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THE DIFFICULTY OF DEMOCRACY: RETHINKING THE POLITICAL IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE THIRTIES (GEHLEN, SCHMITT, HEIDEGGER)

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MODERNITY AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Literally speaking, the phrase "philosophy of the thirties" refers to the work of philosophers from this period, yet it could also be said that it refers to philosophy taking on the "thirties" or, to be more specific, discussing the rise of National Socialism. This ambiguity is not just a grammatical accident, but alludes to a more fundamental difficulty. Distinguishing between these two "philosophies of the thirties" is a tricky matter. Any philosophy seeking to come to grips with the "thirties" is necessarily a "post-thirties" philosophy: inevitably, the encounter comes *after the fact*. Thinking about National Socialism is preceded by national-socialist thinking, and the latter's hidden impact on the former is not elucidated easily. The fact of this sequential entanglement need not be immediate cause for discomfiture. Historic sequence does not imply a substantive heritage that will cast a shadow on retrospective analysis and subvert its independence: sequence need not imply contingency.

Nonetheless, this case remains inordinately complex. To flatly contend that philosophical thinking was uncompromised sheerly by virtue of its will to truth would certainly involve an act of caprice. Maintaining or establishing distance requires more than just the philosopher's self-assuring contention that their thinking is unaffected by contemporary events and dubious ancestors of any kind. After

the disastrous events of the 1930s and 1940s, there is hardly any certainty about which of these theoretical resources have remained intact or, as it were, innocent. Moreover, some of the major figures representing the "philosophy of the thirties" purport to have made valuable contributions to critical analysis of National Socialism. The idea of sorting out or "filtering" theories borders on a bizarre strain of philosophical McCarthyism. Yet if our analysis were based on Zygmunt Bauman's assertion that the Holocaust is the necessary culmination of modernity itself *and* on Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's statement that "only Heidegger" allows us to understand National Socialism properly, we would run the risk of blurring differences.[1]

In an attempt to disaggregate the issues, some tend to rely on reason as the uncompromised cornerstone of modernity in a normative, not merely a historical sense. This modernity represents the defense of human dignity and defies all provenance of irrationalist movements and their political offspring. On the other hand, it has been stated that reason or rationality is closely linked to the system of terror and the logic of extermination applied by National Socialism. Accordingly, National Socialism is said to be either defiantly anti-modern (following the first account) or profoundly modern (following the second account), either a rather backward attempt to escape modernity, or a proponent of what has been called "reactionary modernism."[2]

Although it might seem like settling for a facile compromise, the obvious response to those opposing views of National Socialism is that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. In these introductory remarks, I cannot elaborate upon the concept of modernity in general, but it is safe to say that National Socialism relies on a combination of modern and anti-modern features, and this severely limits the potential of any normative concept of modernity. Those disparate features are precisely what render it appealing both to some advocates of technological and economic progress and to their counterparts who place tremendous stock in what they take to be tradition or heritage. It would not make any sense, for example, to consider the technological advances of the mass media as something wholly external to a strictly anti-modernist message. In this case, the medium is the message: the presence of a homogeneous mass, with one single voice serving as a megaphone broadcasting the would-be will of a homogeneous mass. Yet it is equally misleading to dismiss references to Germanic myths and to "blood and soil" in National Socialist ideology as accidental ornamentation.

A surprisingly early yet still valuable attempt to explain the making of National Socialism which takes into account this twofold message is to be found in Ernst Bloch's *Heritage of our Times*.[3] According to Bloch, the "non-simultaneity" or "non-synchronicity" of historic developments deployed its explosive powers in the Germany of the 1920s and 1930s. It could be argued, for instance, that the racist concept of community served as a perverse response to the need for belonging to a "community." Whoever does not take into account its idiosyncratic mix (or even melee) of features arrives at a distorted image of National Socialism. Martin Heidegger can serve as a telling example for unilateral readings of National Socialism of this kind, since his own partisanship in 1933–34 was primarily based on its anti-modernist features, whereas, according to his own retrospective reading, it was the technological age itself that culminated in National Socialism. He presented two equally contradictory pictures, each with a different half obscured from view.[4]

It is safe to say that a stark distinction between plainly proactive modernity on the one hand and plainly retroactive National Socialism on the other is deluding. That is said grudgingly, and not for the sake of an exculpation of any kind, but for strictly descriptive reasons. The relation between modernity and National Socialism is more complex than we might want it to be, and it deserves our attention.

The following analysis does not seek to expand upon the (anti-) modernism of National Socialism in general, but rather to present a critical account of how three eminent figures of the "philosophy of the thirties" described the political model that was the main object of their disdain: modern democracy. Hence I will deal with the representations of modern politics advanced by some (temporary) partisans of National Socialism. This facilitates a discussion of issues of modernity on a more reliable scale and a delineation of the arguments deployed in this controversy. The three philosophers who are the subject of this inquiry are Arnold Gehlen, Carl Schmitt, and Martin Heidegger. By choosing these thinkers who merit serious consideration beyond ideological templates, I hope to cast some new light on National Socialism and at the same time on democracy and its discontents. After some brief remarks on the concept of modern democracy which will serve as a touchstone for further explorations I will turn to Gehlen, Schmitt, and Heidegger. Finally, I comment on various strategies for rethinking National Socialism in general.

TWO FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY

Since the discussion that follows makes repeated reference to the concept of democracy as it became subject to criticisms by Gehlen, Schmitt, and Heidegger, it is imperative that we outline the basic terms of that concept which will serve as a reference point in this debate. It is not enough that this outline be basic, it must also be inclusive: in order to avoid the exclusion of any pertinent aspects or implications, this conceptualization of democracy must encompass the wide range of positions that have been introduced since the eighteenth century, and yet I shall confine myself to determining the common denominator of what arguably are the most distinctive and yet the most disparate conceptions in this field – namely, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's republicanism on the one hand and John Stuart Mill's liberalism on the other. It seems to me that two points must be made in this regard.

First, democracy must rely on a form of generalization and unification that enables and encourages citizens to identify with a *common cause* (or "common wealth"). The willingness to become a member of a larger whole finds its condensed expression in the idea of the "common self" (*moi commun*) advocated by Rousseau in the "Social Contract."[5] This "whole" does not have any substantive content (a nation's glory or a people's racial purity), but formally represents the idea of self-determination or autonomy itself.

Second, in order for this process of identification to be described as democratic, it must be organized in a specific manner. Individual identification within this process must be based on self-propelled *agency*. This necessarily implies deliberation, hence it also requires the guarantee of basic liberties that permit individual intentions to be shaped and changed. While Rousseau highlights the turn to the "common self," John Stuart Mill urges us to defend individual freedom. And whereas in Rousseau "sovereignty" is attributed to a people, Mill says, "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign."[6]

These two aspects are not altogether irreconcilable or incongruent. Neither does Rousseau denounce the conscious choices made by the individual, nor can Mill do without a notion of the "common" shared by the citizens, even though the institutionalized "state" plays a more limited role in his model than in Rousseau's. I am acutely attuned to the protracted debate on the rivalry between these different political

options and their respective concepts of liberty. Yet even if it is true that the historic and sociological fine-tuning of democracies has assumed many different forms and that the assessments of "negative" and "positive" freedoms diverge, I take it as given that *democracy must embrace both the centrifugal aspects of individualization and the centripetal aspects of participation.*[7] This basic premise provides a reference point for my discussion of the loathing of democracy popular among representatives of the "philosophy of the thirties." If democracy has those two crucial features, it also must confront built-in problems on two different levels, one marked by the "common" – the procedure of universalization or generalization – and the other marked by the individual and its agency. These problems are not at all worrisome, yet to *ignore* them would be to *undermine* the idea of democracy. In order to do justice to democracy, one must address those problems head on rather than simply belittle them.

I assume that the three "philosophers of the thirties" discussed in this paper would not appreciate democracy's twofold structure and would not be willing to deal with its innate problems sympathetically. They present rather a somewhat distorted image of it, and welcome its problems only insofar as these can be construed as reasons for setting democracy aside or outwitting it. Yet, at certain points, a line can be drawn from the discontents of democracy as shared by its detractors to democracy's problems as these are to be dealt with for their own sake. Hence, taking up the challenge represented by the criticisms from the 1930s is vital for the self-image of today's democracy. In the following discussion of those wildly disparate criticisms of democracy, I seek to examine and eventually defend the twofold concept of democracy as based at once on the notions of "individual agency" and the "common."

ARNOLD GEHLEN: THE BIOLOGICAL SOURCES OF AGENCY AND THE "TOTAL" INSTITUTION

Arnold Gehlen's politically relevant texts from this period are, firstly, a series of essays published in the mid-1930s,[8] and, secondly, the first edition of his book *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (Man: His Nature and Place in the World), published in 1940.[9] Of particular interest is the last chapter of this book, Supreme Systems of Leadership, which was not reprinted in the postwar editions. A clear picture of Gehlen's stance can only be gleaned from a

consideration of his contribution to the theory of human agency and the theory of institutions.

Agency is a focus of Gehlen's thought from his early writings on; the first powerful expression of it is his treatise on "the freedom of the will," written in 1932 and published in 1933.[10] The notion of agency that comes into play here is based on Gehlen's then still sketchy considerations of the natural or biological aspects of human life. He stresses the impact of "instinct" (*Trieb*) but also insists on the fact that the biological patterns are inexhaustive. This gives rise to the need for an enhanced anthropology.[11] The distinction between human beings and animals relies on the interruption of merely instinctive processes, which triggers the intervention of the "will." This is why Gehlen polemicizes against an idea of happiness based on the immediate satisfaction of needs.[12] In order to grasp human "nature," we must begin with instinct, but must then proceed to "reflexivity," "negativity," and "character." By availing himself of this vocabulary, Gehlen presents himself as a disciple of German idealism.

These allusions to German idealism are conspicuously unanticipated, since Gehlen strives to build a comprehensive anthropological model capable of overcoming dualism (an ambition he shares with virtually every major thinker of the twentieth century). The critique of dualism becomes obvious in his turn against positivism and materialism;[13] Gehlen also attacks trifling, self-indulgent spirituality and subjectivism.[14] But why does he spare German idealism? His citation of a quote from *Mein Kampf* which portrays Hitler as sympathetic to a certain species of idealism provides no answer to this question.[15] In order to lend consistency to his approach, Gehlen must discover an element of anti-dualism in idealism itself.

He finds it in the concept of "action." From Gehlen's point of view, German idealism (his main reference is to Fichte) is anything but one-sided; rather it is informed by an attempt to overcome the great divide between world and spirit by rethinking the spirit in terms of its practical actualization. This agency is endowed with "openness to the world" (*Weltoffenheit*)[16] and directly deals with resources and objects.[17] The human being is "active" inasmuch as it is not just a biological machine driven by instinct. This is why Gehlen places "agency" in contradistinction to mere "involvement in a process" or, literally, to merely "plugging in" or "tuning in" to it.[18] "The force of *action*, which overcomes the opposition of consciousness and world," is – as Gehlen says in 1935 – "crucial for the worldview of today's man."[19]

Gehlen's pronounced notion of agency is based on a reconstruction of idealism in the spirit of National Socialism (which he also defends against Ernst Krieck). It is this notion that Gehlen takes as his segue into the realm of the political. The paramount form of action is, he says, "political" action.[20] How is this notion of the political to be combined with the philosophical anthropologist's growing interest in the biological equipment of the human being, in "behavior" and "nature"? Gehlen's acknowledgment of biological factors leads him to peculiar conclusions that are fitting examples for National Socialist ideology. For instance, he talks about the human "situation" – a term he has in common with French and German existentialism – yet, following Gehlen, this "situation" is based on "behavior" and "habitus,"[21] where "racial" and *völkisch* patterns apply.[22] The *völkisch* tradition and race are preestablished constants that determine the potential for decision-making in individuals.[23]

How does this pseudo-biological reasoning resonate with Gehlen's turn towards agency? Despite his attempt to overcome dualism, he seems to produce his own peculiar brand of dualism, since he himself must distinguish between natural patterns and free action. Since, according to Gehlen, the biologism of human nature is incomplete, there is ample room for freedom and the human being's "openness to the world." And how might this "openness," with its almost liberal ring, apply to National Socialism? Gehlen's peculiar anthropological explanation leads to a politically questionable misreading of free agency. In Gehlen, the "openness" emerges from the incompleteness of natural patterns of behavior; it is characterized in a negative way, *via negationis*. The "openness" is said to be some sort of "surplus" and brings the individual into "jeopardy."[24] This agency suffers from a lack of orientation that must be compensated for, and this is where Gehlen's famous theory of compensation comes into play (though he does not yet use this term in the early 1930s). Firstly, cultural achievements: institutions are to provide a framework to guide individuals. This link is evident in his later writings as well: the individual, which, in his view, is a sixteenth-century invention that reached maturity in the nineteenth century, aims at "self-awareness" and "self-importance," but, as Gehlen sees it, the very "nature" of these individuals demands strong "institutions" that gain independence from them and establish a modern "machinery" to organize human behavior. Insisting on individual autonomy against the towering dominance of institutions would be precisely the wrong move, in his

rendering, because this autonomy itself *aims* at being abolished by them.[25] From this perspective, the eclipse of autonomy comes as a *relief*.

Since Gehlen's explanation of agency goes back to the natural condition of humankind, it need not rely on social philosophy. It elides interaction, participation, recognition, etc. altogether. From his point of view, political action as the primary mode of agency is directed at *institutions* that provide individuals with directives and orientation. His reading of agency prevents Gehlen from taking this agency to be a building block of *democratic* politics. Instead, he criticizes "enlightenment," which is said to have led to the "dissolution of the state and a people's character" and to have promoted individualism with a merely instrumentalist view of institutions.[26] This critique of liberalism complements Gehlen's political defense of National Socialism.[27] He pleads for a "National Socialist *Weltanschauung*," which is supposed to be "total" in order to "affect *every* aspect of life and to adjust it according to its basic concepts."[28] Thus, even though Gehlen seems to stress the "agency" of human beings, the way he does so causes him to embrace National Socialist ideology both in its biologistic aspects and in its totalitarian politics.

In an attempt to combine these two positions, Gehlen praises Germany's new ideology for its focus on race and nationalism, whereas "liberal democracy" is said to have a bias towards "imperialism" because it wants to succeed everywhere. Following Gehlen, democracy does not shy away from applying its political model to "other peoples," other "forms of life and thought."[29] This he decries as the "missionary complacency" of "non-Germans" (the main targets of this critique being France and Great Britain).

The institutional order required for organizing the individuals and providing them with "orientation"[30] must rely on what Gehlen calls Supreme Systems of Leadership. The main task of these systems is *Zucht* – breeding, drilling, or training. Obviously, this term has enormous potential in a National Socialist framework, oscillating as it does between biological and cultural meanings (Gehlen frequently refers to Rosenberg's concept of *Zuchtbild* in this context).[31] This *Zucht* brings about a "firm organization" of the people for the sake of its "growth and performance," and leads to the rise of the "Germanic character."[32]

Gehlen fails to grasp a notion of agency that would enhance political participation and cooperation. That leads him to certain biologistic

claims on the one hand and to a totalitarian view of political institutions on the other. His misrepresentation of agency fits a notion of politics dominated by institutions of strictly "total" (or totalitarian) character. Instead of merely censuring Gehlen for this stance, I find it interesting to see how slight the differences are that separate his position from others that are anything but dubious in political terms. A conceptual proximity of this sort comes as no surprise, since Gehlen himself turned to National Socialism on his own premises, and, even though his involvement was considerable, his work is obviously not compromised altogether and his account is still part of an ongoing philosophical debate on the foundations of politics. However, two remarks remain regarding this debate and Gehlen's contribution to it.

On the one hand, it can be said that certain supposedly unproblematic or even promising claims come under scrutinity as they bear some resemblance to Gehlen's position of the 1930s. This is true, for example, for strong notions of agency, which are compatible with "openness" and ask for new "origins" or new "beginnings." Even though these notions do not necessarily cry out for or lead to overpowering institutions that compensate for individual willfulness and disorientation, they are based on a presupposition about individual autonomy which is as ambitious as it is simplistic. The idea of agency as a new "beginning" which Gehlen borrows from idealism is also to be found in the Kantian tradition, first and foremost in Hannah Arendt's concept of "natality" and "beginning," and, though there is obviously a world of difference between Arendt's "love of the world" and Gehlen's "openness to the world," between Arendt's public space and Gehlen's institutions, it can be said that Arendt's conception slips into systematic pitfalls corresponding to the ones Gehlen gets caught in.[33] "Agency," as Gehlen understands it, is released from natural necessity and cannot help but feel tempted by the iron cage of institutions; Arendt's notion of unencumbered "action" remains the privilege of human beings who disregard the chores of self-preservation and live up to the highest standards of intellectual and moral independence. In both cases, there is enormous pressure on the individuals who are expected to be either "underachievers" (in Gehlen) or "overachievers" (in Arendt); in any case, the human scale seems to be missing.

After asking whether the problems in Gehlen are related to problems in other positions, we must turn the tables and ask, *on the other hand*, whether there are arguments in Gehlen that could be rescued from his political entanglement. Suffice it to say that the critique of

the imperialist ambitions of Western individualism has been put forward not only by Gehlen but also by others who fall far shy of combining it with racist ideologies. A sound theory of democracy obviously must face this challenge and take the inherent problems of universalism seriously. Gehlen's polemical remarks on "imperialist" democracies are not only *reflected* in more recent debates on the supposed "neutrality" of Western life-forms, they are also *anticipated* in an intriguing controversy between Thomas Mann and his brother Heinrich, which is worth mentioning here. In his 1918 essay "Reflections of an Unpolitical Man," Thomas Mann makes several derogatory remarks on an anonymous writer's praise for the progress promoted by British colonialists in India; Mann quotes this author's appreciation for "humanitarian businessmen who seek to make money by making people happy." This anonymous writer is none other than his brother Heinrich, yet his position is presented in a somewhat distorted manner, since Thomas Mann not only dismisses his brother's comments on the "bare life" and the material well-being of the Indians, but ignores the next step taken by Heinrich, which leads to the ideas of "reason," "justice," and "liberty": the true "heritage" that "Europeans" are to communicate to others.[34]

Thomas Mann's description of the "psychological ability of equating morality with business, humanity with exploitation, virtue with utility"[35] is less flattering than his brother's. It is safe to say that, in 1918, Thomas Mann was less concerned with the welfare of Indians than with Europe's cultural finesse. At any rate, the two-step strategy combining economic transformation and political emancipation is certainly one of the trademarks of modernity, hence there is no doubt that the so-called "neutrality" of democracy is an issue that must be discussed with regard to political systems, their corresponding life-forms, and material living conditions. In light of the debate between Heinrich and Thomas Mann and its more recent sequels, Gehlen's critique of so-called democratic imperialism cannot be dismissed casually.

CARL SCHMITT: THE CRITIQUE OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBERALISM AND THE DEFENSE OF THE POLITICS OF SOVEREIGNTY

Carl Schmitt's fervent support of National Socialism was short-lived; his contempt for democracy was long-lasting. Following the

systematic guideline presented in the second section of this chapter, Schmitt's critique is to be read as an account of individual agency and as a theory of institutions, both of which contradict the self-image of democracy.

One cautionary remark is in order here: a discussion of Schmitt's critique of democracy will find him attacking something that bears a different name – what I might prefer to call "democracy," he calls "parliamentarism" or "liberalism."[36] I shall return to this terminological problem later, yet first I would like to deal with the critique itself, thereby postponing the question of its precise target.

Schmitt devotes considerable critical attention to parliamentary decision-making. He insinuates that this decision-making is based on a quasi-economic deal-making that has nothing to do with overcoming individual interests and caring for the "whole."[37] "The parliament as based on liberal reasoning" is nothing but an "artificial machinery, whereas dictatorial and caesarial methods are supported by the acclamation of the people; they can be immediate assertions of democratic substance and power."[38] Parliamentarism must stress the "public sphere," since it is opposed to feudalist politics which used to take place behind closed doors, yet it falls short of living up to the ideals of the public and the common cause. Instead, parliamentarism settles for a "bourgeois ideal of peaceful communication," where "everybody looks for his advantage and wants to strike a good deal."[39] Against the growing influence of individualism and "relativist rationalism," Schmitt hails Italian fascism as a herald of "national enthusiasm," of a "new authority, a new feeling of order, discipline, and hierarchy."[40]

Instead of relying on the "homogeneity" of a community bolstering the common cause, parliamentarism would have us believe, says Schmitt, that its power is based on the individuals themselves. "No specifically political idea" whatsoever could possibly emerge from this "individualistic liberalism."[41] "The negation of the political itself that is inherent to any consequent individualism leads to a political practice that is suspicious of any political powers and states you could think of, but it will never lead to a political theory of its own," nor will it lead "to liberal politics, but to a liberal critique of politics."[42] The bottom line of Schmitt's critique of liberalism and parliamentarism is that both of them amount to *no politics at all*, and a defense of "true" politics is Schmitt's main concern.

As we shall see in my subsequent discussion, Schmitt chooses an angle totally different from Heidegger's, but, like Heidegger, he turns

against liberalism *and* communism: "Western liberal democracy and bolshevist marxism agree on the idea of the state as a machine ... This machine, as well as technology in general, gain independence from any content that stems from political goals and convictions ... Since the seventeenth century a process of neutralization has been on its way that logically culminates in the totalization of technology."[43]

Debate and competition are the primary modes of interaction in liberalism, both being inherently individualistic.[44] Schmitt presents himself as a critical witness of the rise of the "age of neutralisation and depoliticization"[45] which transform politics into economics or rather "technology."[46] Schmitt traces this transformation of politics into technology to Thomas Hobbes, whose account of sovereignty is said to suffer from the fact that the citizens or subjects already act as liberal competitors.[47] Technological organization takes care of individual needs and is linked to "activist metaphysics," which grants "infinite power" and the "domination of nature and even of the human *physis*" to humankind itself.[48] The growing concern about the natural or physical side of human life is an immediate outcome of the turn to individualism witnessed by Schmitt. Liberal individualism is pleased to explore the "infinite opportunities for change and happiness" that can be experienced by a "natural, this-worldly" human being.[49] Eventually this way of life is reduced to concerns about physical "comfort and ease,"[50] whereas politics in Schmitt's sense – namely, politics concerned with sovereignty and fighting the enemy – asks people to put their lives at risk. It is this agonistic concept of politics that lies behind Schmitt's portrayal of Hitler as the redeemer who "upholds the law." (I am alluding here to Schmitt's famous 1934 article "Der Führer schützt das Recht" [The *Führer* Upholds the Law]); but instead of discussing his most insidious and aggressive texts from this period,[51] I consciously seek to base my argument on other, systematically more ambitious and serious texts.)

For a critical assessment of Schmitt's concept of the political, we need to discuss his claim that what is called "democracy" is not worthy of the name and ought to be attacked under the name of "liberalism" or "parliamentarism." The question of whether his critique is justified brings us back to the issues of agency and institutions.

From Schmitt's point of view, government by the people, i.e. democracy in the literal sense, is not congruent with a notion of civil society based on participation and commitment. Schmitt insists on homogeneity (and he seeks to win over Rousseau as a supporter of dictatorial

"democracy"); he says that sovereignty does not allow for partisanship and contractualism. It should come as no surprise that I find Schmitt's contribution to the debate in this field inconclusive, yet it might nevertheless be worthwhile to see where exactly Schmitt runs into problems.

Obviously, Schmitt's claims directly impact the two issues that have served as my conceptual framework so far: the status of individuals in the political realm and the idea of the common cause. The internal organization of the "People" is not a question external to the form of government itself. Since government always results in a split between the governing and the governed (even if they can be seen as two roles played by the same person, as in Rousseau), the question of how individuals cooperate politically is crucial. Thomas Jefferson's willingness "to acknowledge any government to be rightful which is formed by the will of the people," which he expects to be "substantially declared,"[52] is entirely contingent on the question of how this "substantial declaration" of the "will of the people" can be approved. Based on these premises, Schmitt's claim that certain forms of dictatorship could be called democratic is untenable: a "substantial" legitimation from the side of the individuals is lacking.[53] Schmitt may loathe discussion and agreement, but the formation of a "general will" cannot do without them.[54]

For similar reasons, Schmitt's concept of the state (be it "democratic" in his sense or not) remains questionable. At this point we can follow the critique of Schmitt's concept of the "political" put forward by Leo Strauss. Strauss shares Schmitt's reservations with regard to parliamentarism, since he does not see mere agreement as an appropriate basis for sound political action. From Strauss's point of view, there is only one reliable ground for political action: nothing but the "truth." Yet it is interesting to see how his political claims turn against Schmitt rather than against modern democracy itself. Strauss says that Schmitt actually adopts the position he is supposed to attack, namely a conception of the political that fails to grasp its essence and makes it part of technology or, in Schmitt's case, of military power.[55] If asked whether Leo Strauss's quest for a politics based on "truth" is closer to Schmitt's defense of absolute sovereignty or rather to democratic decision-making, I would opt for the latter.

Based on the criteria set by the minimal model of democracy, I draw the conclusion that Schmitt underrates the level of political unification and generalization reached by much-derided parliamentarism; he shares this prejudice with other critics who volunteer to say that the

People is not able to act responsibly (and who usually do not know a lot about "People"). In Schmitt's account, institutions must shy away from the participation of individuals. The state is identified as the one and only political bulwark in a world that is dominated by interests and has lost its sense for existential controversies.

We ended our discussion of Gehlen by asking (a) whether his account shared problems with other accounts whose political implications were less peculiar, and (b) whether his critique could effectively connect to other discourses dedicated to the future of democracy rather than to its liquidation. And yet, Schmitt's approach can serve as a starting point for fairly different paths as well. This starting point is Schmitt's twofold model of radical individualism on the one hand and indisputed sovereignty on the other.

Let us first turn to contemporary positions that might unwittingly share certain shortcomings with Schmitt's account. Following Schmitt, individual agency cannot be but non-political or even anti-political, whereas the state in its sovereignty is the true homestead for politics. Certain contemporary debates on the role of responsible government and decision-making in modern societies follow the same patterns. The Schmittian opposition between a would-be "paradise" of peaceful comfort and the political world of serious controversies reappears, for example, in Robert Kagan's antithesis between "paradise" and "power" – with the "paradise" now located in Europe and "power" attributed to the U.S.[56] It goes without saying that, from Kagan's point of view, the paradisiacal state is phony, since it is exposed to dangers of all kinds and cannot take any measures to protect itself, whereas powerful America is prepared to take risks and defend itself. Kagan misses the mark on two points. Since his defense of power subscribes to a polemic against international consultations and transnational decision-making, his claim that the kind of "power" eulogized in his essay is executed for the sake of democracy is self-defeating. In this regard, his concept of "power" is implicitly Schmittian because it has no use for participation. Moreover, Kagan's claim that this "power" cannot be anything but beneficial to the democratic cause is countered by the fact that it is coupled with a disconnect between the governing and the governed in the United States itself. Kagan's defense of "power" turns out to be much more Schmittian than he might want it to be. If one takes the debate on the relation between citizens and institutions conducted by Jefferson, Hamilton, and others in the eighteenth century as a blueprint for

contemporary controversies, Kagan represents the contingent that cultivated distrust of the citizens.

In addition to criticizing contemporary positions for their hidden relation to Schmitt, we should, again, turn the tables and seek to use elements of Schmitt's critique more constructively. Schmitt presents the modern citizen in the disguise of a liberal decision-maker maximizing their personal gain, and he shares this rather simplistic account of individual agency with theorists whose political options are much less offensive than Schmitt's. Even though his general claim that politics has come to an end in parliamentary negotiations is unsubstantiated, it can still be asked whether his critique does apply to *certain tendencies* in modern politics. Rather than upsetting parliamentarism altogether, Schmitt's critique can help uncover factual shortcomings of that system (lobbyism, tactical compromises, etc.). Jacob Taubes reminds us that Schmitt's essays were widely read among left-wing academics in the 1960s who adopted the critique of the *clasa discutidora* advanced by Schmitt and his polemical predecessor Donoso Cortés.[57] There are striking similiarities between Schmitt's critical depiction of political processes and conceptions of the political based on the idea of utility maximization; the difference lies in the respective evaluations, not on the level of the descriptions themselves. Schmittian arguments have their place in a rebuttal of theories based on the contention that economic individualism could serve as the key for a new understanding of politics.[58]

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: THE CRITIQUE OF BIOLOGICAL LIBERALISM AND THE PITFALLS OF OVERCOMING METAPHYSICS

Whereas Carl Schmitt's criticizes democracy for the sake of "true" politics, Martin Heidegger's critique of democracy is not paired with any positive notion of the political whatsoever. He does not aim to defend political institutions but to overcome the political altogether. Symptomatic of the difference between them is the fact that Schmitt's endorsement of National Socialism relies on the "state" whereas Heidegger's relies on the (pre-political) "People." The self-assertion of the German people is driven by the "spirit of community ... as it has been pushed through and elevated to a formative power by Hitler" – as Heidegger stated in the summer of 1934.[59]

At this point, it is tempting to expand upon Heidegger's own involvement in National Socialism and the systematic reasons for his endorsement of the *Führer*. Yet, instead of dealing with these widely discussed issues,[60] I refer to texts that show Heidegger at some distance from National Socialist ideology. I say "some distance" because in these statements Heidegger is neither able nor willing to take on this topic directly; his comments remain oblique and somewhat twisted. This is why they are of interest; because it allows us to take seriously similar theories and to focus on the uncanny familiarity between the "philosophy of the thirties" and its wholesale critique of modern democracy. The comments on democracy and liberalism that come under scrutinity here are to be found in Heidegger's posthumously published fragments "On the History of Metaphysics" from 1939/40 and the "Contributions to Philosophy" and the "Nietzsche" lectures from the late 1930s. The question is: how does Heidegger attack the concept of the individual that plays a central role in modern democracy, and why is it that he disdains democratic self-organization?

The answer to these questions lies in Heidegger's critique of humanism, or, to be precise, in his critique of the humanist "human": the "rational animal." The point of departure for his argument is easy enough to locate. Stating that because we are animals – at least partially – humanism tends to say that we are animals, but not just that. In short: we end up being a compound, or a sandwich that could be named 'animal-plus-*x*.' Obviously, this sandwich conception of ourselves is based not solely on the plausibility of our being animals, but also on the fact that something else can be added and plausibly combined with this. To put it the other way around: the conviction that we are in fact animals is corroborated by an account that claims we are not *only* animals but more than that.

Heidegger presents a powerful critique of this self-conception. In yet another critique of dualism, he seeks to overcome the split between the biological and rational aspects of human life. His phrase of "overcoming metaphysics" is to be read as an attempt to overcome an isolated account of the "physical" too. He says, "The essence of mankind can never be sufficiently defined by the ... *metaphysical* interpretation of the human being as the 'rational animal,' be it rationality ... or animality that prevails, or be it only a bearable balance between them that is sought to be established."[61] "In the metaphysics of the 'rational animal,' the 'low' animality and the 'high' ratio are insolubly linked in

correspondence."[62] Eventually, spirituality as well as "bestiality" emerge from this dualism.[63] Heidegger is not satisfied with merely closing the gap between object and subject, nature and reason; he rather seeks to upset this distinction altogether and redescribe both sides from the bottom up, in order to avoid the deplorable theoretical "mish-mash" (*Gemengsel*) of body, soul, and spirit.[64]

Heidegger considers the rational to be entrapped in – and obsessed by – the duality with the "natural:" modern rationality wants to foster this opposition by dominating nature and by celebrating its own distance from "this" world (that is, what Heidegger calls modernity's "Platonism"). Since he takes that mechanism to be the fundamental pattern of modern rationality, he must deem suspicious all other forms of reason that purport to function in a different manner. Following Heidegger, these "other rationalities" are merely *disguising* the original dynamics at work between the natural and the rational. He is eagerly demasking those forms of reason that claim to retain independence from the metaphysical dualism of the rational animal. The most famous among those derivative forms of reason (you could also call them "ideologies" or *Weltanschauungen*) is *politics*. From Heidegger's point of view, political reason is a secondary phenomenon, a mere coat of varnish for the true dynamics of modernity, a covering which emerges from the "mish-mash" of the rational animal; its political complement is called "biological liberalism."[65]

Accordingly, the truth behind this "liberalism" is "humanity's unconditional self-legislation," and this self-legislation is not to be understood as democratic self-government but as pure domination of nature.[66] The dualism that separates the non-natural from the natural is primordial, and in order to stabilize this dualism the non-natural takes on the form of technological rationality that seeks to dominate the natural (our being animals). Politics has no room of its own.

As a result of his general dismissal of politics, the considerable differences between political systems do not really matter to Heidegger. He would even chastise theorists who stress these differences for contenting themselves with a superficial comprehension of modernity. The most chilling remark in this regard is to be found in a fragment from 1940 (published in 1998), where Heidegger discusses early modern nation-building in England (he seems to have Hobbes in mind) and late modern Bolshevism in the Soviet Union. They are, as he says, "essentially" of the "same" kind.[67] It is unclear whether Heidegger's explicit reference to England's nation-building and the comparison to

Bolshevism is inspired by Carl Schmitt's almost identical statement published in his 1938 volume on Hobbes.[68] Anyway, those political differences do not matter to Heidegger, since both examples are based on the same metaphysical dualism; they treat the human being as a virtually "technicized animal,"[69] and both liberalism and Bolshevism are in the business of "making a people happy."[70] Again, there is an almost literal correspondence between Heidegger's critique of *Völkerbeglückung* and the claim that the "natural, this-worldly" human being is obsessed with "infinite opportunities for happiness" in Schmitt's "Concept of the Political" – an essay enthusiastically received by Heidegger in 1933.[71] Moreover, it should be noted that all three authors – Heidegger and Schmitt and Gehlen – share a disdain for happiness, which they seem to have adopted from Nietzsche. But neither is Nietzsche's account of happiness as one-dimensional as his followers have us believe,[72] nor does the belittling of happiness reveal any substantial shortcomings of democracy.

Following Heidegger, democracy is based on the "ideal" or " 'idea' of human community and of making its members happy," and that sets the tone for the "organization of the 'real,' including its transformation."[73] The same ideal is said to be promoted by Bolshevism, which is actually favored and preferred by Heidegger, since it does not seek to conceal its technological essence with the "ethical" camouflage proper to democracy (which indulges itself in terms like "autonomy," "dignity," etc.). Accordingly, Bolshevism turns out to have a decisive historical advantage over Western democracy: its minimalism of sheer power.[74] Communism has the privilege of revealing the essence of metaphysics, which, following Heidegger, consists in "execut(ing) the overpowering of beings."[75] In his perspective, communism is more authentic or truthful than democracy – truthful in the highest possible sense, as it reveals modernity as it is, on the edge of catastrophe.

Heidegger rarely uses the term "democracy" in his writings.[76] In his posthumously published interview with the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* he says, "I am not convinced" that the "political system" apt to master future challenges will be "democracy."[77] Another rather explicit comment is a passage from the Nietzsche lectures which was omitted from the 1961 edition and has only become available posthumously. On this rare occasion, Heidegger says "Europe still feels the need to cling to 'democracy' and has not learnt yet that this would be its historical death."[78]

In 1933, Heidegger feels that he can grasp the historic moment that reveals the true destiny of the German people. From this perspective, the "historical death" of democracy is caused by a new beginning that asks for another form of language and communication: whereas the language of democracy has to do with modes of discussion, controversy, participation, and agreement, the new language of 1933 has to be nothing but a gesture of expression, the proclamation of historic destiny. There is a certain ambiguity in Heidegger at this point: on the one hand, language itself seems to *perform* the historic event or to make history happen; on the other hand, language seems to provide us with a belated expression of some kind of historic necessity.

Whereas the breakthrough of 1933 figures as a true alternative to talkative democracy, Heidegger's texts from the late 1930s are a bit more reluctant with regard to historic activism, yet the rebuttal of democracy becomes even firmer. He now focuses on democracy's superficial self-image that conceals the true dynamics that actually determine the role of would-be rational subjects cast in the role of citizens. Following Heidegger, subjective agency is a metaphysical figure doomed to self-destruction in the course of the history of Being. In its current metaphysical stage, this history is the battleground for the relationship between subject and object, not between subject and subject. It is about the technological domination of nature, not about democratic participation and recognition. Following Heidegger, the idea that "political planning and practice" could take place in a "separate area" is misleading.[79] At this point, it becomes abundantly clear that Heidegger's attack on democratic politics is primarily based not on his defense of a collective "whole" (even though he desperately seeks to find a way from the isolated *Dasein* to the "people" in *Being and Time* and in 1933), but rather on his attack on the "subject," the individual and its agency.

Heidegger's impact on political theory is considerable, and it is interesting to see how some, like Hannah Arendt, sought to *reconstruct* political agency by returning to Heidegger's earlier notion of the "world" and the "common world" as laid out in *Being and Time*, whereas others, like Giorgio Agamben, adhere to Heidegger's *destruction* of the dualist image of the rational animal and of democracy as a suspicious, bastard-like offspring of technological metaphysics.[80] Agamben's claim is that modern democracy also bears responsibility for establishing the distinction between political and biological life, a

distinction that served National Socialism well in its strategy to deprive Jews of their political rights and to reduce its victims in the concentration camps to nothing but "bare life."[81]

Taking into account the whole range of Heideggerian readings of politics, our summary of Heidegger's approach must be at least as ambivalent as the equivalent summary in the case of Gehlen or Schmitt. On the one hand, Heidegger's contention that politics is a secondary phenomenon wholly dependent on technology strikes me as misleading. The link Heidegger establishes between technological rationality and democratic politics is amazingly weak. The critique of democracy emerging from Heidegger's critique of metaphysics is based on a misreading of individual agency and social intercourse: a misreading prevalent among a number of other theorists (who rarely share Heidegger's political preoccupations). While Heidegger criticizes the "blank slate" created by a subject that pretends to be independent from traditions and to dominate nature, the link established between technology and democracy only creates a blank slate of a different kind: Heidegger expects the telos of technology to be the total demolition of the subject, which, in turn, is supposed to create an open room for the "clearance" of Being. Heidegger's critique of metaphysics aims at leaving subjectivity behind without really getting to know it.

Even though Heidegger's critique is inconclusive, a sound theory of democracy should not bluntly *ignore* the problem of metaphysical dualism. This means that, on the other hand, the theory of democracy should not just reject those remonstrances as politically incorrect aberrations. But instead of relentlessly rebutting the metaphysical notion of the autonomous subject, we should take the opportunity to explore the social and symbolic realm of human life-forms and the concomitant modes of agency, responsibility, recognition, and commitment. Following these lines, we could arrive at a notion of democracy that is no longer hostage to metaphysics. Instead of being exposed to a Heideggerian critique of metaphysics, this notion of democracy would avail itself of some of his arguments directed against an idea of the subject which overemphasizes autonomy and individual decision-making. Several schools of thought would agree with some of these arguments: communitarians, but also, for example, Durkheimian sociology, John Dewey's revised notion of liberalism, the Rousseauian defense of social life by Tzvetan Todorov, Amartya Sen's theory of "commitment," and Harry Frankfurt's concept of "care."[82] These authors argue that subjective agency must rely

on resources that go beyond the individual and are to be found in a communal sphere. If we took the individual as some kind of "ready made"[83] and if we fancied ourselves as defending the dignity of the person by granting them that kind of autonomy, we would misrepresent the way a human being thinks, feels, makes choices, and acts. The Heideggerian critique of metaphysical autonomy can lead to dead ends, but if we use it cautiously and selectively it can also prevent us from falling prey to certain misrepresentations of subjectivity.

CONCLUSION

For the sake of a proper analysis of individual agency and its political implications, some of the problems highlighted by Heidegger, Gehlen, and Schmitt should actually be addressed in the context of a theory of democracy, yet not in a condescending and ill-tempered way.[84] Those problems should be seen as part of the idea of democracy rather than as an excuse to dismiss it. This idea could benefit from scrutinizing the positions discussed in this paper, be it Gehlen's theory of individual agency as suffering from disorientation and cramped between biologism and overarching institutions, Schmitt's attempt to save the state from interest-driven individualism, or Heidegger's critique of democratic politics as an offspring of metaphysical dualism and technological domination. These thinkers' political aberrations are partly driven by the dereliction of the social which prevents them from presenting a plausible concept of the person. Defending democracy against these attacks on systematic grounds is more rewarding than simply dismissing them on moral grounds.

Intellectuals who seek to come to grips with the Third Reich usually choose one of two paths. Either they refer to values that need to be preserved against the threat of Nazism, or they seek orientation by "facing the extreme." Both groups do, by all means, detest and condemn National Socialism, but in their critical analysis they choose opposing strategies. In one case, the legacy of modernity is established at the outset and National Socialism is judged on moral grounds that have been fostered in advance. In the other case, National Socialism is seen as an event that has led to an upheaval of thought and destroyed any safe stance where you could rest, hence the critical agenda chooses as its starting point the attempt to comprehend the incomprehensible.

Both perspectives are flawed. The first strategy runs the risk of presenting a saturated interpretation of the state of affairs; the second strategy cannot help but to formally affirm the catastrophe and take that as its point of departure. The two strategies are plausible reactions to historic events that render us speechless and at the same time require harsh judgments. Yet relying on a given set of criteria representing enlightened normalcy is as unsatisfactory as is the idea that the extreme should become the unique touchstone of critical analysis. Both approaches are based on a methodological dichotomy that is unfortunate for both historic and philosophical knowledge. Overcoming this dichotomy would lead to an attempt to *historicize* National Socialism. An attempt of this nature raises suspicion, since it usually comes with an attempt to relativize it. This equation is misleading, though, because, in this context, historicization implies nothing less than the task of accurately describing the developments leading from one situation to another, or from one mindset to another.[85] A description of this kind would turn to differences, deviations, and transformations that are instrumental for a proper understanding of both democratic politics *and* National Socialism. There is a world of difference between the two, but without an understanding of this difference a proper analysis of democracy and its discontents is unthinkable. The horrors produced by National Socialism are immense, but who ever said that this devil would not be in the details?

NOTES

1. Cf. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La Fiction du Politique: Heidegger, l'art et la politique* (Paris: Bourgois, 1987), p. 72.
2. Cf. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For an enlightening account of the debate on National Socialism and modernization see Rolf Peter Sieferle, *Die Konservative Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995), pp. 198–221 ("Modernity, Technocracy, and National Socialism").
3. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); idem, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962 [1935]); cf. Anson Rabinbach, "Unclaimed Heritage: Ernst Bloch's *Heritage of Our Times* and the Theory of Fascism," *New German Critique*, 11, 1977, pp. 5–21.
4. Cf. Dieter Thomä, "Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus: In der Dunkelkammer der Seinsgeschichte," in *Heidegger-Handbuch*, ed. Dieter Thomä (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), pp. 141–162, esp. 158.

5. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959ff.), vol. 3, p. 361; idem, *"The Social Contract" and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), vol. 1, p. 50.
6. John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty" (1859), in *Utilitarianism – On Liberty – Essay on Bentham*, ed. Mary Warnock (New York: New American Library, 1974), pp. 126–250, esp. 135.
7. The standard is still set by the controversy between Berlin and Taylor; cf. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958), in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 118–172; Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Freedom?" (1979), in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 211–229. For a discussion of related issues, cf. Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); cf. esp. introduction and ch. 1, "Before Negative and Positive Liberty."
8. Arnold Gehlen, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980): "Wirklichkeitsbegriff des Idealismus," pp. 181–198; "Deutschtum und Christentum bei Fichte," pp. 215–294; "Der Staat und die Philosophie," pp. 295–310; "Der Idealismus und die Lehre vom menschlichen Handeln," pp. 311–347; "Der Idealismus und die Gegenwart," pp. 347–357; "Noch einmal: Der Idealismus und die Gegenwart," pp. 358–362. Subsequent references cited as: Gehlen GA 2.
9. Arnold Gehlen, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993). Subsequent references cited as: Gehlen GA 3.
10. Gehlen GA 2, pp. 1–180.
11. Ibid., pp. 15ff., 43.
12. Ibid., p. 15.
13. Ibid., p. 332.
14. Christianity; cf. ibid., pp. 356–357.
15. Ibid., p. 357.
16. Gehlen GA 3, p. 733.
17. Cf. Gehlen GA 2, p. 330.
18. Ibid., p. 167. The German original reads, "Handeln vs. bloßes Sicheinschalten in den Prozeß;" Gehlen's critical application of this technical metaphor is remarkable, since *Einschalten* is related to the Nazi parole *Gleichschaltung*. Heidegger uses the same, surprisingly mechanistic metaphor in an affirmative sense when he says to Jaspers in March 1933, "Man muss sich einschalten ... One has to become engaged." Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (Munich: Piper, 1977), p. 100.
19. Gehlen GA 2, p. 356; at this point, Gehlen presents himself as a strange doppelgänger of American pragmatism.
20. Gehlen GA 3, p. 360.
21. Gehlen GA 2, pp. 331–333.
22. Gehlen GA 3, p. 360.
23. Gehlen GA 2, p. 304. The German original reads, "vorgegebene Konstanten" for the "Entschlußmöglichkeiten des Einzelnen."
24. Gehlen GA 3, p. 733.
25. Cf. Arnold Gehlen, "Über kulturelle Evolutionen," in *Die Philosophie und die Frage nach dem Fortschritt*, ed. Helmut Kuhn and Franz Wiedmann (Munich: Pustet, 1964), pp. 207–220, esp. 208–209, 217; Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1956), p. 9.

26. Gehlen GA 2, p. 304; "Auflösung des Staates und des Volksbildes."
27. Cf. ibid., pp. 227, 233, 238.
28. Ibid., p. 354.
29. Ibid., p. 238.
30. Gehlen GA 3, p. 712.
31. Cf. ibid., pp. 710, 733–734, 739.
32. Ibid., p. 739.
33. On "natality" and "beginning" see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 247; on the concept of "action," p. 7ff.; on the phrase "love of the world," the original title of her *The Human Condition*, cf. Hannah Arendt, *Denktagebuch 1950–1973*, ed. Ursula Ludz and Ingeborg Nordmann (Munich: Piper, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 522–23, 539; Dieter Thomä, "Heidegger und Hannah Arendt: Liebe zur Welt," in *Heidegger Handbuch*, ed. Dieter Thomä (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), pp. 397–402.
34. Cf. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1983 [1918]), pp. 356f.; cf. Heinrich Mann, "Der Europäer" (1916), in idem, *Macht und Mensch. Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), pp. 129–135; cf. Dieter Thomä, *Vom Glück in der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), pp. 257–260.
35. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 356.
36. Cf. "Vorbemerkung (über den Gegensatz von Parlamentarismus und Demokratie)," in Carl Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, 2nd edn. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1926), pp. 5–23, esp. 18–19. Subsequent references cited as: Schmitt 1. The title of the English translation of this treatise, "Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy" (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1988), does not do justice to Schmitt's own reading of democracy.
37. Ibid., p. 33.
38. Ibid., p. 22.
39. Ibid., p. 81.
40. Ibid., p. 89.
41. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1963 [1932]), p. 69. Subsequent references cited as: Schmitt 2.
42. Schmitt 2, p. 69.
43. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Cologne: Maschke, 1982 [1938]), p. 63. Subsequent references cited as: Schmitt 3.
44. Schmitt 2, p. 70.
45. Ibid., p. 79f.
46. Ibid., p. 93.
47. Schmitt 3, p. 64.
48. Schmitt 2, p. 93.
49. Ibid. For a similar passage cf. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie*, 4th edn. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1985), p. 82: "Every moral and political decision is being paralyzed in a thisworldly paradise of immediate, natural life and problem-free somaticity."
50. Ibid., p. 93.
51. Cf. Bernd Rüthers, *Carl Schmitt im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989), p. 54f.

52. Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings. Memorial Edition* (Washington DC, issued under the auspices of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1903–4), vol. 8, p. 437.
53. Schmitt 1, pp. 22, 37.
54. For a contemporary account of democracies that barely deserve this name, cf. Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: Norton, 2003).
55. Leo Strauss, as quoted in Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 116: "he remains trapped in the view that he is attacking."
56. Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003). For a direct reply to Kagan that echoes the title of his book, cf. Tzvetan Todorov, *Le Nouveau Désordre Mondial* (Paris: Laffont, 2003).
57. Cf. Jacob Taubes, *Ad Carl Schmitt: Gegenstrebige Fügung* (Berlin: Merve, 1987), p. 14. For Cortés's critique and Schmitt's reading of it, cf. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie*, pp. 69ff., 79: *clasa discutidora*; pp. 82–83: "If the political disappears in the economic or technological-organizational sphere, it also dissolves in the endless conversation on cultural and historical commonplaces ... Either way, one shies away from the gist of the political idea, which is the high-reaching moral decision."
58. Cf., for example, Geoffrey Brennan and James M. Buchanan, *The Reason of Rules: Constitutional Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
59. Heidegger GA 16, p. 302. Here and in subsequent references, "Heidegger GA" refers to Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975ff.), followed by volume and page number.
60. Cf. Thomä, "Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus."
61. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen, Germany: Neske, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 193–134.
62. Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen, Germany: Neske, 1954), p. 91.
63. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, p. 200.
64. Heidegger GA 65, p. 53.
65. Ibid p. 53; p. 319.
66. Heidegger GA 48, p. 213; p. 69, p. 194.
67. Heidegger GA 69, p. 208f. The equation of capitalism and communism is later explored by Alexandre Kojève in a famous footnote to his Hegel lectures: "On peut même dire que, d'un certain point de vue, les Etats-Unis ont déjà atteint le stade final du 'communisme' marxiste, vu que, pratiquement, tous les membres d'une 'société sans classes' peuvent s'y approprier dès maintenant tout ce que bon leur semble, sans pour autant travailler plus que leur coeur ne le leur dit ... Si les Américains font figure de sino-soviétiques enrichis, c'est parce que les Russes et les Chinois ne sont que des Américains encore pauvres, d'ailleurs en voie de rapide enrichissement. J'ai porté à en conclure qu l'*American way of life* était le genre de vie propre à la période post-historique, la présence actuelle des Etats-Unis dans le Monde préfigurant le futur 'étérnel présent' de l'humanité tout entière. Ainsi, le retour de l'Homme à l'animalité apparaissait non plus comme une possibilité encore à venir, mais comme une certitude déjà présente."

Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 436f.

68. Carl Schmitt is of course not the only one who compared liberalism and socialism. When Heidegger wrote the remark quoted above, he also prepared a seminar on Ernst Jünger's *The Worker*, where "socialism" is presented as an offspring of "liberalism," and "capitalism" and "socialism" are characterized as "branches" belonging to "the same tree" (cf. Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* [Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1932], pp. 245, 249). But Heidegger's vocabulary seems more closely related to Schmitt's than to Jünger's.
69. Heidegger GA 65, p. 98; "technisiertes Tier."
70. Heidegger GA 69, p. 208f.; "Völkerbeglückung."
71. Schmitt 2, p. 93; Heidegger GA 16, p. 156.
72. Cf. Thomä, *Vom Glück in der Moderne*, p. 182.
73. Heidegger GA 69, p. 189.
74. Heidegger GA 69, pp. 188f., 208f.
75. Ibid., pp. 69, 194f.
76. Cf. Heidegger GA 65, pp. 39, 243.
77. Heidegger GA 16, p. 668; cf. Martin Heidegger, " 'Only a God Can Save Us'," *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 91–116, 104.
78. Heidegger GA 43, p. 193; cf. Katrin Meyer, "Auseinandersetzung mit Nietzsche II: Das Rettende der Kunst," *Heidegger Handbuch*, ed. Dieter Thomä (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), pp. 210–213, esp. 211.
79. Heidegger GA 69, p. 188.
80. Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973 [1951]); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).
81. For a critique of Agamben, cf. Thomä, *Vom Glück in der Moderne*, pp. 239–250.
82. Cf. for example Martin S. Cladis, *A Communitarian Defense of Liberalism: Emile Durkheim and Contemporary Social Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); John Dewey, "The Future of Liberalism" (1935), in *Problems of Men* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), pp. 126–140; Tzvetan Todorov, *Life in Common: An Essay in General Anthropology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Amartya Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioural Foundations of Economic Theory," in *Choice, Welfare, and Measurement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 84–106; Harry G. Frankfurt, "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 155–180.
83. Cf. for a critique of this idea John Dewey, "The Future of Liberalism," p. 136.
84. Cf. D. Thomä, *Vom Glück in der Moderne*, ch. 6 ("Selbstbestimmung, Selbsterhaltung und Glück").
85. I owe this notion of uncompromised historicization to a thought-provoking essay by Martin Broszat, "Plädoyer für eine Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus" (1985), *Nach Hitler* (Munich: dtv, 1988), pp. 266–281, esp. 280–281.

Nazi Germany and the Humanities

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ANSON RABINBACH



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