

religious/political boundary and drawing inspiration, in particular, from Gandhi's practice of *satyagraha*, which contributes to political self-rule and has been practiced as nonviolence in many political and social movements. However, one might still ask: If Hertzberg's approach is not an alternative to a liberalism grounded in public reason, in what sense is it fundamentally different from the wide view of public reason and Rawls's proviso that religious arguments be given in terms of nonreligious and political reasons?

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José Daniel Parra: *Heidegger's Nietzsche: European Modernity and the Philosophy of the Future*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. 224.)

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Heidegger's two-volume *Nietzsche* has long been considered his second-greatest major treatise after *Being and Time* and before his *Beiträge (Contributions to Philosophy)*. But in recent years consideration of his confrontation with Nietzsche has received accelerating attention. Parra's *Heidegger's Nietzsche* is a useful addition to this expanding discussion.

Reminiscent of the Farias affair, the release of the so-called *Black Notebooks* has sent students of Heidegger into another round of discussions regarding what can be saved in Heidegger's thought that remains of use in light of his practical failings and miscalculations. The Nietzsche lectures have emerged as central to that damage control.

It is in his Nietzsche lectures starting in 1940, which were eventually published as the two-volume work we now possess, that Heidegger focuses upon the origins of the ideas that lead to the global technological domination of beings announced in his essay "Question concerning Technology." In the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger made the then iconoclastic claim that in effect Nietzsche was a Cartesian and that the constructivism announced by Descartes led directly to Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power as well as straight into the "enframing" of modern technology that blocks access to the question regarding being itself.

On Parra's account, both Nietzsche and Heidegger see contemporary humanity as caught between past and future in what both stress is a situation of nihilism. Heidegger uses Nietzsche as his foil for getting to the issue of

nihilism and how it emerged and hence might be confronted. Both Nietzsche and Heidegger see nihilism as related to developments in past thought that must be transcended in the direction of different visions of a “philosophy of the future.” But Heidegger tries to present Nietzsche as still entrapped in the original problem itself, suggesting means of transition to the future that intensify rather than transcend the problem. Nietzsche is especially trapped in the values language that is at the heart of nihilism as Heidegger sees it. The ultimate source of this values talk can be traced to Descartes’s move to make the *ego cogito* the *subjectum/hupokeimenon* as ultimate ground.

With Descartes, as with subsequent modern philosophy, cognition becomes a form of willing of the being of the objective world that is posited as outside the grounding self. The “ideas” of cognition are under these terms willed “values” imposed on external beings. Nietzsche, in trying to will countervalues to the prevailing nihilistic values of the last man, is still caught in the nexus of the core problem and hence cannot, as the allegedly last metaphysician, get us beyond the problem. As Heidegger once said of National Socialism, Nietzsche is still “fishing in the troubled waters of values.” Parra is effective in developing and displaying this argument.

As the analysis proceeds, it becomes clear that Parra himself sees the present situation as one of nihilism and that values talk is indeed central to the problem. And he too sees the need for a transition to a novel form of philosophy in the future. The whole “knowing is creating” mentality is at the core of the problem and needs to be replaced by an ontological analysis that finds a basis for the valuable in being itself.

Parra sees Heidegger’s critique of past thought as useful, but seems to split off from Heidegger at various points, frequently in the footnotes. What that leads to remains somewhat unclear, although it is more than once explicitly associated with the names of Plato and Aristotle. Indeed at one point Parra suggests that the epic recollection of the tradition that Nietzsche and Heidegger present may not actually make them Plato’s rivals so much as possible fellow travelers—or at least, Heidegger and Nietzsche open the door back to Plato. That of course flies in the face of what each author explicitly says in tracing nihilism back to Plato as the ultimate source.

Heidegger’s critique of liberal democracy and modernity is seen as useful by Parra in that it “unsettles” contemporary liberal theory while protecting what is presented as the highest purpose of liberal democracy, namely, encouraging men and women to “follow the logos” and live the “examined life.” In his “relentless” criticism, Heidegger seems to fulfill the mission of Socrates as gadfly and stinging fish, leading down a path to *aporia* that opens a door to contemplative wonder and awe more than thinking as a form of willful *praxis*. It is suggested that this might “clear a pathway for returning to the examined life” that simultaneously sees “truthfulness in a manner that is sensible to beauty and freedom” (190).

So construed, Heidegger is presented as more useful on the way to a future philosophy than the modern, all too modern Nietzsche with his willfulness

and values talk. But unless we open the door to some kind of givens that are unchanging, it is unclear how this helps transcend nihilism on the everyday, practical level. In this vein, Parra does point at one place toward “fundamental questions” and issues, presumably raising the specter of Leo Strauss’s reduction of the Platonic ideas to fundamental alternatives. Along this path we get the notion that the idea of justice is a permanent problem and discloses the “noetic heterogeneity of the whole”—a notion also associated with Strauss. And we get the further intimation that a more contemplative thinking would focus on “collection and division” of natural kinds, seemingly pointing in the direction of Plato once again.

Having passed through the Heideggerian critique, which looks much more like a critique of modernity than of the entire Western tradition, Parra seemingly arrives at what he calls a zetetic interpretation of ideas not as values but as permanent problems which along with ongoing collection and division never arrive at simply clear and self-evident contradiction-free categories. By this move Parra believes we avoid transforming ideas into willed values. One can see how this attitude could lead toward detached intellectual virtue but not how it overcomes public nihilism. Further, all of Parra’s intimations seem to solve the problem of absolutism more than the problem of nihilism as a historical, time-bound, cultural phenomenon as depicted by Heidegger and analyzed with some subtlety by Parra.

There also seems to be one final intimation, following the path of Heidegger that sees man as a site or “Da” between earth and world, and presumably incorporating the “fourfold”: that healthy human selfhood can only be possible at such a site. Finding and developing such particularistic sites might help avoid the “undifferentiated homogeneity” (184n80) of a cosmopolis based on an unprecedented tyranny, supported by the global technological domination of beings that leads to total homelessness (175). That presumably is another manifestation of nihilism: global homelessness.

The hope is that in a future work Parra will develop these thoughts, on the far side of the Heideggerian critique of modernity that he seems to accept. That said, the analysis of the Heideggerian/Nietzschean dialogue and dialectic is conceptually sure-footed and a useful addition to the literature.

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