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Editors

Heidegger's Black  
Notebooks and the  
Future of Theology

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*Dream: Onetropoicis and the Prism of Imagination* (2011), and *Giving beyond the Gift: Apophysis and Overcoming Theomania* (2014). *The Duplicity of Philosophy's Shadow: Heidegger, Nazism and the Jewish Other*, and *Heidegger and the Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiesis*, will appear in 2018.

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## Introduction: Heidegger and Theology after the Black Notebooks

Jayne Svenungsson

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CHAPTER 1

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the reception of Heidegger in several ways entered a new phase. These were the years during which the damning studies of both Victor Farias (1987) and Hugo Ott (1988) appeared. While Heidegger's Nazi sympathies had been well known ever since his own explicit commitment in his inaugural speech as the Nazi-installed rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933, Farias and Ott, using newly uncovered documents, laid bare the extent of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism.<sup>1</sup>

The shift between the 1980s and 1990s was also the time when Heidegger's lecture series from the early Freiburg period began to appear in the *Gesamtausgabe* of his works.<sup>2</sup> These now famous lectures revealed Heidegger's intense interest in religious experience as a key field for phenomenological enquiry. Even more so, it seemed that Heidegger first discovered phenomenology as a method essentially through his engagement with religious experience, and more particularly, with 'Christian' (Pauline, Augustinian) experience.<sup>3</sup>

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42. *Ibid.*, 12.  
 43. *Ibid.*  
 44. *Ibid.*, 26–27.  
 45. *Ibid.*, 31.  
 46. *Ibid.*, 357.  
 47. *Ibid.*, 484.  
 48. *Ibid.*, 560.  
 49. *Ibid.*  
 50. *Ibid.*, 563.  
 51. Heidegger, GA 94, 345.

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## CHAPTER 5

## Anarchist Singularities or Proprietorial Resentments? on the Christian Problem in Heidegger's Notebooks of the 1930s

Ward Blanton

Once more: the world is in reconstruction (*im Umbau*) toward itself. We are again approaching the truth and its essentiality – we are becoming mindful (*wir werden gesonnen*) of everything the truth requires to take it up and to take a stand within it – to become the ones who are indigenous, who stand on native soil.

The one who can be indigenous (*Boden-ständig*) is the one who derives from native soil, is nourished by it, stands on it – this is the original (*das Ursprüngliche*) – that is what often vibrates in me through body and disposition – as if I went over the fields guiding a plow, or over lonely field-paths amid ripening grain, through winds and fog, sunshine and snow, paths which kept mother's blood, and that of her ancestors, circulating and pulsing...

The other indigenous ones – to them this root has withered, but they persist on the way back to the soil and to esteeming the soil.

Martin Heidegger, *Black Notebooks*<sup>1</sup>

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In the letters [sic] to the Galatians, Paul is struggling with the Jews and the Jewish Christians. Thus we find the phenomenological situation of religious struggle and of struggle itself.

Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*<sup>2</sup>

This is a tale of the mirror of high philosophy in everyday anti-Judaisms and of one type of a 'return' to an 'indigenous' experience also mirroring itself in a crasser version of the same. It is a story, moreover, of the way that even while this fantasized return home seems always to be doubled, with Heidegger always excluding himself from the others, his fantasy about 'struggling with the Jews and the Jewish Christians' so to speak will remain undoubled over the course of so many years, unified, as if the given ground to which all his high flying discourses would eventually fall back to earth. Ours is a tale, therefore, of philosophy's repetition compulsion vis-à-vis *the Christian problem*.

As a preamble to this tale, let us situate ourselves initially with the view of a surveyor who declares there is no way to map modern philosophy or modern religion from a vantage point which eludes, or stands outside of, an unfolding and interlocking series of crises, co-operations, and catastrophes. Our thinking will not—however we stick to the proverbial best of intentions—remain outside these catastrophic coordinates. Rather, our thinking is always worldly in the sense that it will always be forced to find transformations of (or migrations within) these events themselves. My own interventions in the complex Heidegger affair start from this place. On this occasion in fact I would like to start explicitly from the interlocking of two specific catastrophes—neither of them innocent and neither of them philosophical legacies we should forget. Let us begin then with Heidegger's fascination with a new philosophical start in the 1930s, reading it over against Heidegger's negotiation of what I sometimes describe as the persecutorial invention of Christianity, the archive of which never ceased to envelope Heidegger's work. Among other things, I want to unfold a bit further here one of my frequently repeated assertions in the early chapters of *A Materialism for the Masses*,<sup>3</sup> namely, that we have not yet taken seriously enough the way some of the central gestures constituting the archival 'invention of Christianity' continue to radiate with dramatic reverberations through modern and contemporary continental philosophy. I will claim that in the notebooks of the 1930s, Heidegger sometimes fails to keep pace with his own best insights about how to challenge inherited anti-Jewish fantasies about Christian origins. Far from being a sideline issue, my claim here is that

the flat footed *repetition* of a traditional (i.e., persecutorial) Christian-origins story in Heidegger's work during this period is central and also something which makes usefully clear how Heidegger's own political debacle was not simply personal or political (as so many Heideggerians seem so quick to say these days), but also deeply philosophical in a way which threatens to render his promising thought about singularity and self-reliance entirely pointless. Put more pointedly, Heidegger doesn't simply fall into anti-Jewish animosities on these occasions, though that is a serious enough topic in its own right. What I would like to point out also is that on these occasions Heidegger likewise destroys the central insights of his philosophy of singularity. Read this way, I want to say that Heidegger's anti-Judaism in fact destroys the philosophy to which he otherwise often enough seemed to be pointing. In doing so, Heidegger, despite himself, remains centrally within an old, even ancient, set of philosophical coordinates that, as already mentioned, I like to call the Christian problem.<sup>4</sup>

To be sure, these interlocking starting points will at first blush for some seem an odd place from which to articulate a reading of the 1930's notebooks. After all, are not the *Black Notebooks* everywhere marked with iterations of a desire for the new philosophy to break free of its Christian limitations? Is not this the last place we should be trying to sense archival repetitions of that moment of 'Christian origins'? In fact, it is precisely because Heidegger sometimes says such forceful things about Christianity's limits that I find all the more haunting a repetition of some of the standard, and even entirely clichéd, stock motifs of, say, Christianity versus Judaism, as ways of grappling with what Heidegger is doing in the notebooks. Repetition compulsion was always about a strange necessity which seems always to emerge over a field we would otherwise imagine to be purely contingent. As ever, here we ignore the archival comparisons to the detriment of our own philosophical experimentations.

In keeping with my surveyor's assertion about catastrophes we inherit but do not escape, this is the situation of thought and its stock repetitions—its capture in a play of haunting or affecting analogies. In the end, I want to say that Heidegger—despite himself—succumbs at crucial moments in the notebooks to a very common persecutorial temptation, one Heidegger inherits among other places from the archive of Christian origins.<sup>5</sup> At stake, philosophically, will be the desire of freedom in thinking and the question of whether this freedom could affirm its expression



in a way besides persecutorial antagonism for that which will stand in as that thought's flawed doppelgänger. In a word, Heidegger—despite his bold self-assertions of having stepped beyond it—stumbles on the stumbling stone which is *the Christian problem*, one we have overcome today all the less to the degree we no longer recognize ourselves to be facing it.

#### ALIENATION, MISSION, SINGULARITY

The lines cited at the beginning of this essay about philosophical reconstruction or a return home are typical of Heidegger's reflections in the notebooks of the early 1930s. His intuition of a homecoming was, during that period, often enough the very name of the philosophical revolution he believed to be signalling itself in and through his own work. The singularity or self-assertion of the new philosophy or the philosophical revolution would be a kind of coming home, even a kind of (somehow revived or sublimated) 'return' to home which becomes greater than ever before. In the early to mid-1930s especially, Heidegger's notebooks were never far from this kind of messianic or exilic tableau, with himself as the voice crying in the wilderness of alienated and misguided others. Not long before this particular declaration of a return home from exile, for example, Heidegger would confess that this 'reconstruction toward itself' or coming 'home' of the philosopher was in a sense a finding of 'God'. Such connections can in fact be very surprising for those who have worked carefully through texts like *Being and Time* (1927).

As Heidegger would scribble (and, we must always remember, then edit for eventual publication) in his notebooks: 'We first find God again when we lose the *world* no longer and truly exist in the power of *world-formation*.'<sup>6</sup> Everywhere one catches the frequency, picks up on the way a return home conjures the buzz of a free being surging forth in the production of beings. Heidegger, in fact, seems fairly obsessed in these texts with the thematics of this eventalizing 'return' home, and he often gestures toward the idea that such an event—on the way, almost here—is precisely the drama which will enact his earlier analyses of *Being and Time*.

The connections are so strong on this point that, in his own encounter with the Black Notebooks, Karsten Harries notes the links Heidegger makes on this score and, indeed, agrees with them in a fairly straightforward sense. Harries finds in them confirmation of his own challenging pronouncements about the Heideggerian legacy from decades earlier in

1976. As Harries points out: "The formal character of *Being and Time*", I wrote, "makes it like a vessel that demands to be filled. This demand does not come to fundamental ontology from without but is generated by the ontological analysis itself."<sup>7</sup> A political experiment in some sense was already in the cards. Indeed, Harries goes on to say that this pre-scripted need is seeking satisfaction in Heidegger's language of the 'home' within the notebooks.

Harries's suggestion seems trustworthy, and here we must add that the frequent—and structurally solicited—language of home sits sometimes uneasily along the equally frequent thematics of empowering or the energetics of eventalization whereby Heidegger elicits a sense of the dramatic nature of his new philosophical movement. Heidegger's notebooks of the early to mid-1930s are chock full of the language of a kind of empowering, eventalizing *energy* which flows through certain forms of relatedness. There is the 'jolt' which brings to life and which everywhere elides itself into the 'attunement' of a frequency which, so to speak, installs its own—grounds its own—sender and receiver.<sup>8</sup> This language is that which carries a sense of an-archic or self-reliant creativity in philosophy. It is, I would suggest, the substance of Heidegger's much valorized 'anarchism', a topic to which we will return. But does this vibrant substance hold out, as it were, does it rest in itself, eluding the proprietorial—and resentful—temptation to become agonistically aggressive toward competitors, which is to say essentially reliant on something outside itself?

#### RECTORSHIP AND RESENTMENT

In Heidegger's reflections (or, in fact, carefully managed self-presentations) after what he soon lamented as his 'founded year [*Ein geschichtliches Jahr*]—a lost one...' while Nazi rector of the University of Freiburg, it is easy to note a kind of heightening of an almost apocalyptic tension in which Heidegger senses the emergence of a true spiritual movement or return 'home'.<sup>9</sup> If he had hoped to lead an emancipation of the university which leads to a new spiritual invention of the old and inherited ways of life, Heidegger's sense of the deferral of this event seems to have elicited from him a kind of darkening riff in his discourse of the 'new native' of the university. The powers of reified and alienating reality were too strong for Heidegger's spiritual exodus from the bureaucratic, representational, and functional-technical mode of self-organization.



Germany's self-assertion will for Heidegger remain dominated by what he sometimes calls 'vulgar Nazism',<sup>10</sup> a kind of fallen simulacrum of the spiritual breakthrough for which he hoped. Heidegger's response to the situation seems in the notebooks in the 1930s always to up the ante, so to speak, and there is evidently here a burgeoning of a kind of dark variation of his earlier hopes in a spiritual return to the homeland. Everywhere there is a kind of unconquerable 'bourgeois philistinism', a 'bureaucratized student body and instructors', a reduction of university life to 'meeting needs', a missing of the real 'vocation' of the university to inventively recreate the 'essence' of the people.<sup>11</sup>

The most important section of today's university is the *public-relations office* – wielding the greatest possible authority. It is reported there that such and such a number of S.A. men are fed in the refectory, that the building of the new gym increased employment, that an excursion to the North Sea newly brought together students and instructors, etc., etc. – and so what?<sup>12</sup>

If a functional-technical way of life is increasingly absorbing the university even under Heidegger's oversight, Heidegger's accompanying sense of what it will look like to overcome this resistance and its 'liberal-spiritual' obfuscation of a true spirit-movement begins over time to grow darker, as if becoming more aggressive in relation to the form of life it must depose. In this respect, we should pay close attention to the *way* in which Heidegger speaks his usual rhetoric of the risk or indeed 'danger' involved in authentic spiritual self-assertion. In the notebooks he reflects, for example:

Should the state of the movement of 1933–34 merely be interpreted and decanted into bottles as 'what has been attained' – an end of state – or is this only the prelude to the great future of the people? Only if it is this – which we believe – does it harbor the guarantee of greatness. But then the question comes to the fore: which powers create and unfold this future? Certainly not those powers which are ever satisfied with the hitherto, but also not those that now follow behind as latecomers and 'interpret' and make palatable – i.e., harmless – everything liberal-spiritual (*liberal-geistig*). Seen from here a mistrust of the 'old' over and against the 'new' is not only justified but is even necessary. Yet if this mistrust blindly extends to all spiritual endeavor (*alle geistige Anstrengung*) and to every seeking already long ago equal to such endeavor and *equipped* for it, and if everything is

thereby thrown indiscriminately into a melting pot of 'intellectualism' and 'theorizing,' then it becomes a thwarting and disfiguring of creative happenings.<sup>13</sup>

When the Silyl of the free spirit speaks, it does so with a world-transforming violence that must not be obfuscated by the latter day interpreters of the oracular (or, rather, poetic-political) utterance. What good old ways of *equipping* or *enacting* the free invention of the self-reliant spirit are those we are being encouraged here not to mistrust, Heidegger does not begin to say—though clearly the problem is that these old modes of executing self-reliance are becoming overthought, mere theory without the teeth, so to speak, of real 'creative happenings' in Germany. Heidegger's silence on this point is perhaps all the more ominous the way it is simmering just under the surface of this text.

Moreover, this lack of a kind of *spirit-technics* of real transformation, it is clear, indicates that a day-after intellectualizing and justifying of the *real* forces of transformation fulfill the role of a liberal-spiritualizing of everything that is not only more powerfully creative but also more *dangerous*. The stylistics of a passage like this are crucial, and before we make such lines into the usual bland and generic 'tropics of the event', or a merely formal declaration about the nature of a free self-forming happening, we could just as well ask the more offensively deflationary question. What, in 1933, did Heidegger have in mind as the more dangerous enactment—the less 'liberal' enactment—which the university seemed so keen already to suppress or to sublimate, in any case to make more palatable and safer? What is the older, more creative, and more dangerous way that the 'liberals' (who are everywhere at this point in the notebooks) want to render into a more functional-tactical-respectful occurrence?

Some entries later, Heidegger would hit a similar note when—in a striking transformation of the tone of those comments with which he began—he wrote:

If truth lies in the power of 'race' (of the native-born one) (*des Eingeborenen*), will and should the Germans then lose their historical essence – abandon it – organize it away – or will they not have to bring it to the supreme tragic denouement (*zum höchsten tragischen Anstrich bringen müssen*)? Instead of which, those who are now bred are short-sighted and oblivious!<sup>14</sup>



One of the things that intrigues here is the way Heidegger is developing during this period a taste for the tragedy, and perhaps the taste for darkly implicit threats, along with the accompanying theme of the sacrifices to come. Heidegger laments that he lives in a moment when his peers fail to understand that the 'firstfruits' of a new harvest or (read through the New Testament and Pauline links to firstfruits language) a new age are meant to be evacuated, lost, *sacrificed*—precisely not invested in the building up of the tabulated powers of progress: 'First fruits—true ones—are sacrificed, immolated (*werden geopfert, kommen in die Flammen*); but they are not passed around and certainly not paid for and transported.<sup>15</sup> Again, Heidegger seems clearly to distinguish his own sense of a revolution to those of his merely calculating 'liberal' contemporaries by presenting his own rhetoric as a darker and more ominous version of their own.

One question is whether, in the inflation of the rhetoric of agonistic violence, Heidegger does not precisely annihilate some of his own best insights about singularity and difference. Heidegger's work teeters on the verge of a distinction between the empty, self-reliant, or merely performative invitation of a kind of new gospel and the persecutorial, threatening tactics of a fascistic homeland. He is, in other words, struggling with the Christian problem in philosophy. Inasmuch as Peter Sloterdijk often situates his own writings explicitly within a Nietzschean desire to outdo Christianity by overcoming Christian logics of resentment, his diagnoses of Heidegger are worth recalling here.<sup>16</sup> In *Rage and Time*, for example, he writes:

Rage becomes the *momentum* of a movement into the future, which one can understand as the raw material for historical change. As elementary as these considerations may appear, their implications reach into the innermost motives of twentieth-century philosophy. If they are correct, they necessitate important modifications to one of the most well known theorems of modern philosophy. If they are correct, one should not interpret existential time as the immediate being-toward-death, as Heidegger in *Being and Time* suggests an interpretation that is as well known as it is rushed. The being-whole-ability of existence is what matters to the thinker, an ability that does not depend on the fact of the individual considering his own death in order to ascertain his directedness toward something that is an unconditional future fact. *Dasein* can just as well orient itself because it traverses the distance from humiliation to revenge as a whole. Existential

time emerges from such anxiety toward its decisive moment. Such an act of endowing for one's own being-toward-goals is more powerful than every vague heroic meditation of the end. When *Dasein* is angry it does not have the form of running ahead toward its own death, but of an anticipation of the indispensable day of rage.<sup>17</sup>

In his longer diagnosis of modern philosophical resentment, Sloterdijk tends to focus—as he does in this paragraph—on the role of resentment *over against* Greek myths of recognition, but it is clear that the entire project of Sloterdijk's *Rage and Time* could just as well be read as the trial of Heidegger in relation to the Christian problem of whether there is a free, rather than persecutorial, news to tell.<sup>18</sup> Is Heidegger a philosopher of the freely self-grounding singularity or a hopeful investor in the 'rage bank' of revenge and aggressivity?

#### ANARCHISM'S SACRIFICE—OR THE SACRIFICE OF ANARCHISM?

Heidegger will again and again in the notebooks come back to the notion that philosophy is necessarily untimely, 'inopportune' and therefore pointless—certainly not functional. Philosophy's revelations are outside the realm of calculation and technics, and this has profound implications for the logic of the enemy within Heidegger's writings. As he writes in the notebooks:

Christianity is victorious *once again* through the production of the opponent in subjection to it, whose only option is the *overturning* of the Christian view of mankind. Yet overturning is indeed a coarsening and constructing of the essential relations (for Christianity, essentially the relation to the creator God). Overturning is inversion and reversion—but never overcoming as liberation (*Umstülpung ist Umwand Rückfall—aber niemals Überwindung als Befreiung*).<sup>19</sup>

Real freedom, real self-reliance would therefore elude the logic of rebellion or dialectical contestation which, precisely, Christianity seems so good at enforcing. For me, perhaps the *key* element in that tradition, from Reinier Schuurmann to Peter Trawny, of reading Heidegger as a kind of nominalist anarchist or as someone with the taste for a philosophy of singular differences expresses itself here. Indeed, Heidegger himself points out these kinds of links often enough in the notebooks.



But we should beware, indeed following Heidegger's own advice, lest we aestheticize and tame—attempt to make 'harmless'—the way his rhetoric seems to flow back and forth between the openness of an event, or the freewheeling anarchy of a spiritual self-assertion, and decidedly concrete calculations of retributive violence borrowed from tales of sacrificial economies of old. In the years after the short-lived hopes of the rectoral period, Heidegger will in fact increasingly link the two together: the revelation of the self-assertion of spirit will involve, decidedly, a sacrifice, a 'tragic denouement of the German people', a tarrying with the full violence of the event, rather than the 'liberal spiritual' intellectualism or sublimated niceness which would apparently betray it.

Heidegger's edifice groans and creaks like the old-fashioned Lutheranism he inherited, and we should not miss what is quite simply the obvious overlap between the Heideggerian escalation of 'spiritual danger' vis-à-vis an everyday spirituality and that Lutheranism which would forever urge the would-be believers to eschew all 'Pharisaic', or simply Jewish, forms of calculating legalism in relation to God.<sup>20</sup> Heidegger would even suspect, like almost every Christian contemporary, that he was—internally—still a calculating 'liberal', a term which would often enough (and soon explicitly so) be entirely interchangeable with the word 'Jew' in these writings. Indeed, it is this interchangeable-ity which will finally express itself in Heidegger's post-war fantasies of a global 'Jewish conspiracy', which is—let's be clear—simply another name for what he describes throughout the 1930s as the liberal problem of technocratic or functional reason. From his early writings in which he finds in his fantasy of Paul-versus-the-Jews a vision of 'struggle as such' to the post-war fantasies of a technocratic-functional world handed over to a global 'Jewish conspiracy', Heidegger is actually not ever straying far from the everyday clichés of the Christian problem in Germany, never facing them, never overturning them, despite his claims to be moving ever farther afield from Christianity.

What is hindering the risky self-assertion of the university in the 1930s, for example? Only its internal liberal/Jew:

Why does one not have the courage (*den Mut*) to see the university as it is: a hodgepodge of groups of professional schools, a hodgepodge shovved together by some ministry? It is because 'one', deep within, thinks 'liberally' (*wel'man'zimmerst'liberal'denkt*) i.e., becomes enraptured mendaciously with the mere semblance of 'universitas', indeed since 'one' now

has the power and will some day (through whatever channels as the reward of whatever 'organization') receive a place in this sphere called the 'university', a sphere constantly reviled in public and hotly striven for in private.<sup>21</sup>

For me, the rhetorical and formal link that Heidegger rehearses again and again is that link between a revolution grounded in the 'open' and the sacrifice, presumably, of the liberals—or Jews—inside and around us. It also matters little that, on this occasion, Heidegger's sights seemed to be set on one professor already known for his anti-Jewish activities and another who would likewise become an important Nazi ideologue, Ernst Krieck and Albert Baeumler. Heidegger simply wants to outdo both of them in his radicality of the spiritual opening, the opening of freedom.

What we need to note is that the link between self-assertion and an aggressive logic of 'sacrifice' is a kind of non-sequitor on Heidegger's own hypernominalist or anarchic grounds, an indication of a lack of freedom in his capacity to reconceptualize the coordinates within which he finds himself. For all the openness of the open, for all that being appears as a questionable and questioning sphere, Heidegger's discussions are almost everywhere in the notebooks directly something very different, solicitations to sacrifice one representational *type* for another. And, as seems to be endemic to the case, to enact a migration from one type to another is to imply a kind of aggressive mirroring of the one in relation to the other. To read Heidegger's resentment in the notebooks and then try to keep the different types a matter of nonrelational or indifferent difference would be a striking misstep, even if that misstep has become a path well worn by many of Heidegger's latter day disciples.

It is with this in mind that I find, once again, a great threat implied when Heidegger declares that his 'liberal' (and soon to become 'Jewish') contemporaries are those who are unable to undergo a self-assertion which is, at the same time, a 'lawless grasping of the unthought' which constitutes their thinking. Again, this assertion is not non-relational; it is a critique, a refusal, an enactment of what makes the liberal a mere pacifier of a really dangerous spirituality beyond the law. And when Heidegger's much valorized spirituals emerge on one side, the liberals are left to stand in an entirely uncertain position as to the sacrificial, tragic grasping of the unthought for which the Heideggerian revolutionaries are constantly preparing and for which they constantly rehearse in a kind of quiet resoluteness (or at least quiet inscriptions in their private notebooks).



In other words, for me it seems that Heidegger has things precisely the wrong way around when he suspects that the temptation Christianity poses for the revolution or self-assertion of free spirit is that of a ready-made 'morality' or a discourse of 'belief'. As he writes in 1934:

The confusion in the 'spiritual' situation – this situation does not allow its most proper plight (*ihre eigenste Not*) to appear and is so weak (in its scant strength) that it fears its plight instead of exulting in it. Meanwhile, positive Christianity is demanded – or conceded – on the basis of the concordat and the universal perplexity and the need for a certain 'morality'; besides this – besides those doctrines – there are the all too hasty ones who make a movement out of 'belief', then those who mix an unclear Germany with a still more diluted Christianity; then those few who form for themselves a standpoint out of sheer Godlessness; and finally the majority, the sheer indifferent ones, who look on and wait for something to which they can 'attach' themselves one day. If all this is not a flight of the gods – if this is not Godlessness – the lack of all art is no wonder!<sup>22</sup>

Again, Heidegger excludes himself from what he disavows as a ready-made and obfuscating struggle of 'types'. That he would fail to see his own calls for spiritual freedom to be very similar to a working through of his own earlier readings of Pauline Christianity is perhaps therefore quite striking. Indeed, in the very moment when he escalates *all* of the various stances in the cultural stew to a kind of misstep of one form or another, inasmuch as they all indicate a 'confusion in the "spiritual" situation...'; he seems—despite himself—like he may be more a Christian (as he understood it earlier on) than ever before. Indeed, in keeping with that earlier line from his reading of Pauline Christianity, Heidegger seems once again to find in the tableau of a spirit-freedom versus Judaism to be, precisely, where he finds himself: 'In the letters [sic] to the Galatians, Paul is struggling with the Jews and the Jewish Christians. Thus we find the phenomenological situation of religious struggle and of struggle itself.'<sup>23</sup>

Naturally, Heidegger on occasion clearly presents himself as *farther* from Christianity than most of his peers, even those peers who are close to Christianity through their antipathy towards it. Heidegger frequently ridicules, for example, Catholics for getting a sense of themselves—imagining themselves to be modern and relevant—by contesting other readymade identity groups or new cultural developments. He also finds

frequently annoying others' desires for him to become more embroiled in polemics with other university administrators. Heidegger thus performs himself in this section and many others as the one who, because the authentic version of spiritual struggle, secedes from these other forms of agonistic polemical relation.

In doing so, ironically, Heidegger inflates *another* discursive operation which seems perhaps to incite the return of a modern Christianity with more blisteringly present power than any of these others. Even as Heidegger performs himself as the most removed from Christianity, to me it seems he has the opposite problem, namely, that he does not remove himself far enough from one of the fundamental, indeed clichéd and knee-jerk, operations of Christianity, namely, its supersedist aggressivity toward those other groups it claims to transcend. Heidegger stumbles on the stumbling stone of the Christian problem for philosophy. Read this way, despite himself, Heidegger's open revolution becomes haunted by dark and not so veiled threats toward those whom the revolution would transcend, so many 'liberals' who would soon enough become in Heidegger's writings so many 'Jews'.

It is in this sense that I disagree with Reiner Schürmann's impressive analysis in *Heidegger On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*. Read against the Black Notebooks, Schürmann ventriloquizes well Heidegger's many assertions about being above the fray, free and easy—rather than reactionary or resentful—a singular soul rather than a combative dialectician. In a discussion of Heidegger's epoch of the technocratic world-picture, for example, that period of ontological history in which a coming to be is a coming-to-be-functional with a network of servcability, Schürmann leads the charge for the emancipation of a kind of anarchist spirituality from the Heideggerian writings: 'It is obvious that Heidegger does not oppose a counter-violence or at least not a violence of the same kind of institutionalized violence. He does not call for some counterattack. He does not seek confrontation and expects nothing from it.'<sup>24</sup>

Or, as Schürmann went on to write from the New School in New York in the early 1980s: 'The violence Heidegger espouses before the institutionalized assault is the nonviolence of thinking.' The free anarchic response which secedes from, rather than combats directly, the violence of the current world order, we are told, is lost on many of those for whom Heidegger 'is recruited into the ecologist cause or some other



remedial [sic] program'.<sup>25</sup> As Schürmann goes on to explain in the same passage:

What is missed when Heidegger's recollection of being is turned into a parody of dialectics, is the change of level on which he discusses technology: not the pros and cons, nor his or our or anyone's or consciousness's 'for' and 'against', affirmation and negation, but technology's native site.<sup>26</sup>

I agree with Schürmann that there is indeed this virtual 'Heidegger' in these texts. Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that we must point out the way the scents of agonistic and resentful violence in the notebooks must be identified as the death of this particular Heideggerian legacy. A resentful dialectician looking to crush the opposition while spouting off about the openness of being and the singular (rather than dialectical) site of emergence of being is just a revenge-monger masquerading as Schürmann's happy nominalist hippy. Or, differently put, the Heideggerian legacy must, now more than ever, face the fundamental philosophical problem that I call 'the Christian', the problem, to this day, of resentment in the form, precisely, of superseditionist aggressivity.

#### SPIRIT'S BUZZ

Derrida's lectures, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, could be read as a kind of masterpiece of strategic offense and deflationary repetition, two gestures which often served Derrida well in relation to his master thinkers. On this occasion, Derrida imagines a Heideggerian theatre, a mode of presenting a lecture which at first seems unremarkable enough. This theatre, naturally, has a stage on which are presented costumes, bodies, words, and gestures over time. Locked into this theatrical tableau, however, Derrida's lecture wonders aloud about shifting references to the spirit or the spiritual in Heidegger's work as this work was scripted onto page after page over the course of Heidegger's life. Of course, such an approach to, say, the history of ideas within a philosopher is very traditional—as Derrida's lectures often were. Here the intriguing twist on the traditional mode of presentation is simply that Derrida's time-theatre was focused on a character which tended to be neglected, in this case—surprisingly—the role of spirit in Heidegger's work.

We should not miss however that, precisely in this traditional guise, Derrida's reflections could be taken as a kind of deflationary offense

against the Heideggerian project, a form of deconstruction through banalizing literalization and even plodding biographism. After all, Heidegger's entire enterprise was premised on the destruction of the two key aspects of this Derridean tableau of a spirit-theatre. For a start, of course, Derrida's imaginary theatre offends against the fundamental prohibition within the Heideggerian project, the prohibition against pretending one can play out philosophy as a series of self-same scenes within linear time as a kind of generic medium or container of real philosophy. Derrida's second strategic offense, very similar, transgresses another great commandment: not to want to observe spirit as a kind of self-same actor over time. Derrida's reflections appear then as two blasphemies against the two main commandments of the Heideggerian order.

Derrida points out that there is a 'provocatively "retro" character of this *Of Spirit*', but then goes on to justify it by suggesting, in a typical Derridean gesture, that

It was perhaps necessary to run the risk of a classical academicism so as to mark, while yet leaving it open – for it is not my intention to deal with it – the French dimension, the Franco-German chronicle in which we are *situating* Heidegger during this conference which was also an *Erörterung* keeping the questions 'open', in view of this place.<sup>27</sup>

All this is fair enough, and as ever Derrida presents his work as (always strategically) locked into various aporiae and forced decisions inherited from the linguistic apparatuses of the past. One could hardly argue with it. But isn't the more direct and immediate impulse to be 'provocatively "retro"' at this point (meaning in this context to be rather plodding, linear, and biographical) not better named by declaring it the way of scandal for a Heideggerian self-narration, indeed the self-understanding of so-many gatekeepers of the Heideggerian legacy? Is there not more rebellion at work in the young acolyte in relation to his master-thinker? Why else transgress the two fundamental commandments of the Heideggerian system? There's a question.

Derrida's theatre is one in which, in a willing deflation of the command to deconstruct these figures the character, after-images, resonances, acts, ectoplasm, and auras of spirit may be watched by any daydreaming or bored member of the audience. Derrida's gestures to the backgrounded histories of discursive regimes, sending-and-receiving machines, or what he elsewhere calls 'tele-technological' relays, appear



then in merely formal language.<sup>28</sup> As he writes, 'I shall begin to follow modestly the itineraries, the functions, the formations and regulated transformations, the presuppositions and the destinations' of spirit in Heidegger's writings.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Derrida's spirit theatre will end up focusing on the way that spirit, despite Heidegger's own promises to refuse this term as yet another reification of the question of being, not only haunts the master's texts but also bursts into life—and with no scarce quotes or deflationary or deconstructive gestures—when Heidegger gives his fateful address to the university as its rector for the Nazis.

Heidegger's Nazi period, therefore, is where Derrida's deflationary or recalcitrant narration was always headed, and Derrida takes time to milk the moment of its arrival:

It's the law of the quotation marks. Two by two they stand guard: at the frontier or before the door, assigned to the threshold in any case, and these places are always dramatic. The apparatus lends itself to theatricalization, and also to the hallucination of the stage and its machinery: two pairs of pegs hold in suspension a sort of drape, a veil or a curtain. Not closed, just slightly open. There is the time this suspension lasts: six years, the suspense of the spectator and the tension which follows the credits.<sup>30</sup>

And then, the suspense—and the suspension or bracketing of the word 'spirit' as a non-Heideggerian term of reified or ossified Being—is broken, broken through with the revelation of spirit ablaze as the spirit of Heidegger's university under Hitler. As Derrida manages the scene: 'In the wings, spirit was waiting for its moment. And here it makes its appearance. It presents itself. Spirit *itself*, spirit in its spirit and in its letter, *Geist* affirms itself through the self-affirmation of the German university.'<sup>31</sup>

I like Derrida's text best when we step back at this point from his constant references—almost always in merely formal language—to the complex semantic histories of the terms he is considering. Indeed, I like to read these empty gestures to complexity and the call for *farther* work, as a kind of reaction formation against the trauma of this moment of his master's curtain coming back. Why not rather imagine Derrida, whose own career and the philosophical movement bearing his own name had so much to do with his careful commitment to the Heideggerian corpus, in a more aggressive mode here? Why not continue to read Derrida in keeping with the deflationary structure of his theatre or in keeping with

the theatrical blasphemy against those two greatest Heideggerian commandments? Derrida claims to begin with this certainty, 'the certainty of not fully understanding what, in the end, rules Heidegger's *spiritual* idiom'.<sup>32</sup> He has a sense of the 'kerygmatic tone' of the rectoral address, and—as ever—he claims that Heidegger is playing here, precisely in the kerygmatic presenting of spirit-as-rectoral-flame—the last of the metaphysicians rather than its overcomer. He even says that 'One could say that he spiritualizes National Socialism. And one could reproach him for this, as he will later reproach Nietzsche for having exalted the spirit of vengeance into a "spirit of vengeance spiritualized to the highest point"'.<sup>33</sup> Derrida does not make explicit here the link, the archival history, which elides itself into the usual hyphen he repeats in his mentions of a 'Platonic-Christian' enemy of Heideggerian thought. We should highlight it here, as the problematic fall into 'metaphysics', his failing to avoid the openness of the question, and so on, are entirely oriented by the mode in which Heidegger will take up a persecutorial naturalizing of the enemy of spirit, its leader and its rector. There is, as Jacob Taubes struggled to make clear through an encounter with Carl Schmitt, an 'enmity' question which seems most directly to crystallize the 'metaphysical' question on the table here.<sup>34</sup> As for Derrida, I think that no other approach could keep pace with the deflationary shock of the curtains pulling back onto spirit now ablaze in itself, meaning, of course, with the deflationary revelation that at his highest and most ecstatic moment of being cast into his thinking of being, Heidegger stands there a Nazi stooge.

And worse than a stooge, as Heidegger never makes himself or this moment of tragic-comic theatre into a joke, which would have been his only route to maintaining his thought on the side of sense. Heidegger did not, as Derrida points out, forever avoid spirit as that very master-term his own philosophy ostensibly foreclosed. Derrida does not say, however, that Heidegger did seem to refuse to the end to become the *stooge* on this stage, never accepting the triple face slap, the sneaky eye poke, the stomped foot, or the haymaker fist on the head which even a Larry, Curly, or Moe could have offered him. Indeed, one could read the Black Notebooks as part of Heidegger's life-long efforts to manage his legacy *against* precisely this redemptive gesture of comic-tragic collapse, ever refusing the philosophical role of the sublime idiot or the tragically failed effort to enact an emancipation. I find this scene of the stooge on the spirit stage, a stooge who always refuses to become so, a more



immediate, simple, but also intractable problem for Derrida than many of his abstract gestures to the complexities of semantic histories.

Indeed, is not this particular stooge who refuses always to become so, not—even more than Derrida's tale of a final revolution or final university solution of 'spirit'—the place to locate what Derrida earlier described as what he would try to show in his theatre that 'what remains unquestioned in the invocation of *Geist* by Heidegger is, more than a *coup de force*, force *itself* in its most out-of-the-ordinary manifestation'.<sup>35</sup> Something is lost when the acolytes of the master try to cope with this particular irruption of *force itself*—once of course that buzzy name for the revelation of divinity in all its violently self-reliant and self-grounding sovereignty—with formal gestures to the complexity of semantic histories. As Derrida says again and again in this text, force will have been that which forces itself into speech, time. It is what we might call (steering Derrida's interest in negative theology and how to avoid speaking in this essay) that which *forces* us to speak about what we do not intend to, sovereignty itself in the form of phenomena.

Read this way, Derrida's reflections are perhaps a very traditional tale of the violence of the sacred. Heidegger tried to elude it, to defuse and deconstruct it, but somehow as if by a mysterious repetition compulsion, such gestures only made the absent master signifier all the stronger. When the crossed out Spirit would return, it would do so with a vengeance. If so, I would like to add another footnote from the history of religion, borrowed from the torn clothes and angry denunciations at the trial of a Jesus or a Socrates. If an irrepressible sovereignty of a sacred violence irrupts, speaking the unspeakable (as seems to concern Derrida), then the audience is really only left with the option to respond in similar terms, terms that somehow say what can't be said, a non-language of counter-violence or counter 'force itself': a phrase like Fuck you, for example. Readers of Heidegger as master thinker should treat themselves to the experience. How else to address the stooge on this stage, all the more horrific for having—to the end—refused to become so?

#### MODERN ONTOLOGY AND A JEWISH WORLD CONSPIRACY

When in his 1920/1921 lectures on the phenomenology of religion, Heidegger makes two synthetic assertions, he makes some very troubling claims that are worth remembering as we read the 1930s notebooks or when we consider his later declarations that the modern world

reveals itself as, somehow, almost miraculously, a Judaizing technocracy. In those earlier lectures, Heidegger summarizes Paul's encounter with the Galatians as a 'struggle with the Jews and Jewish Christians', giving 'the struggle' a very obvious enemy—the Jewish. In doing so, naturally, Heidegger was repeating the oldest of clichés from the 'Christian origins' stories in which what is new in Christianity is obstructed by what is recalcitrant amongst 'the Jews'. Heidegger's second synthetic statement, a profound marker of orientation for his own thinking of phenomenology at that point, may be for our purposes even more striking. Heidegger adds, after all, that the clichéd tableau of Paul struggling against Jews becomes, rather astonishingly, the leading exemplar for 'the phenomenological situation of religious struggle' more generally and, indeed, more generally still, 'of struggle itself'.

In the docile repetition of superseditionist Christian origins stories, and in his early situating of his own efforts to refound philosophy as a repetition of this tableau, Heidegger takes a path which obstructs his own striking insights about the nature of an-archic or self-reliant principle, his own insights about singularity. He stumbles, once more, on the Christian problem. After all, again and again in his lectures on the Pauline texts, Heidegger will repeat that career-making assertion that the event of truth grounds itself, that it is (in a certain sense, 'tragically?') responsible for those things it projects as its enemies and obstructions. *Everything* else, every reification of the enemy, every naturalization of the enemy, every objectification of the obstruction, simply obscures the fundamental insight in question about how a happening of truth *gives itself* its own coordinates, sketches them out in ecstatic projection, trust, or *paixis*.

In Heidegger's rendering of Paulinism, not to mention his sustained support of the demand in his later work, the philosopher demands of the community of trust that it bear its own load in relation to its enemies, that it bear its responsibility in their manufacture rather than naturalizing them. In an excellent line about Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, for example, Heidegger distinguishes between a reified 'belonging' and a 'living effective connection with God' which, precisely, acknowledges that the 'anguish' or *thipsis* of the believers' situation is not an exterior contingency but, rather, the intimate mode in which their particular 'joy' reveals itself.<sup>36</sup> That is a moment when Heidegger certainly sensed the an-archic or singularizing vibrancies of a non-foundational philosophy of difference, but it is a moment which is rendered entirely moot once he starts to play around with the naturalization of Jewish enemies of a



gospel. It is an insight which must be maintained against another more traditional and supersedionist way of rendering the Christian origins story, and that is the Christian problem Heidegger falls to navigate well as his singularities turn to strategies and threats in the 1930s notebooks. As if acting out my suggestions about philosophy's repetition compulsion in relation to the archive of Christian origins stories, not only will the young Heidegger repeat the persecutorial logics of this archive, but he even generalizes this logic by claiming it is another name for 'struggle itself'. The recalcitrant 'Jews' you will always have with you, we might say, and in fact that is just what Heidegger gives us in the longer run of his career—that is what the Black Notebooks make clear. Even when he wants to separate himself from Christianity, we find in the notebooks a struggle between the logic of freely self-grounding singularities and a more persecutorial and proprietorially naturalized identity of the philosopher and his philosophical revolution. The very freedom of the anarchic self-grounding of truth is at stake in whether one naturalizes one's enemies, perhaps if one names them at all. Heidegger is the philosopher who perhaps more than any other made the point. And yet, at crucial moments, he forgets, falling into the most clichéd and scripted forms of animosity—indeed, I think we should take seriously the haunting echoes and the way in which we could read Heidegger as, frequently enough and despite his best insights into the paradoxes of singularity, scripted and clichéd—mechanized—by the stereotyped tableau of Christianity emerging from a world-historical narrative break between a recalcitrant Judaism of mere law and calculation and a freely self-grounding experience of divinity. In a word, don't the notebooks suggest to us that we should take Heidegger's own earlier writings on Paul with the utmost seriousness? In his rendering of the Galatians, controversy is the very nature of a phenomenologically grounded philosophical struggle, or even a perennial question for 'struggle itself'. What else do we have, in the end, when Heidegger eventually juxtaposes the freedom of thought to a global technocracy which, he fantasizes, is yet another name for Judaism?

The issues are crucial to the many intriguing discussions of this course in relation to the 'formal indication' which is so crucial for Heidegger's development. What we need to write in blazing buzzing colours is that the 'formal indication' which gives access to the experience of time in the Pauline community is that which also gives access to a generalized model of 'struggle itself', namely, struggling against

'Jews and Jewish Christians'.<sup>37</sup> It is a witness to the continued wholesale domination of traditional supersedionist ways of understanding Paul, even among those concerned to remedy Heidegger's lack of engagement with Judaism, that most readers of Heidegger's analysis of the Pauline letters do not mention his striking comments in this regard. We should put the issue forcefully, remembering that Heidegger does not simply discover in a Paulinist experience of messianic temporality the 'formal indication' which gives an intriguing form of access to that experience, one which will then haunt also his discussions of *Being and Time*. The issue here is, even more, that Heidegger finds Paul struggling to press an experience of time as a form of 'struggle' against 'Jews and Jewish Christians'.<sup>38</sup>

Derrida presented Heidegger's 'spirit' as waiting in the wings to break free, in itself, as force itself, in the fantasy of the university's self-assertion under Hitler, but we could say just as well that what is waiting in the wings during this period is, despite his efforts to distance himself from Christianity, the Christian nomination of the 'Jew' as precisely what is obstructing the revelation of Christian freedom. When Heidegger will eventually claim that the triumph of a technocratic world-picture ontology is the same thing as the world becoming 'Jewish', then we will have returned to his earlier declaration, in the name of self-grounding phenomena, that Paul's struggle against Jews was the indication of struggle itself. Once more the repetition compulsion that is the Christian problem bursts into bloom. Heidegger's earlier passage on Paul is haunting for a reading of the oscillations in the Black Notebooks from a singularity politics to a politics of resentment and ominous threats. If we might put it in the language of Heidegger's reading of Paulinism, at stake here is whether the philosopher opens up yet another dreary game of merely reified community belonging or whether the philosopher unleashes something like a 'living effective connection' with the self-sustaining energies constituting a very different kind of being together.

#### BETWEEN FASCISM AND THE OPEN: HEIDEGGER AND THE

##### FUTURE OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

We are not finished with the Christian problem in philosophy. Indeed, to this day we scarcely name the problem as such, and the slightest gesture to the secularization of our traditions or of our own relative lack of interest in religion seems always enough to put us off the scent.



I conclude therefore with the fascinating intervention of Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: From Heidegger to Marx* (2011). All too briefly summarized, Vattimo and Zabala articulate the powerful claim that a kind of an-archic Heideggerianism is a crucial ongoing contribution of philosophy for contemporary struggles to affirm democratic experimentation with—or invention of—a common good. Against what they call the merely ‘framed democracies’ on offer from economic and philosophical managers from Francis Fukuyama to some of the ongoing governance of the European Union, their an-archic Heideggerianism would in fact foster—at a democratic level—a permanent ‘crisis’ of legitimation. This crisis, moreover, opens up currently existing ‘frames’ of democracy to radical reevaluation and restructuring through the experimentally self-reliant projections of the people. There is a great deal to say about this important intervention of Vattimo and Zabala, which is a significant touchstone in ongoing efforts to articulate the relevance of Heidegger’s work to political life.

I will only comment on some aspects of their story, but I want to note several of the rhetorical structures which seem to me to pop up consistently in this book. For a start, note that *Hermeneutic Communism* is replete with suggestions about how, finally, a kind of emptied *Christian* religiosity—secularized or made ‘weak’ through hermeneutical self-reliance—becomes interchangeable with the ‘weak ontology’ on offer as the ongoing relevance of Heidegger’s philosophy. In a chapter entitled ‘Interpretation as Anarchy’, for example, the authors repeat with admiration Richard Rorty’s assertion that the ‘hermeneutical or Gadamerian attitude is in the intellectual world what democracy is in the political world. The two can be viewed as alternative appropriations of the Christian message that love is the only law.’<sup>39</sup> Indeed, this tradition can be summarized as ‘anarchic’ politics precisely because of the way the tradition can subvert itself, revolutionize itself, *from within*. For Vattimo and Zabala, Martin Luther becomes one of the great precursors not only of the Schürmannian or anarchic Heidegger they admire but also of Freud’s reading of Europe through the lens of the biblical.<sup>40</sup>

On another occasion, of the oddly self-referential and yet excessive status of ‘divinity’ in Heidegger, Vattimo and Zabala find a useful philosophical updating of the New Testament Gospels. As they rewire Heidegger’s famous claim about a god, the two write:

‘Only communism can save us’. We do not believe this is a ludicrous phrase, since it could even be justified by quoting the Gospel: ‘For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them’ (Matthew 18:20). ... In a Nietzschean-Christian style, one could say: *Now that God is dead and the absolute truth is not credible anymore, love for the other is possible and necessary.*<sup>41</sup>

Thus a communism that we could believe in would be the miracle which would change everything—but only insofar as we believe it, the ‘divinity’ function always being a strange and auratic mirroring of our own projections.<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, the philosophers seem to elaborate those generalities of the an-archist Heidegger (and of Reiner Schürmann’s Heidegger) which develop links to nominalist philosophers and Franciscan theologians as well. On such occasions, the authors play up the theological archive behind the notion of a *use* ‘without dominion’ of the world, a vision which the two translate provocatively but helpfully as the notion of a ‘classless society’.<sup>43</sup> They go on to suggest that the Heideggerian ‘open’ could also be linked to the ‘weak messianic power’ in Walter Benjamin or, indeed, to the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels.<sup>44</sup>

My point here is only to note the way in which Vattimo and Zabala associate Heidegger’s an-archism, or his philosophy of singularity and difference, with a heavily Christianized biblical legacy. All this is far enough in the game of philosophical genealogy, but it does raise the old question therefore of how these two will cope with the perennial Christian problem in philosophy. Will another gospel, so to speak, arise to cast out singularity for the sake of a persecutorial and naturalizing foundationalism of some sort? With that question in mind, I was struck by Gianni Vattimo’s intervention in a fascinating anecdotal and biographical reflection entitled, ‘How to Become an Anti-Zionist’.<sup>45</sup> In that piece (and again to summarize all too briefly), Vattimo makes several interesting statements about his experiences as an Italian philosopher and politician. My favourite aphoristic summary emerges from the way Vattimo presents his current experience as in some sense stranded between a horror of Italian Fascism and the receding fantasy of an American Wild West, as if our thought were in some sense stranded between Fascism and some mythical promise of ‘the open’. That is, after all, precisely where I think Heidegger was stranded in his own analogical repetition of the problem of Christian origins.



What strikes me about Vattimo's aphoristic synthetic comment about Fascism and the 'open' of the Wild West fantasies is the way it usefully crystallizes so many of the recent Italian philosophical ambitions, stranded as they all seem to be somewhere between a Fascist 'home' which must be eschewed and a lack of coordinates—a lack of ground for resistance—against global capitalism and the 'framed democracies' which, they argue plausibly, are increasingly armed for the sake of capitalism's maintenance and defence. I find Vattimo very illuminating on this point. After all, do these coordinates—caught between Fascism and the open—not usefully illumine many other Italian thinkers at present? Roberto Esposito, for example, shuffles the philosophical archive wondering aloud whether he can hit upon an 'affirmative biopolitics' which he articulates as a kind of immanence of self-reliant self-grounding which nevertheless does *not* fall into fascistic intolerance or persecutorial violence toward those imagined not to share therein.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, throughout his decades long *homo sacer* project, Giorgio Agamben has always looked to a kind of Franciscan or nominalist Paulinism as the promise of a politics which is anarchically self-reliant in the sense that a singular *form-of-life* is affirmed—again, however, without that form itself becoming a persecutorial machine or an identity of 'dominion'.<sup>47</sup> This is the Christian problem for our time, perhaps, as if stranded between Fascism and the open.

Because it is so, I feel that it is here where the singularity stories of Vattimo could be sacrificed if he does not more effectively elude a traditional persecutorial or scapegoating story of 'Christian origins'—especially when that 'new' gloss on the old religious tradition will be an an-archic Heideggerianism. The problem comes not from the elision of, say, Franciscan nominalism, or Lutheran revolutionism, but from the way these elisions always seem—as if on auto-pilot—to evoke once more the problem of Judaism as the *obstruction* of a new thought of the open as anarchic-singularity. Do we have reason to fear? Consider the easy narrative flow of Vattimo's 'How I Became an Anti-Zionist' where, once again, it is insinuated that Heideggerian anarchism belongs to a Christian tradition of 'the open' which may be opposed to a different, and stronger (less deconstructed) 'legitimacy' which is drawn from strong myths of election, exceptionality, and proprietorial ownership.<sup>48</sup> Vattimo, always touchy about witch hunts against Heidegger, even declares that he valorizes 'Kafka, Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin, Bloch' and that in fact he would never gainsay their value to his thought

simply to spite those who call upon these philosophers to legitimate what cannot be legitimated:

I will not do to them what the Zionist Nazi hunters have done to Heidegger, when they think of liquidating him because he sided with Hitler. Once again I cannot free myself from the problem of Israel; it is ultimately like the original sin spoken of in the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible.<sup>49</sup>

To be sure, there is a great deal more to be said about Vattimo's essay, but in the end it is the shorthand of our philosophical narrations which does a great deal of work in, easily and summarily, destroying our best insights about a politics of singularity. And here too, like clockwork or a repetition compulsion, a new and Christianized 'open' seems to elicit the question of another mode of legitimation which must undergo a forced sacrifice, a forced giving up of the other's *illegitimately proprietorial self-protectivism*. Who, in the end, is not surprised that a Christianized anarchic or 'weak' ontology will not rather quickly get around to the need to focus on the problem of, as the title of this collection has it, *Deconstructing Zionism*, and this as the specific instance which always seems to inherit to the more general topic (as in the subtitle), of *A Critique of Political Metaphysics*. The problem to which the whole world—or all the politics of the world—seems liable, therefore (and, again, like clockwork) seems to embody itself in a special case which becomes exemplarily grievous and an exemplary obstruction of the insights of the Christian open. 'How to Become an Anti-Zionist'? One starts by becoming a Heideggerian Christian, apparently. Could we, indeed must we, not map the game back into Heidegger's writings, with the global critique of metaphysics giving way to a politics of self-reliant self-grounding, only to have this answer immediately obstructed by the figure of the Jew? Was not in this sense the young Heidegger frighteningly present when he elided Paulinism into a post-metaphysical phenomenology only to ruin the same insight by imagining this resource as part of a struggle against Jews? And if Heidegger would declare, both earlier and much later in his career, that this struggle of self-reliant self-grounding against Jews was in fact the general image of 'struggle itself', then have we in fact progressed very far in our philosophical struggle with the Christian problem?



To say it once more, I am not interested here in the specific questions of griefs and grievousness, which seem to me enough to go around in the topics addressed in *Deconstructing Zionism*. What I am saying is that the 'Christian problem' is about the underlying narrative substrate of philosophy's breakthroughs to self-reliance or an-archic affirmation. Every time it gets there it seems to fantasize something like a new faith, a new religiosity, and in some sense a revolutionized Christianity—even as it does so in profoundly traditional terms with all the persecutorial or anti-Jewish accoutrements of some of Christianity's most lamentable self-narrations. As I say, the point here is not to adjudicate or to moralize, but to point toward the doggedly forceful repetitions, all the more dogged and forceful the more we declare ourselves 'beyond' this religion or unconcerned about the maintenance of its inherited narratological coordinates. As Freud might have put it, we seem still to be discovering ourselves amidst a paradoxical necessity of the return—and replay—of a persecutorial Christian story, despite the fact that we continue to repeat to ourselves that this repetition would be of no interest to us, that it would be purely contingent. And what is this necessity in contingency but what Freud declared—throughout his own negotiation of biblical traditions in modern political life—repetition compulsion? It is dealing with *that* uncanny force of necessity in contingency that we must approach if we are to work through the Christian problem in philosophy.

Heidegger, I have argued, took leave of his promising an-archism at precisely those moments when he failed to elude a broadly supersedionist and persecutorial agenda which can, to this day, rightly be called Christian. For me, therefore, theology need not give up on the texts of Heidegger. Indeed, theologians will only ever obfuscate the trauma and transferability of, precisely, the Christian problem in culture the more they act as if Heidegger's anti-Judaisms are able to be naturalized, so to speak, safely in a disavowable past or safely outside the domain of theology. Instead of spiritually investing yet again this gesture of a step outside (the very definition of the Christian problem, of its very automation), theology could realize that it must take sides or articulate solidarities on the inside, *within* the texts of Heidegger, precisely because his texts were clearly enacted within a larger Christian problem in culture which, despite himself, Heidegger did not escape any more than we will. No doubt this will be a disconcerting way to articulate the catastrophe of Heidegger's anti-Judaism for some theologians. Read this way, *both* Heidegger and the Christian problem must be judged, and both

transformed, otherwise than by the step outside. I have suggested that we orient ourselves rather by exploring our capacities *within* this problem on behalf of anarchic self-grounding over against a supercessionist and persecutorial sacrifice of the same. The partisan struggle for the anarchic against the persecutorial state is not an easy one. Therefore, any such interventions within the Christian problem, whether inflected theologically or philosophically, will no doubt greatly benefit from the theological archive's long story of sporadic experimentation with the spiritual exercise of an-archic self-grounding or freely offered solidarities. Perhaps the archivist activists of the world should unite.

#### NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, GA 95 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014), 38; Eng. trans.: *Ponderings II-VI: Black Notebooks 1931-1938*, trans. Richard Kojcevicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 29. In what follows I do not alter the excellent translation of Richard Kojcevicz, though as I do here I will continue to note the page number of the German edition alongside the English translation. References to the German edition will be given as GA (*Gesamtausgabe*) followed by the volume number.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Frisch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 48.
3. Ward Blanton, *A Materialism for the Masses: Saint Paul and the Philosophy of Undying Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
4. *A Materialism for the Masses* was a title marking a way in which, to counter the persecutorial and foundational 'Platonism' of influential early Christian writers, we need to recast Christian origin stories through philosophies of difference and singularity.
5. I very much admire the work of someone like Marlene Zarader (*The Unbought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage Heritage*, trans. Bettina Bergo [Stanford: Stanford University Press]). My own work is generally more wrapped up in the question of how an originarily polemical differentiation of Christianity and Judaism—the testamentary divide she seems to take more seriously than I do—returns with such ferocity in Heidegger's modern philosophical struggles.
6. Heidegger, GA 94, 31; Eng. trans., 24.
7. Karsten Harries, 'Nostalgia, Spite, and the Truth of Being', in Ingo Farn and Jeff Malpas (eds), *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931-1941* (Boston: MIT Press, 2016), 207. This essay is for me more than usually punctuated with a sense of indebtedness. I note here that Karsten



- Harris's graduate courses on Heidegger at Yale University, focused on *Being and Time* and 'The Origin of the Work of Art' respectively, are among the most important events in my own intellectual formation.
8. It isn't the time to explore the fascinating rhetoric of energetics as they slide across the pages of Heidegger's notebooks, even though the entire question of singularity or post-metaphysical difference rests in them. There would be much to discuss, and I hope to return to it. As that great Heideggerian media theorist, Friedrich Kittler, writes of Heidegger's fascination with the radio and its buzzy tunings: 'Heidegger's "turn" is the insight that all modes of transcendental philosophy—whether they take their point of departure in the subject or *Dasein*—founder upon the facticity of high-tech media. Modernity turns out to be a destiny or fate which determines what is absolutely closest from its greatest point of removal—that is, the turn of the hand to the tuning capacitor which, at the time, given the analog state of radio, could for millions of listeners establish their Cartesian *repräsentationen* before (not even fourteen months later) the worst-case scenario occurred: the battle of world pictures that with greater precision we call "World War II". "What presences does not hold sway; but rather, assault rules"?' Idem, *The Truth of the Technological World: Essays on the Genealogy of Presence* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 296.
9. Heidegger, GA 94, 161; Eng. trans., 118.
10. See e.g. *ibid.*, 142, Eng. trans., 104.
11. *Ibid.*, 142–145; Eng. trans., 106–107.
12. *Ibid.*, 148; Eng. trans., 109.
13. *Ibid.*, 150–151; Eng. trans., 110.
14. *Ibid.*, 168; Eng. trans., 123.
15. *Ibid.*, 169; Eng. trans., 124.
16. One sees this motif often enough in Peter Sloterdijk's writings, though see specifically his *Nietzsche Apostle* (Boston: Semiotext(e), 2013).
17. Peter Sloterdijk, *Rage and Time: A Psychopolitical Investigation*, trans. Mario Wenning (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 60–61.
18. Note, for example, how well the diagnoses of *Rage and Time* cohere with Sloterdijk's praise of Nietzsche's efforts to outdo Christianity precisely by overcoming persecutorial resentment in his *Nietzsche, Apostle*.
19. Heidegger, GA 463, Eng. trans., 336.
20. I explore some of the intriguing links between this tradition and the articulation of phenomenology in some of Heidegger's early writings in Ward Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins: Philosophy, Secularity, and the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); see Chap. 3, 'Paul's Secretary: Heidegger's Apostolic Light from the Ancient Near East', 105–128.
21. Heidegger, GA 94, 180; Eng. trans., 131–132.
22. *Ibid.*, 184; Eng. trans., 135.
23. Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 48.
24. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 277.
25. *Ibid.*, 278.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3–4.
28. See the very nice discussion of this trope in Derrida's work on and around religion in Michael Naas, *Miracle and Machine: Jacques Derrida and the Two Sources of Religion, Science, and the Media* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 125–130.
29. Derrida, *Of Spirit*, 5.
30. *Ibid.*, 31.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, 12.
33. *Ibid.*, 39.
34. Cf. Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).
35. Derrida, *Of Spirit*, 5.
36. Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 66.
37. Two important discussions of Heidegger and formal indication are to be found in Michael Fagenblat, 'Levinas, Judaism, Heidegger', in Agata Bielik-Robson and Adam Lipszyc (eds), *Judaism in Contemporary Thought: Traces and Influence* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 51–63, and Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
38. Ryan Coyne's work on formal indication—*Heidegger's Confessions: The Remains of Saint Augustine in Being and Time and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)—is also welcome, but for me it tends to remain (in this respect and others) a reception of Paul which tends to naturalize some of the anti-Judaisms which later thinkers (included Augustine) did so much to install in the cultural memory. Here, to repeat a mantra from both *Displacing Christian Origins* and *A Materialism for the Masses*, what is remarkable is not just that in Paul we find a pre-metaphysical Christianity. We find in it rather also a pre-suppressionist Christianity which would not even recognize itself in that name. That is, the relationship between the rise of 'metaphysics' and the rise of narrative anti-Judaism is the crucial link to make.



39. Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: from Heidegger to Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 75.
40. *Ibid.*, 81–84.
41. *Ibid.*, 111–112.
42. I have explored some of the questions of Heideggerian ‘divinity’ in Blanton, *A Materialism for the Masses*.
43. Vattimo and Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism*, 116.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Gianni Vattimo, ‘How to Become and Anti-Zionist’, in Gianni Vattimo and Michael Marder (eds), *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 15–22.
46. Roberto Esposito, *Two: The Machine of Political Theology and the Place of Thought*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).
47. Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
48. Vattimo, ‘How to Become and Anti-Zionist’
49. *Ibid.*, 20–21.

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