Voegelin and Heidegger as Critics of Modernity

Unlike the word "modem," which in common usage usually connotes progress and improvement over the past, "modernity" is a more abstract, less commonly used word that has largely negative connotations, suggesting the negative cultural underside of "progress" and "improvement over the past." The so-called "culture war" in which the Western world is currently engaged is a contest between those who regard the modem age of secularism, scientism, and moral relativism as a great advance beyond the metaphysical darkness of the past and those who see modernity as a period of decline in which something essential has been lost. Socrates and Plato were the major critics of their own modernity, and of the past four centuries that we call modernity, there have been quite a few critics, two of the most prominent in the twentieth century being Eric Voegelin and Martin Heidegger. Although Voegelin and Heidegger were roughly contemporaries and shared some insights into the disorders of the modem world, their analyses are nonetheless substantially different because they had fundamentally different understandings of the nature of reality and the importance of understanding the order of the soul.

Both grasped quite clearly the problems posed by the modem positivistic, scientistic, anti-metaphysical worldview and both sought to reawaken human awareness of a reality beyond the limitations of our senses. But, although early in their careers both were strongly influenced by Husserl, they later moved away from Husserl and developed philosophies quite different from each other. Voegelin was a political or social scientist, with some training in law, whose constant questioning led him gradually to a theory of consciousness and the soul's participation in the divine. Heidegger, who eventually decided to call himself a thinker, rather than a philosopher or scientist, began his career as a Catholic theologian but ended up as an atheist (or at least agnostic) *vates* of "Being", with the purpose of overcoming not only modem positivism and scientism but also metaphysics itself because it questioned only the beings in the world. He wanted to replace it with a kind of poetic meditation on Being, the ultimate ground of all beings.

Although Voegelin and Heidegger were concerned with essentially the same questions and problems, the considerable differences between their philosophies became quite obvious in their different reactions to National Socialism in Germany. Consider two starkly different events: In 1933 Heidegger joined the Nazi Party and became the Rector of Freiburg University. In 1938, just after the *Anschluss*, Voegelin was fired from his position at the University of Vienna and fled the country almost literally one step ahead of the Gestapo because he had written books of which the Nazis did not approve. There is a common attitude, attested to by the extent of Heidegger's influence, that, although his Nazi affiliation was certainly deplorable, this really does not reflect on the significance of his thought, which many even consider quite compatible with Christianity. But is it possible for a thinker whose thinking is truly sound and possesses intellectual honesty to be seduced by such a primitive, violent, and anti-intellectual ideology? This is a question that will have to be addressed in order to evaluate Heidegger as acritic of modernity.

In comparing Voegelin's and Heidegger's analyses of the modem world there are three questions that I want to explore:

1) In what sense is each a critic of modernity and what are the anti- or counter-modem positions in their thinking?

2) What made Heidegger susceptible to Nazism and Voegelin totally immune?

3) The third question arises from a remark made by Karl L6with in his trenchant analysis of Heidegger, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism,* originally published in 1953. L6with states that "genuine opponents, those who are not simply against Heidegger but rather could treat him as an adversary, can scarcely be found in the philosophical efforts of the most recent decades."[1]

To begin with the first question: Both Voegelin and Heidegger believed that modernity was a loss in the understanding of reality and both believed that comprehending the problems of modernity required a return to philosophy's origins among the ancient Greeks. There, however, the resemblance ceases, because Voegelin considered Plato the most important ancient philosopher and returned to him again and again as the source of inspiration, but Heidegger came to regard Plato's philosophy as already a falling away from the primordial truth of Parmenides and Heraclitus into mere metaphysics. Also, unlike Voegelin, Heidegger shared the peculiar belief of many Germans, going back at least to Fichte, that the Germans had a particular affinity with the ancient Greeks and that the German and Greek languages were the only tongues truly suitable for philosophy.[2] Fichte, Heidegger, and others believed "that the Germans had a language with metaphysical origins and that this language made them uniquely capable of original thinking."[3] To these thinkers the Germans, like the early Greeks, were gifted with primordiality because of their rootedness-they still lived in their ancient home and still spoke their original language (although even Heidegger had to acknowledge changes in the language while expounding on his etymological interpretations of non-German texts). The German thinkers believed that their language and culture made them the world's foremost metaphysical thinkers and that anti-metaphysical ways of thinking, such as empiricism, positivism, and scientism. were entirely un-German. It was as though the Germans were bom to be the world's philosophers.' Voegelin, of course, rejected this linguistic chauvinism and found English quite capable of expressing his mature thought.
The loss of reality that both Voegelin and Heidegger found in modernity was interpreted by the latter as "homelessness." Near the beginning of his almost one- hundred-page analysis of boredom *(Langeweile-long while)* in his 1929-30 lectures *The Fundamental*

[1] Karl Lowith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism,* tr, by Gary Steiner, ed. by Richard Wolin.
Columbia University Press. 1995, p.
[2] Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany.* Harvard University Press.
1993, p. 37
[2]3 Sluga, p. 120
[3]4 See Sluga, p. 198. As Marx once observed, what other nations have done, the Germans have thought.
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Concepts of Metaphysics-World, Finitude, Solitude he says

This profound boredom is the fundamental attunement. We pass the time, in order to master it, because time becomes long in boredom....Is it supposed to be short, then? Does not each of us truly wish for a truly long time for ourselves? And whenever it does become long for us, we pass the time and ward off its becoming long! We do not want to have a long time, but we have it nevertheless. Boredom, long time: especially in Alemannic usage, it is no accident that 'to have long time' means the same as 'to be homesick'. In this German usage, if someone has long-time for ... this means he is homesick for....Profound boredom-a homesickness. Homesickness-philosophizing, we heard somewhere, is supposed to be a homesickness.[5]

He goes on to analyze boredom, or homesickness, as a feeling of emptiness and he diagnoses the prevailing mood in Germany as one of deep metaphysical boredom, a sense of uprootedness and homelessness.[6] In his excellent study, Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art, Michael Zimmerman comments that "Heidegger experienced this homelessness profoundly, so much so that his sanity seems to have been threatened by the loss of familiarity and meaning in a world devoid of God. In 1929-30, he commented approvingly on Novalis's statement that 'philosophy is authentic homesickness [Heimweh], a drive at all times to be at home....A remarkable definition, naturally romantic. Homesickness-is there still something like this in general today? Has it not become an incomprehensible word, even in everyday life? For us has not the contemporary urban man and ape of civilization long since abolished homesickness? And [to think of] homesickness as the absolute determination of philosophy!'"[7]

For Heidegger this homelessness is not a lost relationship with Transcendence (in fact, Heidegger applies the term transcendence to human existence), but an alienation from the essence of Being's history.' The search is for a return to "German Being" or "German culture", a return to the Fatherland. But there is more here than a desire for rootedness in one's native soil. Philosophically, as well as Germanically, Heidegger's thinking expresses a homesickness for a lost Eden, a primordial time when Being unconcealed itself to man, when man lived in a complete, pre-rational, pre-conscious wholeness, before man fell away from Being into reasoning and metaphysics with its concentration on entities, their nature and their production.

[5] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World Finitude, Solitude.* Tr. By William McNeill and Nickolas Walker. Indiana University Press. 1995, p. 80.

[6] Voegelin, not mincing words, diagnosed this situation as one of "ethical and intellectual rottenness." *Hitler and the Germans. Vol. 31* of *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin.* Tr. And ed. By Detlev Clemens and Brendan Purcell. University of Missouri Press. 1999, p. 57

[7] Michael Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art.* Indiana University Press. 1990, p. 23

[8] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings, Revised & Expanded Edition,* ed. By David Farrell Krell, Harper San Francisco. 1993, p. 241.

He came to believe that the only salvation from the alienation of modernity is in releasement, *Gelassenheit,* a somewhat mystical concept that for him meant a apatient waiting for the next

epiphany of Being. The way to evoke this attitude of expectation is through poetry, not poetry in general but the sort mystical poetry written by Holderlin, Rilke, and Trakl. Heidegger's lifelong concern was to restore a home for man in an awareness of Being *(das Sein),* the mysterious something that manifested itself in the world of entities or beings *(Seiendes).* Human beings as Da-sein are the "clearing" where Being can emerge from concealment into presence, presence, apparently to itself, since Da-sein is part of Sein. This fundamental ontology, which Heidegger began to develop in his early works, is a stark challenge to the positivism of modernity, for Heidegger sought that ultimate Being behind and beyond the appearances, yet yielding itself as the beings that appear. In the *Letter on Humanism* of 1947 he says that " homelessness ... consists in the abandonment of Being by beings. Homelessness is the symptom of oblivion of Being. Because of it the truth of being remains unthought. The oblivion of Being makes itself known indirectly through the fact that man always observes and handles only beings."[9] Although in *Being and Time* Heidegger focused on human existence as the "there" where Being is able to achieve presence, that is to be conscious of itself, in his later works he abandoned what some considered an anthropocentric view for a focus on Being and the overcoming of metaphysics with its more limited understanding of reality. By this time man has become "the shepherd of being" and language "the house of Being."

Although Heidegger frequently spoke of the gods or God as part of the whole and was fond of quoting Holderlin's line that "only a god can save us," he did not identify Being, or even divinity, with God[10] and, unlike Voegelin, showed no interest in the soul and its relation with the divine. These matters he removed from philosophy and left to theology, which he considered a positive science.[11] In general Heidegger regarded Christianity, along with metaphysics, as responsible for the decline in the West from Parmenides to modem positivism.[12] In one of his clearest statements he bluntly says in his 1924 lecture *The Concept Of Time,* "Der Philosoph glaubt nicht," that is, "The philosopher does not believe," or, more freely translated, the philosopher is not concerned with God or eternity or the transcendent. The philosopher, he says, is resolved *"to understand time in terms of time, " and* not time in relation to eternity, and time itself is Da-sein, which must individually "maintain itself by its "running

[9] Heidegger, *Basic Writings, pp. 242-43.*

[10] Zimmerman, p. 17 1.

[11] Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology," in *Martin Heidegger: Pathmarks,* ed. By William McNeill. Cambridge University Press. *1998, pp. 40-54.*

[12] In a work on Heraclitus in the *1940s* Heidegger wrote that " Christendom, which as a result of the *techne-like Creation* doctrine believed and taught in it (seen metaphysically, it is also one of the most essential reasons for the coming of the dominion of modem technology), would have an essential part in the formation of the domination of the self-reflection of subjectivity, such that precisely Christendom can do nothing toward overcoming this reflection. Whence then the historical bankruptcy of Christendom and its Church in modem world history? Is yet a third world war needed to prove it?" Quoted in Zimmerman, p. *180.*

ahead" [Vorlaufen] into the future.[13]

In order to demonstrate how far we have fallen from the primordial "truth" or unconcealment of

Being, Heidegger attempted to recapture its spirit by subjecting traditional interpretations to a careful rethinking in the light of an exhaustive etymology of Greek and German. Perhaps the most egregious example of this is in his analysis of the Anaximander fragment. He begins by presenting the conventional translation (actually the one made by Nietzsche), which, as rendered into English, reads: "Whence things have their origin, there they must also pass away according to necessity; for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustice, according to the ordinance of time."[14]He then states that before this fragment can be more adequately translated into German it must first be translated into what is really being said in Greek and compares a thoughtful translation of what is spoken in this fragment to "a leap over an abyss." After he decides that only the last part of the fragment is authentic and works his way through a great deal of complex etymologizing, he winds up with the translation (as it is rendered into English): "along the lines of usage; for they let order and thereby also reck belong to one another (in the surmounting) of disorder."[15] This has the Heideggerian virtue of being less intelligible, and Karl Lowith, for one, considers it a "violent interpretation of Axaximander," an interpretation with which no classical philologist could agree.[16]

Similarly, he retranslates the Heraclitus B50 fragment from "When you have listened not to me but to the Meaning *[Logos]*, it is wise within the same Meaning to say: *One* is All" to "Attuned not to me but to the Laying that gathers: letting the Same lie: the fateful occurs (the Laying that gathers): One unifying All."[17] As Lowith comments on Heidegger's statement that thinking the truth of Being is "releasement toward that-which-regions" because the essence of thinking rests in the "regioning *(Vergegnis)* of releasement," if someone asked Heidegger if this sort of explanation makes the matter clearer he would answer, "No, nothing is clear; but everything is significant!"[18]

But what does it signify? Presumably it signifies Being, but what does Heidegger mean by Being? In an essay called "The Turning" Heidegger says that Being "is itself the placeless dwelling of all presencing,"19 In the *Letter on Humanism* he says that Being "is It itself The thinking that is to come must learn to experience that and to say it. 'Being'-that is not God and not a cosmic ground. Being is farther than all beings and is yet nearer to man than every

[13] Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time, " tr*. By William McNeill (English-German Edition). Blackwell, 1992, pp. I (I E) and [14] (14E). 14 Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy,* tr. by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. Harper SanFrancisco. 1984, p. 13.

[15] Ibid., p. 19.

[16] Lowith, p. 43. Heidegger might have agreed. He said, "Because it poetizes as it thinks, the translation which wishes to let the oldest fragment of thinking itself speak necessarily appears violent." (p. 19).

[17] Ibid., p. 4 1.

[18]Ibid., p. 57

[19] In Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* tr. By William Lovitt. Harper Torchbooks. 1977, p. 43.

being, be it a rock, a beast, a work of art, a machine, be it an angel or God."[20] Of course, this is still not very clear so we must attempt to grasp its significance by doing some apophatic thinking. First, Being is not an entity and like Plotinus's The One, it cannot be named but only referred to. It is not the object of metaphysics, which concerns itself only with beings, and it

cannot be controlled or manipulated by human power or will. Second, Being is not God or even divine. In fact, God or the gods are simply different ways in which Being may or may not reveal itself. As Heidegger puts it, "Whether God lives or remains dead is not determined by the religiousness of man, and still less by the theological aspirations of philosophy and science. Whether God is God is determined from and within the constellation of Being."[21] Although Heidegger regarded human existence in a godless world as empty, there is nothing-no repentance, no change of heart, no conversion-that humanity can do to restore God. God is merely one of the possible epiphanies of Being. God is a being, an entity, and therefore theology is merely one more positive science, absolutely different from philosophy. In his 1927 lecture "Phenomenology and Theology" Heidegger says that *'faith,* as a specific possibility of existence, is in its innermost core the mortal enemy of the form *of existence* that is an essential part of *philosophy* and that is factically ever-changing. Faith is so absolutely the mortal enemy that philosophy does not even begin to want in any way to do battle with it....Accordingly, there is no such thing as a Christian philosophy; that is an absolute "square circle'."[22]Yet Heidegger has his own faith in Being.

Being reveals itself in language and for Heidegger it is a poetic, not a rational, language. Thinking is poetizing, not what is ordinarily meant by reasoning. He once put this quite bluntly: "Thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries, is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought."[23] This is why he translates the early Greek philosophers into something that looks more like a mystifying sort of poetry than philosophy. It was poetry he thought of as the true language of Being, a language that is handed over to Da-sein from Being. "Language is the house of Being.-Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home,"[24] so that Being can manifest itself Thinking and poetic creation require liberating language from the rigid framework of grammar. But creating a more original language framework can merely render "thought" meaningless and incommunicable. Heidegger's translations create an aura of mystery, rather than clarity, which is precisely his purpose, for his central criticism of modernity is that the sense of mystery, of the unfathomable and ineffable and significant has been lost. (Also, of course, the more cryptic the utterances, the more profound a thinker he can appear to be.) While in his earlier writings he tended to ascribe the cause of this loss to man's forgetting of Being, in his later writings he

[20]*Basic Writings,* p. 234.
[21] Quoted in John Macquarrie, *Heidegger and Christianity,* The Continuum Publishing Company. 1994, p. 107.
[22] In Pathmarks, p. 53.
[23] "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,*
p. 112.
[24] *Letter on Humanism, in* Basic Works, p. 217.

decides that our anxiety-creating loss of a ground is simply the way in which Being reveals, or conceals, itself in our age.

Therefore, when it comes to the modem utilitarian, technological world Heidegger is less a critic than an observer. In *The Question Concerning Technology* he says that "modem technology as an ordering revealing is ... no merely human doing. Therefore we must take that challenging that

sets upon man to order the real as standing-reserve in accordance with the way in which it shows itself. That challenging gathers man into ordering. This gathering concentrates man upon ordering the real as standing-reserve." [25] This means that the modem technological, scientistic, positivist, utilitarian view that regards all beings as useful in the present or the future is merely the way in which Being both reveals and conceals itself in our time. All that we can do is try to understand that whatever happens is the doing of Being. This is a necessary, difficult period of time which we must go through, but also dangerous because technology is the ultimate distance from ontology. Technology reduces the entire world to things that can be used according to the will to power. Nothing mysterious and poetic is left in the spiritual wasteland of the technological world. On the one hand our existence is important, for we are the clearing where Being can presence itself out of Nothingness into unconcealedness, but on the other hand our existence (or, as Heidegger puts it "ek-sistence") is unimportant for history and civilization are not matters of human action but of the selfrevelation of Being which it is our destiny to observe, but not necessarily to understand. Heidegger's analysis of ancient texts makes clear that (in his interpretation) the more deeply we penetrate into the linguistic utterances engendered by the revelation of Being the more incomprehensible it becomes.

The goal of Heidegger's thinking and teaching was to make a new beginning, to reawaken in human beings the awareness of the mystery of Being which is Nothing because it is No-thing. It is an ultimate, ungraspable, impersonal reality that reveals itself to human beings who are receptive to this revelation. Most human beings remain oblivious to this hidden reality and see only beings, but the awareness of Being remains accessible to a few philosophers and poets who are the "heralds" of being. By devoting his entire philosophical life to Being Heidegger hoped to overcome the emptiness and meaninglessness, the homelessness and anxiety of modernity. The hope is that a god will save us, but whether or not a god appears is something we can only wait for in an attitude of *Gelassenheit*, or releasement, and idea he derived from German mystics such as Meister Eckhart and also Eastern philosophers such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism.[26]

[25]"The Question Concerning Technology," p. 19.

[26]There is a considerable amount of literature discussing Heidegger's debt to Eastern thought. To give just a few examples: *Heidegger's Hidden Sources,* by Reinhard May, tr. by Graham Parkes. Routledge, 1996; the chapter on Heidegger and Zen Buddhism" in *The Other Heidegger,* by Fred Dallmayr. Cornell University Press, 1993; and "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology" by Michael E. Zimmerman in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger,* Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 240-269. According to Richard May, "one cannot dismiss the possibility that Heidegger intentionally incorporated East Asian ideas, in an encoded manner, into his work." (p. 9) It would have to be encoded because Heidegger claimed that a tradition could attain salvation only from its own resources.

Voegelin is starkly different. Like Heidegger he also seeks to revitalize the experiences that gave rise to philosophy, but he has a radically different understanding of those experiences as noetic, that is, they involve the nous, the human faculty for entering into a relationship with the divine transcendence. Where Heidegger is grounded in himself and his own (and a few others') attempts to articulate the ineffable as poetry, Voegelin grounds philosophy in the participation in the divine In 1943 he wrote to Alfred Schutz that the philosopher of history had to explore his own consciousness for participating in the world of meaning. This requires penetrating "every

historical spiritual position" to the point "where it is deeply rooted in the experiences of transcendence of the thinker in question."[27] Throughout all his later work he followed his conviction, which, as he explained in his *Autobiographical Reflections* he arrived at while working on his two volumes on the race question, namely that "a political theory especially when it was to be applicable to the analysis of ideologies, had to be based on Classic and Christian philosophy,"[28] which had explored the experiences of transcendence. Voegelin would never say that nothing is clear because for more than half a century he strove for increasing clarity, within a wider horizon of mystery, and, in contrast with Heidegger he would say "Der Philosophe glaubt." Having a solid standpoint put Voegelin in a position to give quite a different critique of modernity and to provide a very detailed explanation of what has gone wrong.

In his unfinished *History of Political Ideas* Voegelin gives a thorough analysis of a number of thinkers as he traces the development of modernity's spiritual and political disorder and the degrees to which attempts to grapple with the problems aided in understanding or contributed to the deterioration. Voegelin's position gradually evolved into an understanding of the true nature of consciousness as the central issue, and, contra Husserl, it seemed to him that it was "ridiculous to pretend that there was nothing to consciousness but the consciousness of objects of the external world."[29] From his understanding of Classic and Christian philosophy, and from his personal recollections of early childhood experiences that formed his own consciousness, he derived a theory of the center of consciousness as "the experience of participation, meaning thereby the reality of being in contact with reality outside myself,"[30] reality here including all kinds of experiences, not only the spiritual, and these experiences are kept in balance in the soul. Following William James and Plato, Voegelin argued that the central experience is not in an isolated mind but in what Plato called the *metaxy*, the In-Between, and the most crucial In-Between experiences were those that involved response to the movements of divine presence. These experiences are expressed in linguistic symbols and therefore language participates in the *metaxy* character of consciousness. Voegelin believed that symbols participate equally in divine and human reality and signify the "divine reality in its

[27]Quoted in *Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science,* by Barry Cooper. University of Missouri Press. 1999, p. 197.
[28] Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections,* ed. By Ellis Sandoz. Louisiana State University Press. 1993, p. 38.
[29] *Autobiographical Reflections, p.* 70. Voegelin, nonetheless, had great respect for Husserl's achievement.
[30]Ibid., p. 72

presence itself "[31] This is, of course, reminiscent of Heidegger's theory of language as expressing the presencing of Being, but for Heidegger Being is not God and there is no divinehuman encounter in which the human soul has the freedom to choose whether or not to respond. Through his *History of Political Ideas* Voegelin traces the spiritual struggle in the human soul in its essential existence in tension toward the divine ground of its being. In Volume V, in a section entitled "The Problems of Modernity" where he is dealing with the period around the end of the sixteenth century, he says that "the compound of sentiments that we call 'modem' contains a will to self-assertion against the ancient model that is not less strong than the will to overcome

medieval limitations by means of the model. The very opposition to antiquity has shaped the consciousness of modernity."[32] Later, however, he would decide that this opposition was not consciously directed against antiquity.

Voegelin's theory of consciousness is presented in considerable detail in *Anamnesis,* and in Vols. IV and V of *Order and History.* Consciousness is "the specifically human mode of participation in reality"[33] and the reality of this world is grounded in the divine ground of Being. "There are no things that are merely immanent."[34] In other words, everything, not just human beings, is drawn toward the divine as much as it has material existence, an idea already clearly expressed in Plato's *Phaedo* [74d-75b]. There is nothing Beyond God for Voegelin, and God is the source of all things that come to be.

Since man is not completely immanent but is In-Between, he experiences his earthly existence as unrest and those who are most sensitive to the attraction to the ground of existence engage in searching, questioning, wondering. Their experience of divine reality engenders symbols which exist in the In-Between. "The man who asks questions, and the divine ground about which the questions are asked, will merge in the experience of questioning as a divinehuman encounter and reemerge as the participants in the encounter that has the luminosity and structure of consciousness....The ground is not a spatially distant thing but a divine presence that becomes manifest in the experience of unrest and the desire to know."[35] The divine is a subjectivity which merges with human subjectivity and the human commitment to the search for our origins calls forth the divine presence, as the divine can move within the human soul and call forth a response, although the soul is also free to refuse and can demonically close itself against the divine presence. It is this demonic rejection that Voegelin sees as the principle source of the pneumopathological. disorders of modernity. The public order has been despiritualized, Christian transcendental experience has atrophied, souls have closed themselves off from Christianity, and the state has become entirely secular, all of which has had an effect

[31]Ibid., p. 74

[32]Eric Voegelin, *History* of Political Ideas, Vol. V.- *Religion and the Rise of Modernity, e*d. By James L. Wiser, in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 23.* University of Missouri Press. 1998, p. 135.

[33]Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis,* tr. and ed. by Gerhart Niemeyer, University of Notre Dame Press. 1978, p. 4.

[34] *Anamnesis, p.* 78.

[35] *Anamnesis, p. 95.*

on human self-understanding, which has become somewhat dehumanized. The culmination of this process in the twentieth century has, of course, been the metapysically and physically violent totalitarian ideologies that replace the tension toward a divine transcendent perfection with a tension toward an earthly future human perfection.

The fundamental reality for Voegelin is the tension between the human and divine poles which "must not be hypostatized into objects independent of the tension in which they are experienced as its poles."[36] Philosophy, then, is the consciousness of eternal being in time, which may sound reminiscent of Heidegger, but for Heidegger there is no eternal reality and Being is non-divine and temporal. The soul, which is a very important concept, or more correctly, symbol, for Voegelin, but not for Heidegger, is not a thing or an object, but "soul" is "strictly the name of a

predicate of which 'place of the tension' is the subject."[37] The soul is the sensorium of transcendence. For Voegelin both "soul" and "I" are symbols for aspects of experience, rather than discrete beings.

And what does Being mean to Voegelin? "It designates, not an object, but a context of order in which are placed all experienced complexes of reality after the dissociation of the cosmos, and which, before the dissociation, were placed in the context of the cosmic order. The new context of order called *being* replaces the older one called *cosmos."*[38] For Voegelin Being is not a mysterious and hidden something that conceals itself in its self-presencing in the clearing called Da-sein but simply the overall complex of order in which the soul seeks to participate and find its true order of existence. A genuine spiritual or interior life does not fit into Heidegger's speculative world because he has eliminated transcendence. This means that he has also eliminated the depths of the soul and he cannot criticize modernity in terms of the extent to which it is caused by and has an effect on spiritual disorders, but only in terms of the mood of "sacred mourning" for the gods who have "died" and our own homelessness in a world dominated by technology, a world it is our role to care for but in which nothing cares for us, who are merely "thrown" into existence.

Just as Heidegger cannot explain why and how Being emerges from concealment, Voegelin cannot fully explain why, since the beginning of the fourteenth century, which is the time when he sees the beginning of the decline of the Church, there has been this steady deterioration in spiritual order. He does have a partial explanation. He puts some of the blame on Aquinas for reducing metaphysics from the living fluid symbolization of the experience of the divine in the *metaxy* (the In-Between), to a set of dogmatic propositions, devoid of the experiences that gave rise to the original terms. This produced a loss of spiritual experience and a misunderstanding of metaphysical speculation that has led to the modem rebellion against a false or misunderstood metaphysics. Also, beginning in the Renaissance life on earth began to change dramatically through new inventions and discoveries and the rise of modem science. This was an eruption of human energy that was so intoxicating and seemed so promising that Descartes, in a moment of exuberant optimism, predicted that humanity would eventually

[36]Ibid., p. 104
[37]Ibid., p. 125.
[38]Ibid., p. 13 5.

become "the masters and possessors of nature." The Platonic and Christian focus on the search for fulfillment in a union with the Ground of our being in the "beyond" began to shift to an interest in making this world better, and the parousia was contracted to a future earthly perfection. It became impossible to believe that everything important in human history (except its end) had already happened and there was nothing to do but endure the senescence of humanity. Modem science promised something quite the opposite. As Voegelin put it, people early in the modem age could not believe that they were merely a "senseless appendix" to the Classical world and the beginning of Christianity.[39] Second, human beings have free will and there is the inscrutable mystery of divine grace, which is either granted or withheld. Not everyone is a Plato, nor can everyone comprehend Plato's thinking. And human beings have the freedom to reject God and contract in upon themselves. And then there is, of course, the existential tension, the profound unsettling uncertainty that arises from simply existing as a

finite, contingent being facing death. Heidegger is very much aware of this anxiety, or *Angst,* which, in his later works, he tries to counteract with Gelassenheit. For the earlier Heidegger Da-sein, which is characterized as being-in-the-world, not as having any participation in the In-Between (he would later say that only the poets exist in an in-between of gods and men), could seek to live an authentic life only in the midst of das *Man* (the anonymous "they") in the tension of being-toward-death, but the later Heidegger has moved beyond this to resigned patient waiting upon the whims of Being. Voegelin is much more incisive in *The New Science of Politics* regarding the human craving for certainty.

Uncertainty is the very essence of Christianity. The feeling of security in a 'world full of gods' is lost with the gods themselves; when the world is de-divinized, communication with the world-transcendent God is reduced to the tenuous bond of faith ... as the substance of things hoped for and the proof of things unseen.... The bond is tenuous, indeed, and it may snap easily. The life of the soul in openness toward God, the waiting, the periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, contrition and repentance, forsakenness and hope against hope, the silent stirrings of love and grace, trembling on the verge of a certainty which if gained is loss-the very lightness of this fabric may prove too heavy a burden for men who lust for massively possessive experience.[40]

Voegelin's mature diagnosis of the spiritual disorder produced by the "lust for massively possessive experience" can be found in the old type of thinking called gnosticism and a much more recent term coined by Robert Musil, the "second reality." The core of gnosticism, going back at least two thousand years, is the sense of homelessness, "the experience of the world as an alien place into which man has strayed and from which he must find his way back home to the world of his origin."[41]Salvation from the prison of the world is

[39] *History of Political Ideas, Vol. VI., p. 56.*

[40]Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics.* The University of Chicago Press.*1952, p. 122.*

[*41*]Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics & Gnosticism,* Henry Regnery Company, Gateway Edition. *1968, p. 9.*

through an alien or hidden God who sends messengers or heralds and shows the way to escape. However much the numerous gnostic sects and theories differ, "the aim is always in destruction of the old world and passage to the new. The instrument of salvation is gnosis itself-knowledge."[42] But reality stubbornly remains reality, even though the gnostic thinker constructs the most elaborate theory of salvation and escape to a new, imaginary world. The new world is the second reality which is forcefully imposed on and intended to conceal the first, true reality. But like all attempts to live a lie, the result is enormous psychological stress and dislocation. It is Voegelin's belief that gnostics and creators of second realities are swindlers and not entirely unaware that they are.

While Heidegger drifted off into poetry and Eastern philosophies that reject reason, Voegelin honed his reasoning powers to the sharpness of a scalpel. Poetic thinking, precisely because of its lack of precision, does not allow for a substantive critique of modernity. Heidegger has a state of

mind that, while rejecting reason as thinking, nonetheless is aware that human beings exist in tension toward something beyond the world of sense experience and human technological control. He would, I think, agree with his French contemporary Gabriel Marcel's conviction that life becomes empty and hopeless without the faith that we participate in something beyond our everyday world. But his poetically enigmatic style of thinking is too dull an instrument for a serious and truly enlightening critique of modernity. He simply finds modem technology and positivism unfulfilling for us "whose hearing and seeing are perishing through radio and film under the rule of technology."[43]
So, although both Voegelin and Heidegger reject the positivism, scientism, and relativism of modernity and seek to return to a supersensuous world, their methods and goals are enormously different. Heidegger longed for a primordial, mythic Arcadia in which humanity would live happily in complete harmony with the world as Being gives it to him, while at the same time knowing that this never was and never will be: "The history of Being begins, and indeed necessarily, *with the forgetting of Being."*[44] Metaphysics and technology, as the strange remaining-away of Being, give no sign that Being is ever going to presence itself in its plenitude. Voegelin, on the other hand, believes that human fulfillment in the true order of existence comes only through the loving response to the constant movements of the divine reality in the In-Between. God does not remain away but is constantly present in the depths of our being, but it is this that modernity has lost. Heidegger is unhappy with modernity because he cannot seem to find a place in it for the primordial and the simple peasant life (it is no coincidence that the one work of (pictorial) art that Heidegger discussed in considerable, loving, and eloquent detail is Van Gogh's painting of the peasant's shoes), but Voegelin criticizes modernity for its denial of the central importance of the search for and participation in the divine.

The second question is why Heidegger, along with quite a few other German

[42]Ibid., p. 11.
[43]"The Turning" in *The Question Concerning Technology, p. 48*
[44]"The Word of Nietzsche: "God is Dead" in *The Question Concerning Technology, p. 109.*

philosophers, joined the Nazi Party while Voegelin was declared *persona non grata* by the Nazis. To a great extent, of course, this comes down to a difference of personalities or, more precisely, a difference of souls, but Voegelin was certainly aided by his years of study outside of Germany, in America and France, which enabled him to escape the insulated Germanic approach to philosophy and discover other philosophic traditions of which he had previously been unaware. Commenting on his two years in America in the 1920s Voegelin says that America was a world "in which this other world in which I had grown up was intellectually, morally, and spiritually irrelevant. That there should be such a plurality had a devastating effect on me. The experience broke for good ... my Central European or generally European provincialism without letting me fall into an American provincialism....The immediate effect was that upon my return to Europe certain phenomena that were of the greatest importance in the intellectual and ideological context of Central Europe, for instance the work of Martin Heidegger, whose famous *Sein und Zeit I* read in 1928, no longer had any effect on me. It just ran off, because I had been immunized against this whole context of philosophizing through my time in America and especially in Wisconsin,"[45] where he had acquired an interest in American government as the

core for understanding American political culture.
Heidegger did not study outside of Germany, but instead spent six years as a high school seminarian, followed by two weeks in a Jesuit novitiate, from which he was dismissed for health reasons. In 1916 he began teaching Catholic philosophy at Freiburg University, and was considered an up-and-coming Catholic thinker, but early in 1919 he wrote a letter to his colleague Fr. Krebs in which he said that he wanted to be a philosopher unrestrained by outside influences and that the "system of Catholicism", but not Christianity and metaphysics, had become problematic and unacceptable to him.[46]This was the beginning of a lengthy process in which he became anti-Catholic and then anti-Christian, and ultimately anti-metaphysics. John D. Caputo reports that after 1928 Heidegger was "deeply antagonistic to Christianity in general and to the Catholicism of Freiburg in particular, and he gives indications of having become personally atheistic. He became in his personal conduct at Freiburg a hostile opponent of Christianity,"[47]of which conduct Caputo gives a few examples.[48] Yet, oddly enough, near the end of his life he said that he had never left the Church and was given a Catholic burial. His philosophy, which has certain mystical qualities, is certainly a displaced form of religious thought, but a religion without God. It is a pseudo-religion, as was National Socialism, and like the Nazis, Heidegger sought to mesmerize his audience. The Party gatherings were designed to overwhelm. the critical faculties of anyone who still had them and put everyone under the spell of Hitler. There are a number of comments on the spellbinding effect that Heidegger had on his students. "All his students, even those who later drifted away from him, are unanimous in

[45]*Autobiographical Reflections, pp. 32-33.*
[46] See "Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times" by Thomas Sheehan in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger, pp. 71-72.*
[47]See "Heidegger and Theology," by John D. Caputo, in *The Cambridge Companion, p. 277.*
[48]For instance, Heidegger would not accept Jesuits as his doctoral students and treated other Catholic students very badly. When the occupant of the Chair of Catholic Philosophy died in 1941 Heidegger had the chair abolished.

reporting the spellbinding character of his lectures and the intense fascination of his oral presentations. In his *Heideggers Wege,* Hans-Georg Gadamer ascribes to his teacher a 'nearly dramatic appearance, a power of diction, a concentration of delivery which captivated all his listeners'." Also, in 1978 Hannah Arendt wrote that even before his major works were published his "name traveled all over Germany like the rumor of the hidden king....The rumor about Heidegger put it quite simply: Thinking has come to light again; the cultural treasures of the past, believed to be dead, are being made to speak, in the course of which it turns out that they propose **t**hings altogether different from the familiar, worn-out trivialities they had been presumed to say. There exists a teacher; one can perhaps learn to think."[49] There is, however, a dissenting voice here, that of Karl L6with, who gives a somewhat different description of Heidegger in his autobiographical reflections. "We gave Heidegger the nickname 'the little magician from Messkirch.'...He was a small dark man who knew how to cast a spell insofar as he could make disappear what he had a moment before presented. His lecture technique consisted of building up an edifice of ideas which he then proceeded to tear down, presenting the spellbound listeners with a riddle and then leaving them empty-handed. This ability to cast a spell at times had very considerable consequences: it attracted more or less psychopathic personality types, and

after three years of guessing at riddles, one woman student took her own life."[50]Was Heidegger really teaching his students to think or was he simply casting spells with oracular statements that sounded more profound than they really were? He was not asking them to follow a rational argument anymore than the Nazis did, but instead to follow him as he led them on a gradually disappearing path into the middle of a dark and misty wood. With Heidegger there was more enigma than clarification. Also, Heidegger apparently thought that as Rector of Freiburg University and the most prominent "thinker" in Germany he could be the "Fufirer" of Hitler, guiding him and the Nazi movement into the truth of Being. He saw in Nazism a kind of salvation from the Bolsheviks, who represented socialist industrialism, i.e. technology, and the Americans, who represented capitalistic industrialism. In June of 1933 Karl Jaspers described Heidegger as "like a man intoxicated, with something threatening emanating from him."[51] Presumably Heidegger thought that the god that would save us had arrived and that he himself would have a significant role to play in the salvation of Germany. Jaspers also reports that in the same year Heidegger said "that he could not see why there had to be so many philosophy professors in Germany: two or three would be enough."[52] Apparently he did not mention who the other one or two should be.

There is some disagreement among those who have investigated the matter regarding how long and how deeply Heidegger was committed to Nazism. After the war he remained essentially silent about his involvement and about the Holocaust. He had certainly not given up on Nazism by 1935, as evidenced by the passage in *The Introduction to Metaphysics,* lectures given at the University of Freiburg in the summer of that year. Near the end he says, "In 1928

[49]Quoted in Dallmayr, *The Other Heidegger, p. 133.*
[50]Quoted in Lowith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism, p. 4.* On the whole L6with's portrait of Heidegger and his work is rather critical.
[51]Quoted in Jeff Collins, *Heidegger and the Nazis.* Totem Books. 2000, p. 26.
[52]Ibid., pp. *38-39*

there appeared the first part of a general bibliography on the concept of value. In it 661 titles are listed. No doubt the number has meanwhile swollen to one thousand. All these works call themselves philosophy. The works that are being peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of Nationalism Socialism but have nothing to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely the encounter between global technology and modem man)-have all been written by men fishing in the troubled waters of 'values' and 'totalities'."[53]

In the early stages of Nazi power Heidegger seems to have found considerable congruence between his own thinking and that of National Socialism. For example, in a January, 1934 speech to unemployed Freiburg workers drafted into the "labor service" he exhorted them to find the will that connects mental and manual labor. "This will ... must be our innermost certainty and never-faltering faith. For in what this will wills, we are only following the towering will of our Fufirer. To be his loyal followers means: to will that the German people shall find again, as a people of labour, its organic unity, its simple dignity, and its true strength; and that, as a state of labour, it shall secure for itself permanence and greatness. To the man of this unprecedented will, to our Fiffirer Adolf Hitler-a three-fold 'Sieg Heil! [54] Although the emphasis on will, especially "towering will," is very uncharacteristic of Heidegger's thought I think he managed to use Nazi language here while giving it his own meaning, which is more like an attunement to Being, with

the suggestion that the saving god and the return to the simple and primordial life were at hand. The kind of labor that Heidegger had in mind was not productive, industrial, technological labor in which man imposes his will on things, but the poetic work of letting Being emerge from concealment. Ultimately Heidegger became disillusioned, it seems, when the Nazis turned out to have their own interest in non-poetic industrialism and technology.

In short, while Voegelin had been inoculated against this sense of Germanic salvific mission (although I strongly suspect that he would have rejected Nazism even if he had not studied in America), Heidegger had precisely the sort of mentality and philosophy that could meld itself to the Nazis' semi-mythical pseudo-mysticism. Like the Nazis he rejected transcendence and thought of salvation in intramundane terms, and in the midst of the post World War I German crisis he could see in the Nazis the coming revelation of Being because, for Heidegger whatever happens is essentially the work of Being. According to Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger put the blame (if we can call it that) for the tragedy of World War II and the Holocaust not on any individuals or political movement but on an impersonal planetary force, the Will to Power, which he thought lay beyond anyone's responsibility or control."[55] The planetary force is simply the current presencing of Being.

Voegelin was eventually able to diagnose Nazism as one of the modem revolutionary gnostic movements, closed against transcendence and bent on achieving immanent perfection. Heidegger was seeking a return to a lost earthly perfection but apparently never understood the

[53] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics, tr.* By Ralph Manheim. Yale University Press. 1959, p. 199. Heidegger attempted to have this passage deleted from the English translation, but the publisher refused.

[54]Collins, p. 22.

[55]Sheehan in *The Cambridge Companion, p. 314.*

spiritually destructive implications of this as clearly as Voegelin did. Also, before 1938 Voegelin had already written two books on the development of the sort of racial theories that Nazism was built on. While Voegelin was subjecting Nazi ideology to tough critical analysis Heidegger never subjected anything to this sort of analysis. His analyses generally took the form of plodding meditations that often raised significant questions but led to no solid or clear conclusions. The differences between Heidegger's and Voegelin's evaluation of Nazism are symptomatic of the significant differences in their evaluations of modernity and the validity of their basic assumptions about reality. Heidegger focused on the ontological but overlooked the soul and the transcendent divine reality.

The third question is whether or not Voegelin could be considered an adversary of Heidegger. This depends on exactly what is meant by adversary. I presume that since L6with distinguishes adversary from someone who merely opposes Heidegger he means someone who would contend with Heidegger rather than merely disagree with his thinking. The context of L6with's question is the observation that everyone who reacts to Heidegger seems to fall into one of two groups, the mesmerized acolytes and the positivists who are repelled by his "new mysticism." Certainly Voegelin belongs to neither group. Between them there is some agreement but a great deal of disagreement, and Voegelin subjects Heidegger to the same sort of critique to which he subjects other modem thinkers.

First of all, both Heidegger and Voegelin reject propositional, dogmatic, dead metaphysics and both seek to restore a true understanding of reality by a return to the original living experiences. Second, for Heidegger the modem technological age is dominated by the will to power over beings. Voegelin, while acknowledging that there is a core of rational and practical usefulness in the power of science, nonetheless believes that with the rapid developments of modem science the core has become "a cancerous growth. The rationalutilitarian segment is expanding in our civilization so strongly that the social realization of other values is noticeably weakened. This expansion is carried by the mass creed that the utilitarian dominion over nature through science should and will become the exclusive preoccupation of man as well as the exclusive determinant for the structure of society. [56] Voegelin goes on to point out that the tendencies toward an exclusive preoccupation with scientism and positivism as the way to human happiness "are part of a cultural process that is dominated by a flight of magic imagination, that is, by the idea of operating on the substance of man though the instrument of a pragmatically planning will. We have ventured the suggestion that in retrospect the age of science will appear as the greatest power orgy in the history of mankind." Voegelin believes that the source of this power orgy is "a gigantic outburst of magic imagination after the breakdown of the intellectual and spiritual form of medieval high civilization." He coins the term "spiritual eunuchism"[57] to characterize the sort of person for whom positive science is truth.
Heidegger and Voegelin agree that the emphasis on man's power over nature has been

[56]History of Political Ideas, V1, p. 207. 17
[57]Ibid., pp. 209-211.

detrimental to other, more important considerations. Heidegger objected to what he called "production metaphysics" because it was concerned exclusively with beings and with the human will dominating nature seen only as a collection of objects that can be used for human purposes, the "standing-reserve." He believed that producing things should be a more holistic and poetic act, a letting-things-be, as the sculptor allows the figure to emerge from the stone. Voegelin's analysis of this problem is, however, clearer in its ability to point to the spiritual sources and effects of positivism and the expectation that manipulating nature will bring human fulfillment. Heidegger can say only that technology is the way in which Being is currently presencing itself to us.
So there is common ground, but Voegelin is definitely a critic of Heidegger. I have not found any references by Heidegger to Voegelin but Voegelin refers to Heidegger on a number of occasions. I have already quoted the passage in the *Autobiographical Reflections* in which Voegelin says that *Sein und Zeit* had no effect on him, while it apparently seemed sensational to many other people. In later years Voegelin developed a specific critical analysis of Heidegger, but since he never wrote a chapter or essay on Heidegger and his longest discussion of Heidegger is little more than two pages it is necessary to piece together his analysis from scattered references. The thesis of *Science, Politics & Gnosticism is* that the worst modem political disorders
result from their gnostic character, and, as he argues elsewhere, there is a common trend in modernity to create a "second (imaginative) reality" that will overcome the perceived deficiencies of the first, true reality. He points out that a gnostic thinker is "the herald of being, which he interprets as approaching us from the future."[58] Marx and Nietzsche thought along

these lines but did not work out all the consequences of this position. "It remained," Voegelin says, "for that ingenious gnostic of our own time, Martin Heidegger, to think the problem through, under the heading of fundamental ontology." He goes on to give some examples of Heidegger's speculation in *The Introduction to Metaphysics,* and then makes the following commentary:

Heidegger's speculation occupies a significant place in the history of Western gnosticism. The construct of the closed process of being; the shutting off of immanent from world-transcendent being; the refusal to acknowledge the experience of philia, *eros, pistis* (faith), and *elpis* (hope)-which were described and named by the Hellenic philosophers-as the ontic events wherein the soul participates in transcendent being and allows itself to be ordered by it; the refusal, thus, to acknowledge them as the events in which philosophy, especially Platonic philosophy, has its origin; and finally, the refusal to permit the very idea of a construct of a closed process of being to be called into question in the light of these events-all of this was, in varying degrees of clarity, doubtless to be found in the speculative gnostics of the nineteenth century. But Heidegger has reduced this complex to its essential structure and purged it of period-bound visions of the

[58]*Science, Politics and Gnosticism, pp. 45-46.*

future. Gone are the ludicrous images of positivist, socialist, and super man. In their place Heidegger puts being itself, emptied of all content, to whose approaching power we must submit. As a result of this refining process, the nature of gnostic speculation can now be understood as the symbolic expression of an anticipation of salvation in which the power of being replaces the power of God and the parousia of being, the Parousia of Christ.[59]

In a backhand sort of way Voegelin is acknowledging Heidegger as a master gnostic who has eminently succeeded in clarifying the nature of modem gnosticism. *Pistis, eros,* and *elpis,* are indeed missing from Heidegger andphilia plays only a minor role. Plato Heidegger regards as the initiator of the fall from mindfulness of Being into metaphysics with its concentration on beings or entities. God and Christianity are also not to be considered in Heideggerian philosophy because that would necessitate a turn toward transcendence, and Heidegger cannot be a self-appointed herald of a real transcendence. In Voegelin's 1964 lecture series on *Hitler and the Germans* he considers the semantic problems found in modem logic that arise in the conflicts between a first (true) and a second (false) reality. He says that "if one amuses oneself with a second reality, then language too becomes part of second reality, and then these problems arise, which indeed are only semantic and are resolved as soon as one starts thinking.[60] He gives the example of saying that someone is a liar, which clearly does not mean that every statement this person makes is a lie, but that he lies in certain socially relevant situations. This is certainly the common-sense understanding of the judgment that someone is a liar. However, if someone wants to misunderstand this judgment then we arrive at the logically paradoxical self-reference problem, such as the Cretan paradox, which takes the judgment to mean that the person always lies, even when he says that he lies. This is a denial of reality that creates the semantic problems, which disappear as soon as reality is recognized. He then applies this to Heidegger. The semantic problems "only arise if one does not think in relation to reality, but within language itself-briefly, if the situation that Heidegger formulates arises, that is, the situation in which 'language speaks.' Now it is certainly not Heidegger's intention thus to characterize language as a second reality,

but he has in fact done that. That is to say, if language speaks, then the contrast between thinking and language and between object and reality is interrupted, and these problems arise because one is no longer thinking in relation to reality."[61]For the most part Heidegger thinks in a world that consists of an almost private language. A few pages later he brings up Heimito von Doderer's novel *The Merovingians.* At the end there is a conversation between Dr. D6blinger, the chronicler of the story, and a reader, Mr. Aldershot. D6blinger cites Heidegger as justification of disempowering Childerich III by castration. Aldershot's comment is "murderous imbecility," to which Doblinger agrees: "What

[59]Ibid., pp. 47-48.
[60]Eric Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans,* tr. and ed. by Detlev Clemens and Brendan Purcell, in *The Collected Works of Eric* [61]*Voegelin, Vol. 31.* University of Missouri Press. 1999, pp. 249.
Ibid., p. 250.

else is it but imbecility?! All nonsense." Voegelin's commentary is "that should mean that the language of second reality must be castrated, its virility struck down, pulled out by the roots."[62]
In *Anamnesis Voegelin* places Heidegger in the modem tradition of *agnoia ptoiodes,* "the hostile alienation from a reality that rather hides than reveals itself." This is unlike the temper of the classic interpretation of spiritual unrest, which is joyful because it is experienced as a search for participation in the divine. But in Heidegger the unrest *is Angst and* Heidegger "waits for a 'Parousia of being' which does not come, reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* [63]
But near the end of the book, in a chapter entitled "The Tensions in the Reality of Knowledge," Voegelin says that he has some, limited, sympathy with the anti-philosophical resentment of the ideologist because it was not directed against the classical, Platonic *noesis,* of which the ideologists were ignorant, "but against Thomas's design of a propositional 'metaphysics' treating of universals, principles, and substances. The ideological rebellion ... was indeed strongly provoked."[64] He goes on to point out that modem philosophers who tried to restore what was lost in propositional, dogmatic metaphysics all failed because they did not return to the classic philosophers but took as their opponent the propositional metaphysics of the eighteenth century. "Even Heidegger's remarkable attempt, in his 'fundamental philosophy,' to regain for his feet the firm ground of the reality of knowledge, was heavily inhibited by his orientation to eighteenth century 'metaphysics' as his philosophical antagonist, as well as by the analytical inadequacy of his return to classical philosophy.[65]
In the essay "The German University and the German Society" Voegelin uses Heidegger as an example in seeking to explain the German catastrophe. He somewhat sarcastically characterizes Heidegger as "the famous philosopher who had great linguistic and linguistic-philosophical ambitions, but in the matter of language had such little sensitivity that he was taken in by the author of *Mein Kampf.* [66]Voegelin quotes a passage from *Sein und Zeit,* the one in which Heidegger discusses automobile turn signals (of the 1920s), a paragraph filled with *Zeichen, Weg, Wegkreuzung, Wagen, Zeug, Zeugmsammenhang, Zeigzeug,* and *Zeigen des Zeichens,* and then points out that this language has slipped its moorings in reality and if we really give ourselves over to an alliterative plunge into Heidegger, ending with the *zeichenden Zeichen des Zeigzeugs,* "we could whip ourselves up into a reality-withdrawing state of linguistic delirium."[67]
Finally, in the essay "The Eclipse of Reality," Voegelin groups Heidegger with

[62] Ibid., pp. 255-56.
[63]*Anamnesis, pp.* 101-102.
[64] Ibid., p. 194.
[65] Ibid., p. 194.
[66]Eric Voegelin, "The German University and German Society," in *Published Essays 1966 1985,* ed. by Ellis Sandoz, *Vol. 12 of The Collected Works ofEric Voegelin.* Louisiana State University Press. 1990,
p. 8.
[67]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Kierkegaard, Stimer, Nietzsche, Freud, and Sartre as the inheritors of a deformed existence which they have taken as the subject of inquiry. He comments that "the early constructs, purposely designed to eclipse historical reality, have performed their task so well that, to the latecomer in the movement of deformation, history is, if not altogether, at least sufficiently dead not to disturb by memories of a fuller humanity the concern with the contracted self."[68]
What conclusions can we derive from all this? It certainly seems to be Voegelin's judgment that Heidegger is more a part of the problems of modernity than a valid critic of them. Voegelin is not without a certain sympathy for Heidegger as someone who inherited a deformed tradition that he made a valiant but failed attempt to correct, but he is very clear that Heidegger ended up as another modem gnostic and creator of a second reality. As Voegelin put it, "the structure of the spirit cannot be abolished through a revolt against the spirit. The revolt itself must assume the structure of the spirit."[69]So, as a modem gnostic living in a second reality Heidegger's thinking still has the same basic structure of homelessness, longing, and searching for what we lack, of a fall and the need for salvation, and participation in something greater than the merely human. But what is lacking, or rather displaced in Heidegger is love, the transcendent divine, and the structure of the soul as it exists in the In-Between.
Does this make Voegelin an adversary of Heidegger? The very philosopher, Plato, whom Heidegger regards as the beginning of the fall into metaphysics, is precisely the thinker to whom Voegelin returns again and again as the source, along with Christianity, of his inspiration. As a result, clearly Voegelin has understood Heidegger far better than the disciples and the positivists (and probably better than Heidegger himself), and he finds in Heidegger the worst deformations of reality, of which he was certainly an adversary. On the other hand, compared to the number of pages he devotes to other thinkers Voegelin has relatively little to say about Heidegger. Essentially, he does not do much more than categorize or diagnose him. This may be partly because Voegelin was a political scientist and Heidegger was not, although he did have some political views and scholars have written about the political implications of his thought. But apparently Voegelin thought Heidegger important only because his writings help to clarify the nature of modem gnosticism. Voegelin is not the anti-Heidegger, but he was definitely as much an adversary of Heidegger's type of thinking as he was of the positivist and atheist kind. Heidegger's reaction to the problems of modernity is the creation of an imaginary, slightly bucolic world of Being dwelling in language and shepherded by men. Heidegger set out to be an original thinker, which meant that in the entire history of human existence only he has clearly understood what is really going on. Some of the early Greek philosophers

[68]Eric Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality" in *What Is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings.* Ed. by Momas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella, Vol 28 *of The Collected Works of*

Eric Voegelin. Louisiana State University Press. 1990, p. 117. This is an uncharacteristically awkward sentence by Voegelin. He means that to people such as those mentioned the understanding of history is so close to death through the contracted self that there is no point in bringing up memories of participation in transcendence.

[69] *History of Political Ideas, VI, p. 113.*

supposedly had primordial glimmerings of the truth, but it was then forgotten and concealed by metaphysics. Heidegger is infatuated with the primordial because it is an escape from the modern, but he wrenches the words of the supposedly primordial thinkers into something intelligible only to himself, who has fallen under the spell of language and cannot resist dredging up every possible etymological association, however far-fetched. And if Parmenides is primordial what are Homer and Hesiod? Pre-primordial? They thought in terms of myth, which Voegelin would categorize as a compact expression of experiences that would later be noetically differentiated, but they thought clearly about men and gods, society and nature. So, how can the predecessors (by several centuries) of the primordial be so clear and articulate, while the supposedly first true thinkers produced, according to Heidegger, enigmatic utterances that are, in his versions, intended to sound awesomely profound but actually say nothing? Despite all his talk of average everyday life, the core of Heidegger's thought is a private, second world into which he escaped from the real world.

In contrast, Voegelin, who never sought or desired to be known as an "original" thinker, dissects modernity thinker by thinker, problem by problem, error by error, while also pointing out the correct insights and significant achievements, on the assumption that the truth of existence was understood and articulated in varying degrees of accuracy by a number of thinkers long before him. Voegelin was not the herald of being, but, whether or not one agrees with all of his arguments and judgments, he was certainly a very tough-minded thinker who, in contrast to Heidegger, is definitely not part of "modernity."

Therefore, with respect to their relative merits as critics of modernity, Voegelin incisively analyzed it and clearly explained Heidegger as someone who grappled with a difficult problem and came up with a structurally deformed answer, but Heidegger could only have relegated Voegelin to the vast throng of people who have lost the understanding of Being.