. First, many of the most notorious remarks have precedents in prior volumes of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, in reports of personal interactions, and in class notes. Second, the new remarks in the *Reflections*, including the most notorious ones, do very little to link his philosophy to Nazism. Third, his political remarks, as typically oblique and ambiguous as they are, are far more typically anti-Nazistic or anti-modern than Nazistic or anti-Semitic. Fourth, the lion's share of his remarks, here as elsewhere in his work, concern the abandonment of radical questioning, the forgetting of truth and being, and the critique of technological modernity. Thus, in order to characterize Heidegger's attitude toward Nazism and its relation to his philosophy, we need to see precisely what he was and was not affirming. On my account, his selective affirmation of Nazism transforms it largely into his own philosophy and dispenses with much of the concrete racial, political, and economic doctrines that characterize it. What seems most Nazistic

about his philosophy is Nietzschean, but there are very substantial differences between Heidegger's Nietzscheanism and the official Nietzsche of Nazi Party theoreticians.

While there are certainly divergent responses to the *Reflections*, ranging from the skepticism of French deconstructionist Heideggerians to the validation of Heidegger skeptics, the general consensus seems to be that the *Reflections* demonstrate the Nazism of Heidegger's philosophy, as Karl Löwith long ago contended. In the *New York Review of Books*, Peter E. Gordon describes Heidegger as "a convinced Nazi," and says that the *Notebooks* "will cast a dark shadow on his legacy," for his views only "grew more extreme" following his rectorate.¹ In the *New York Times* report, many scholars cited regard the 2½ pages of anti-Semitic references in the 1200-page *Reflections* as sufficient to demonstrate Heidegger's ongoing anti-Semitism and to link his philosophy to Nazism.² For instance, Richard Wolin is quoted as saying, "The evidence now isn't just undeniable, it's over the top ... Heidegger was engaged with these issues philosophically and intellectually through the course of the whole regime." And Thomas Meyer is quoted as arguing that Heidegger's views on Jews became radicalized in 1938–39 to the point where he identified them with modernity and imagined a world without Jews. However, Richard Polt argues that it was already clear that Heidegger was an anti-Semite, and Thomas Sheehan even argues that it was already clear that Heidegger's critique of modernity as decline was a way for him to "launder" his anti-Semitism. In the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the *Notebooks* are said to possibly provide the "smoking gun" of Heidegger's philosophical Nazism and Peter Trawny, editor of the *Reflections*, is quoted claiming that "We knew that he had expressed anti-Semitism as private insights, but this shows anti-Semitism tied in to his philosophy."³ In the *Guardian's* summation, Heidegger's critique of modernity is a veiled critique of "World Jewry" (*Weltjudentum*), or, at least, he regards "World Jewry" as a driver of modernity.⁴ He describes Jews with their "talent for calculation" as "so vehemently opposed to the Nazis' racial principles because 'they themselves have lived according to the race principle for the longest.'"

Thus, in these accounts, Heidegger appears as both anti-Semite and philosophical Nazi.

However, the caveats turn out to be quite significant. Gordon concedes that "after 1934 [Heidegger] grew disenchanted with the Nazi movement," but "only because he felt that Nazism had betrayed its original promise and had succumbed to the technological fate that afflicted the modern age overall." And the *Guardian* notes that he "distanc[es] himself from the racial theories pursued by Nazi intellectuals," that for Heidegger, "fascism, 'world Judaism', Soviet communism and British parliamentarianism should be seen as part of the imperious dehumanizing drive of Western modernity," and that "[t]he bourgeois-Christian form of English 'Bolshevism' is the most dangerous. Without its destruction [*Vernichtung*], the modern era [modernity, *Neuzeit*] will remain intact [further preserved]" (cf. GA 94: 117-18; GA 96: 154, which identifies the English and Soviet states). This last view is not even new to Heidegger scholars, for it appears verbatim in *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, also edited by Peter Trawny (GA 69: 208-209).⁵ Although the Nazis also opposed Bolshevism, Heidegger's critiques of Bolshevism and modern technology cannot be identified with this Nazi critique, for in criticizing Bolshevism, he is simultaneously criticizing Nazism. He writes that "Bolshevism and authoritarian socialism ["in the variants of fascism and National Socialism"] are metaphysically the same and are grounded in the domination of the beingness of beings [*Seiendheit des Seienden*]," in the sense that they are "a corresponding (not the same) form of the completion of modernity" (GA 96: 109).⁶ Nor is there something specific to Judaism in these critiques of communism and Bolshevism, for in the *Beiträge*, Heidegger departs from the Nazi doctrine in writing that "the final form of Marxism ... has essentially nothing to do either with Judaism or even with Russia" (GA 65: 54/44, tm). Hence, the evidence from the newspaper reports hardly amounts to the scathing indictment of Heideggerian philosophy as anti-Semitic Nazism that we have been led to believe. The point is not to exculpate Heidegger from his Nazism and anti-Semitism, but rather to argue that even in his early explicit

affirmations of Nazism, he was merely dressing up his own philosophy in another guise, rather than affirming anything specific to Nazism.

Despite his membership in the Nazi Party, his 1933–34 service as rector of Freiburg University under the Nazis, his institution of Nazi racial policies at Freiburg, his 1933–34 speeches affirming the Führer, and his subsequent participation in an advisory committee drafting Nazi legislation, including racial laws, with the likes of Julius Streicher and Carl Schmitt, Heidegger’s philosophy and actions in the 1930s and early 1940s were largely at odds with the Nazi Party, as its own functionaries and theorists recognized. Karl Löwith writes that the Party regarded Heidegger suspiciously for the lack of “Jewish and racial considerations” in his philosophy, for his dedications to the Jewish Edmund Husserl (GA 2) and the half-Jewish Max Scheler (GA 3), and his lack of interest in Nordic themes. Nazi theorists criticized him in party organs; he refused to carry out numerous party dictates, both as rector and in his later seminars; he was critical of Nazism in his lectures; and in 1944 he was deemed by the Nazis “the least indispensable of the professors at the university” and drafted into the *Volkssturm*.⁷ Among the exculpatory evidence discussed by Karl Moehling, drawing on documents from the de-Nazification proceedings, is his refusal to allow anti-Jewish posters to be placed in the university, his protection of his Jewish assistants Werner Brock and Helene Weiss, his resigning the rectorate rather than carry out the request of Otto Wacker, Baden Culture Minister, to fire his predecessor Wilhelm von Moellendorf, and the attacks he was subjected to in various articles by the race theorist Ernst Krieck, the rector of Frankfurt University.⁸ Indeed, Krieck did not think that Heidegger’s philosophy was Nazistic. He describes it as

outspoken atheism and metaphysical nihilism, as it formerly had been primarily represented by Jewish authors; therefore, a ferment of decay and dissolution for the German nation. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger philosophizes consciously and deliberately about “everydayness” – there is nothing in it about nation, state, race, and all the values of our National Socialist view of the world.⁹

Of course, Nazism was by no means such a unified body of doctrine as to preclude internecine disputes, and Heidegger's time as rector, which he called "the greatest stupidity of [his] life," is at the very least highly compromised by his association with the Nazi Party, even if we buy his line that he was merely seeking to preserve university autonomy.

But on many occasions in the *Reflections*, which is my focus, Heidegger criticizes Nazism directly – its militaristic ends, its racial philosophy, and most generally, its participation in the general technological forgetting of being and mastering of beings, or the beingness of beings, that he calls *Machenschaft*. The latter ideas are far broader than Nazism or any particular ethnic or political identity.

The power of manipulation – the destruction even of godlessness, the dehumanization of the human into the animal, the misuse of the earth, the misreckoning of the world – has passed into the condition of finality; differences of peoples, states, cultures are still only a façade. *Machenschaft* can be restricted and cut off through no measures. Never before in the history of the human has being uniformly forced the entirety of beings into a state of indecision so unconditionally and in a furious paroxysm, while still remaining fully concealed behind the respective operative beings. (GA 96: 52–53).

Thus, Heidegger denies that *Machenschaft*, as a widely disseminated event of modernity, is restricted to any particular people, culture, or race. It is for this reason that I would argue that we should not magnify his rare but reprehensible connection of Judaism to calculative rationality and *Machenschaft* into a grand narrative of the anti-Semitic foundations of his philosophy. Heidegger refers to Judaism's "current increase in power" as deriving from its "empty rationality and capacity for calculation," which in "the metaphysics of the West, especially in its modern development," becomes useful without enabling decision, and he links this lack of decisiveness to Husserl's inability to attain "the realms of essential decisions," yet he argues that his "'attack' against

Husserl is not directed against him only and in general not essentially ... [but] against the neglect of the question of being” (GA 96: 46–47). Indeed, it is crucial to note that his trafficking in cultural generalizations allows him to extend this very same critique of *Machenschaft* and an alleged Jewish and Husserlian failure to come to a decision concerning the meaning of being to modernity as such, as well as National Socialism, fascism, Bolshevism, England, and America. Thus, Heidegger’s critique of the historical uprooting enacted by modernity (GA 94: 363–64) is nothing specific to or primarily driven by Judaism; rather, it traces back to Descartes’s construction of the subject: “the modern, beginning. Subjectivity and *certitudo*: Descartes” (GA 50: 83).¹⁰

Even the most widely cited remark in the *Reflections* turns out to be characteristically ambiguous. In the ninth of ten points that he sets forth “at the beginning of the third year of the planetary war,” he writes that “World Jewry, incited by the emigrants allowed to leave Germany, is everywhere elusive and nowhere needs to campaign in military actions in its unfolding of power [*Machtentfaltung*], against which it remains to us only to sacrifice the best blood of the best of our own people” (GA 96: 261–62). In reports, this remark is understood as self-evidently anti-Semitic, with no explanation, and certainly it does assert the existence of a World Judaism, that it cannot be grasped, that it is influential without possessing a military, that there is a distinction between Heidegger’s people and World Jewry, that Germans somehow have to sacrifice their best, that it is the best of the Germans that are sacrificed, and that there is a blood tie in this sacrifice. Yet, both on its own terms and especially in relation to his other notes, this claim can be read quite differently to say that the Nazi racial mission cannot possibly succeed by going to war at all costs, whether to achieve influence or to destroy a spectral World Judaism that cannot be seized through any military force, and therefore, that this mission should be abandoned. Thus, he often condemns the “war catastrophe and catastrophic war” with its resultant “devastation” and “decisionlessness” (GA 96: 45), and he criticizes Nazi Germany’s imperialist ambitions, asking, “is Germany the land of the Germans, is its history borne through the grounding of

the Germans in their essence, or do the Germans consume themselves in mere expansion [*Verbreiterung*] and dispersal [*Verstreuung*] for the formation of the highest form of unbinding of all instituted powers of machination [*Machenschaft*]?" (GA 96: 50-51). He also condemns racial thinking on the same anti-modernist grounds. "All race thinking is modern, moves in the track of the constitution of the human being as a subject. In race thinking, the subjectivism of modernity is completed through the inclusion of corporeality in the subject and the complete grasping of the subject as humanity of the masses of human beings. At the same time with this completion, and forcing it into its service, the empowerment of machination carries itself out unconditionally" (GA 96: 48). In its context, then, Heidegger's remark about World Judaism depends on the view that the war's universalization of technological destruction and mastery of the human self only destroys the essential task: the radical thinking of being.

This explanation accords closely with his subsequent rejection of the Nazi approach to what he deemed to be the essential mission of German Dasein and the German *Volk*: the thinking of being. As Trawny argues, what Heidegger is looking for everywhere in the events of the 1930s are "'signs' of an always more catastrophically looming 'forgetting of being'" (Trawny, GA 94: 533). As throughout his career, he seeks a radical questioning of the meaning of being and truth (GA 94: 365, 408, 411-12), not socialism or ontic warfare. He writes, "do we ask after the truth of being in order to ground an originary belongingness - or do we proceed to explain and to 'master' [*beherrschen*] the entity [*das Seiende*] from out of the entity [*Seiendem*]?" This 'mastery' [*Beherrschung*] is no dominion [*Herrschaft*], but rather a badly veiled slavery within an event [*Vorgangs*] that must be at its end" (GA 94: 365). Thus, he opposes as slavery an ontic mastery or dominion over the entity characteristic of technology in general or even Nazi biologicistic destruction (GA 94: 364), in favor of the questioning and questionable, not the "non-figure [*Ungestalt*] of 'problems'"; what is demanded is "the question ... the grounding of the truth itself and its essence for itself," being as *Er-eignis*, rather than ontic *Vorgang* (GA 94: 504-505).

It would require the insertion of a questionable set of equations (being = *physis* = German blood and soil) to translate his ontology directly into a German nationalism of the Nazi biological type. Early on, he does identify the Führer as leading the way to an originary path for thought. He writes of “the great experience and luck that the Führer has awakened a new reality, which gives to our thinking the right path and impetus [*Stoßkraft*]. Otherwise it would have remained lost in all groundedness still and would have only with difficulty found its effect” (GA 94: 111). But this is a highly conditional attachment that he seemed to accept only early on, and which refers only to Heideggerian thinking. Around this time, he does come quite close to identifying his thinking in *Being and Time* with Nazi ideology. He writes that “[t]he project of being [*Seins*] as time overcomes all up to this point in being and thinking; not idea, but rather mission [*Auftrag*]; not solution, but rather tie [*Bindung*]. The project does not break itself up [*löst sich nicht ab*] into pure spirit, but rather opens and first binds blood and soil [*Blut und Boden*] in accompaniment of action [*Handlungsbereitschaft*] and capacity for *effect* and *work*” (GA 94: 127). Here he is quite explicit about defining being as time precisely as a link not to some abstract pure spirit but to the binding of the Nazi racial slogan of blood and soil to action, capacity for effect and work. He also suggests a direct identification between his ontology and politics in writing in italics, “*metaphysics as meta-politics*” (GA 94: 116); “we must bring [philosophy] to an end and thereby prepare something completely other – metapolitics. Accordingly also the *transformation of science*” (GA 94: 115).

Yet his early affirmation of National Socialism and his subsequent critical remarks toward it are very specific to a certain conception of it deprived of most of its essential properties and allied closely to his own thinking. In other words, his affirmation of Nazism is always linked to a very particular, indeed, idiosyncratic, version of it, and he offers criticisms of other understandings of it from the beginning. National Socialism is valid for him only according to certain standards, standards that bear little resemblance to the movement itself. “*National*

Socialism is a genuine becoming power only when it still has something to be silent about behind all its doing and saying – and has an effect with a strong holding-back [*Hinter-hältigkeit*] effecting into the future. But if the present were already the achieved and willed, then only a horror of the fall is left" (GA 94: 114). Its unsatisfactory form is encapsulated in the phrase "*vulgar National Socialism*," by which he means "the world and the measures and demands and attitudes of the appointed, esteemed newspaper writers and culture-makers of the time," as well as the "ethical materialism" of "an entirely determinate doctrine of history and human beings in the people that proceeds from this by brainless appeal, naturally, to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*" (GA 94: 142). Hence, if there is a non-vulgar National Socialism, then it would appeal not to Hitler's own foundational National Socialist text, but probably to *Being and Time* and the Rectoral Address, with its own resistance to the *Führerprinzip*. Heidegger explicitly rejects any National Socialism that accepts ethical materialism and biologism. According to Trawny,

Heidegger at the latest in the Summer of 1936 finds a distance from the really existing National Socialism in which he can catch sight of and criticize the "world-view" of the "desolate and coarse 'biologism.'" At the same time, he places himself in opposition from the beginning to the National Socialist critique of so-called "intellectualism," i.e. of an allegedly senseless extravagance in theoretical questioning. In the *Reflections* from this time, we thus see how the thinker works his way out of his early party participation for National Socialism in a stepwise fashion [as evident in Heidegger's works from the same time, GA 65-66, 69-71]. (Trawny, GA 94: 533-34).

Heidegger's criticism of Nazi biologism is that "the subject character ... still experiences a particular hardening through the privileging of the biological (i.e. in truth, unbiological) interpretation of the essence

of the people, which remains plausibly a ‘biological’ interpretation of the crowd in particular, and therefore also must be often particularly emphasized with regard to it” (GA 94: 521–22). Hence, Heidegger opposes Nazism if it means something biologicistic and anti-intellectual. And if Nazism entails ideology and socialism, then he also opposes it.

“Socialism”:

as mere desire for levelling [*Gleichmacherei*] –
 as superiority [*Übermacht*] of that to be dragged down –
 as mere operation of the commonweal –
 as structuring-levelling need of all for their mission
 according to their conduct and typing in the whole of the
 people (GA 94: 124).

In his later notes from 1939 to 1941, he again criticizes the notions of nationalism and socialism, writing that “[t]his politics is ‘total’ – not because it comprehends everything but because it is grounded according to its essence in the execution of the beingness of beings. Representations like ‘nationalism’ and ‘socialism’ belong to a time in which the modern still resided in the preliminary stage of its completion; now they are merely historically used titles for an entirely different event [*Vorgang*], which can no longer be designated ‘political’” (GA 96: 43). There is nothing positive in his definitions of nationalism and socialism, even in the early *Reflections* (GA 94), and he refers contemptuously to “the socialistic posturing [*Getue*] of the student bodies [*Studentenschaften*] – the stupidest Romanticism” (GA 94: 146). He writes that “the present student is no National Socialist, but rather a full-blown petit bourgeois ... This ‘socialistic’ posturing is only a cloak [or fig leaf, *Deckmantel*] for a flight before the actual task and before their proper incapacity” (GA 94: 147). The actual task, however, has nothing to do with socialism, for it concerns, as we have seen, a radical questioning of being and truth. Even in discussing what defines German idealism, he writes that

the German in this ‘idealism’ (i.e. the interpretation of being as pre-sentedness [re-presentedness,

Vor-gestelltheit]), ... consists in the originary experience of the beginning essence of being [*Seyns*] as *physis*; in other words: the essence of the German determines itself from there first as the ur-own [*ur-eigene*] power for such experience – ; metaphysics is not Germanized 'folk-like,' but rather the German attains through this metaphysical effort for the first time to historical moments in its essence. (GA 96: 9)

So, the possibilities in Nazism will be contingent on its meeting such standards of historical essencing, and it will not in itself constitute these possibilities. He refers to "*National Socialism* not as completely eternal truth fallen from the sky – taken thus it becomes an error and foolishness. Thus, as it has become, it must itself be becoming and form the future – i.e. as an image itself to step back before itself" (GA 94: 114-15). To determine the proper understanding of the task, it "remains decisive whether the spiritual-historical outreaches [*Ausgriffe*] and basic moods are so originary and at the same time so clear that they compel a creative transformation [*Umschaffung*] of *Dasein* – ; and for that the presupposition is that National Socialism remains in war – in the position of having to execute itself, not only of 'spreading itself out' and 'growing' and holding its ground [*Behauptens*]" (GA 94: 141). That National Socialism, then, that Heidegger early on affirms is to be defined by a constant movement of originary creative transformation and struggle, rather than rigidification (GA 94: 140-41). Thus, while Heidegger's use of *Machenschaft* has been understood to indicate an affirmation of National Socialist images of scheming machinations or its operations of power, it plays a solely negative role in his thinking, attached to modernity as such, in contrast to a particular intellectual or spiritual operation. "Not to confuse [the creative] with machination [*Machenschaften*]" (GA 94: 133); "[p]erhaps that all counts as conceptual foolery – but perhaps we learn once to surmise that only the decision of the West is meant – whether the people experiences itself as used [or needed, *gebrauchtes*] by 'beyng' [*Seyn*] and sacrificed to it – or as a giant playground of an allegedly 'eternal' machinery [or machination,

Machenschaft” (GA 94: 522). The proper rank consists not in manipulation, machinic operations, or machinations, but rather in an “inconspicuous, grasping power which fosters in others the essential and brings it to development. Radicalism of a movement can only be preserved where it must be always newly created most clearly and deeply – in the spiritual. . . . Divert the machinery, reconcile disputes, integrate and validate institutions, administer transactions – all that has nothing to do with leading [*Führung*]” (GA 94: 138). We must keep these qualifications in mind when we see Heidegger write of “the inner demands of German socialism” (GA 94: 135) and validate a *Führerwille* (GA 94: 139). “*Führen* means: develop to independence and self-responsibility; and spiritual *Führen* means: awaken the creative forces and build up to leadership [*Führerschaft*]” (GA 94: 138). In other words, he interprets Hitler’s *Führer* principle not as dictating that all follow Hitler, but that there be a creative rebirth of autonomous human spiritual powers, just as it meant to him in the Rectoral Address a resistance to that will.

Heidegger’s Nietzschean transformation of Nazi ideas here suggests what I believe is a far closer philosophical kinship, one easily mistaken for Nazism. Many of Heidegger’s explicit and implicit remarks in the *Reflections* refer to Nietzsche and Nietzschean motifs of power and the rejection of the rabble, herd, and commercial culture, as might be expected, considering the many lecture courses on Nietzsche that Heidegger prepared in the latter half of the 1930s and early 1940s and now collected in a range of volumes in the GA. As I have argued elsewhere, Heidegger’s views of Nietzsche can credibly be distinguished from the so-called official Nietzsche of the Nazis, promulgated by Alfred Rosenberg and Alfred Bäumler, and indeed, these views constitute a critique of the metaphysics of that reading. Thus, for instance, if Heidegger affirms a Nietzschean idea of power and creation as breeding, he explicitly distinguishes this view from the Nazi biologicistic breeding campaign. Those “wanting to breed the people ‘biologically’ by breeding [*biologisch*-züchterisch aufzüchten wollen],” are in error in that “this breeding and its demand are first *the consequence* of the already posited unquestioned mastery [*fraglosen Herrschaft*] of the machinic in itself [*Machenschaftlichen an*

sich] (in the sense of a not overcome 'liberal' thinking of progress)" (GA 94: 364-65). The Nazi form of literal biologicistic eugenics is wrong not because it is conservative, but because a liberal thought of progress is at the basis of the view that the machinic should possess unquestioned mastery, and thus, at the basis of the view that a technological act of physically breeding a new people would be desirable. But this is a rejection of the Nazi biologicistic Nietzsche and its racial eugenics, as we find in Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures of the mid to late 1930s. That his view is Nietzschean is clear in his identification of this modern view of science as veiled, self-denying will to power. "'Science' - as the leading beginning of modernity was a certain 'will to power,' in the sense of the mastery of nature, as 'world' over against anxiety before the mystery of violence - a mode of unveiling directed determinately and remaining [*innehaltende*] at a determinate level" (GA 94: 140). The task now is "to undertake for knowing and science as it were the *inverse* mission: *The re-binding and thus 'liberating' awakening of the world and thereby of historical Dasein*. Binding is only the effecting work as existentiell work. *Will and entry to empowerment of powers*" (GA 94: 140). What Heidegger is after is a liberating, awakening process in thinking of world and historical Dasein, rather than a physiological, ontic eugenics campaign. Thus, he argues that the "breeding of higher and the highest *types of thinking* [*Denkarten*] is primary - above all mere communication of knowledge [*Kenntnismitteilung*]" (GA 94: 124). The transformation of thinking is, as always, his aim, his form of practice, not the body. In subsequently also criticizing a conservative attempt to rescue the past (as opposed to a liberal thought of futural progress), then, he is setting forth a non-biologicistic Nietzschean affirmation of power and creation. The conservative approach to the past is deficient because it may stem from "mere desire for power and from hatred against all creators, or from lack of power [*Unvermögen*] to create - which both are the same in their ground" (GA 94: 365). By arming or equipping in a technological sense for the end, we are "in the end unequipped for the beginning and above all for the great devastation and disturbance of everything" (GA 94: 364). What he affirms, then, is precisely the Nietzschean power of creative

transformation defined by the rank ordering of valuations, which is characteristic of the philosopher of the future, the genuine philosopher.¹¹ Indeed, these Nietzschean views can be seen in the background of such apparently Nazistic views as Heidegger's claims that "a far-reaching spiritual-historical will to the future must awaken, fixing itself and step by step preparing the next half century at least in its spiritual comprehension" (GA 94: 121), and that "[o]nly where [there is] a *strong* will – its *law* and *resistance* – where [there is] creative power, there [are found] application and consent and affirmation" (GA 94: 119).

Thus, I would argue that the superficial similarity between the Nietzschean and the official Nazistic positions cloaks the fact that what Heidegger is doing is in many respects Nietzschean, not Nazistic. When Heidegger is using language akin to the Nazis in speaking of a will to the future that might span decades or even centuries or millennia, this is also Nietzschean language, and the thoughts are closer to Nietzsche's than to the Nazis, but identifiable only with Heidegger's broader critique of modernity and its technological destruction of the being question. Heidegger's conditional attachment to Nazism was thus specific to his ontology, and hence, his philosophy can indeed be judged by reference to his philosophical Nazism. However, his philosophical Nazism bears so little resemblance to Nazism that it would be better characterized as his Heideggerianism. It is a cliché that Heidegger's Aristotle, Heidegger's Kant, Heidegger's Nietzsche, and so on are all Heidegger. Whether or not this is fair, I would argue that Heidegger's Nazism is indeed Heidegger. To the extent that it meets his standards, which is to say, to the extent that it satisfies Heidegger's philosophy, he identifies with it, and to the extent that it does not meet his standards, which is to say, in so far as it is racist, military expansionist, nationalist, socialist, herd morality, biologicistic, ideological, ethical materialism, he rejects it. Thus, he says that bound with a bourgeois affection is a "*muddy biologism*, which provides yet the correct 'ideology' to ethical materialism" (GA 94: 143). What is sought instead is "to awaken the innermost force of the Dasein of our people – not to promote our 'culture,' but rather to empower the clarity

of the will of Dasein ... to set into work the labor from innermost necessity – not to allow to rise a ‘spiritual superstructure,’ but rather to find the basic mode of popular being” (GA 94: 144). That is not Nazism. It is just Heideggerianism.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Peter E. Gordon, “Heidegger in Black,” *New York Review of Books*, October 9, 2014.
- 2 Jennifer Schuessler, “Heidegger’s *Notebooks* Renew Focus on Anti-Semitism.” *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast), Mar. 31, 2014: C.1.
- 3 Paul Hockenos, “Release of Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* Reignites Debate Over Nazi Ideology,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 60, Issue 24.
- 4 Philip Oltermann, “Heidegger notebooks show antisemitism at heart of thinking: Publication counters view that Nazism did not taint writer’s philosophy,” *The Guardian* (London, England), Mar. 13, 2014: 18 Business Insights: Essentials. Web. Jan. 27, 2015.
- 5 Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2009), 135.
- 6 I would like to thank my colleague Martin Schönfeld for a very instructive conversation concerning the translation of several key terms in the *Notebooks* (e.g., *Machenschaft*, *Abwandlung*), as well as the social-historical context in which Heidegger’s views developed.
- 7 Karl A. Moehling, “Heidegger and the Nazis,” in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*; ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), 39.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 36–37.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 37.

- 10 Cited in Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-35* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 399n92.
- 11 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §212; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 2d ed., ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: dtv; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1988), vol. 5, 146.