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Ringmar, Erik

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PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

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Lund, Sweden, August 20, 2016.

Dear reader,

This is an article I've written on Heidegger, willpower and the moods of modernity.

> Conservatives have always been critical of the changes wrought by modern society, yet they have never known quite what to do about them. Heidegger's discussion of willpower provides an example. Early but also late in his career he advocated a live-and-let-live attitude which reduced the will to an aspect of care, and the self to a socialized being-with-others. For a few years in the 1930s, however, he saw the collective will of the people, as expressed by its Führer, as a way in which the ills of modern society could be overcome. The rhetoric of willpower, we conclude, is not a perennial feature of international politics and peace depends not on philosophy but on moods and the postures that states adopt.

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Thanks for reading!

Erik

Heidegger on Willpower and the Mood of Modernity

Erik Ringmar, Lund University

In the latter half of the nineteenth-century societies in Europe and North America changed in dramatic ways. Leaving their previous lives in the countryside, some 80 percent of Europe's population moved — either to cities to find work or overseas, to the United States in particular.[1] In the cities former farmhands and milkmaids worked for a wage, by a machine, at the pace set by foremen and factory clocks, and they lived in tenement houses, thrown together with other migrants with whom they had little in common except their confusion. Not surprisingly, the migrants were often overwhelmed by the sheer pace of city-life, by the impressions and the noise, and everyone was under far more stress than previously. In modern society we are compelled to make something out of ourselves and to perform successfully on terms determined not by custom but by the unpredictable relations between supply and demand. This is the modern way of being in the world.[2]

Conservative thinkers were uniformly critical of these changes. They did not like the upheaval and the commotion; they objected to the speed of the railroads, the soot of the factories, to the power of the market and what it did to social relations and to the souls of the workers. There was a wide-spread sense that the social pyramid was about to topple, that new social classes would take power and that utter chaos would ensue. At the same time it was far from clear what to do about the situation. Many conservatives looked back,

1 Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism*, 141.

2 "On or about December 1910," Virgina Woolf notoriously claimed, at least half-seriously, "human character changed." Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs Brown," 96; See further Ringmar, "The Problem of the Modern Self," 67–86.

wistfully, at the world they had lost, whereas others presented radical schemes for a political renewal. The thought of Martin Heidegger displayed exactly this unstable mixture of nostalgia and political activism.[3] His conservatism was in many ways very endearing and it has continued to win him supporters among people — such as environmentalists and left-wing critics of capitalism — who do not share his outlook on life.[4] Heidegger's is a philosophy of peasants toiling in the fields, of youngsters singing as they walk through the forest, of mothers peeling potatoes for dinner, of church-bells chiming in the distance on warm summer evenings.[5] And yet there is also Heidegger, the radical activist — the member of the Nazi party, the philosopher of the *Führerprinzip*, the antisemite and the advocate, in 1934, of the "annihilation" of all "internal enemies" of the German people.[6]

This unstable mix of nostalgia and radicalism was never more obvious than in relation to Heidegger's discussion of the will. The problem of the will is a central concern of his philosophy, yet he dealt with it entirely differently at different stages of his life.[7] In *Being and Time*, 1927, he had next to nothing to say about the will, and it appears only as a footnote to his discussion of *Sorge*, or care. Human beings are too deeply enmeshed in the world, he argued, to assert themselves against others and stand up against the conditions under which they live. Likewise, in his late, post-1945, thought he advocated an attitude of *Gelassenheit*, a stance of live-and-let-live inactivism. However, between the early and the

3 For more on the historical context of his thought see, *inter alia*, Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity*; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*; Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism*.

4 See, *inter alia*, Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future*.

5 For a critique see Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 40–46; See further Sharr, *Heidegger's Hut*, 103–12.

6 Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 72–73; The secondary literature on the "Heidegger controversy" is itself enormous. A helpful compilation is Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*; See further Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism*; Rockmore and Margolis, *The Heidegger Case*; Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," 642–69; Faye, *Heidegger*; Fried, "A Letter to Emmanuel Faye," 219–252.

7 Although extensive treatments of Heidegger's view of the will remain rare in the secondary literature, Davis argues that "the question of the will … is crucially at issue in the various twists and turns of Heidegger's path of thought from beginning to end." Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, *xxiii*.

late Heidegger, in the middle of the 1930s, we find Heidegger the radical activist and for him will, willpower and self-assertion were key terms. During this period, he insisted that ordinary people should subject themselves to the will of the German *Volk* as interpreted and expressed by its Führer.

Heidegger wrote next to nothing about international politics and his Being-in-the-world has nothing to do with the kinds of beings a student of international politics might study.[8] Yet the problem of the will has direct implications for political action and thereby for international politics. As we are about to discover, the question of will and willpower was widely discussed in the first decades of the twentieth-century. Willpower, at the time, was associated with self-assertive action, for example on the battlefield or in colonial settings; self-assertion was a matter of making it in a Darwinian struggle between nations and races for *Lebensraum* and hegemony.[9] It was to this political discussion that Heidegger made a contribution, no matter how philosophical. This is also where Heidegger's writings become relevant to students of international politics. By following Heidegger's intellectual trajectory, we will suggest in conclusion, we can better understand the role of willpower and self-assertion in international politics.

Heidegger, the sociologist

Heidegger was no sociologist and he explicitly shunned sociological language, yet his philosophy developed in close interaction with the themes discussed by social observers of his day, a proximity often concealed by the technical vocabulary he uses. Consider, to begin with, Heidegger's sharp, if never explicitly argued for, distinction between modern and pre-modern societies, reminiscent of similar distinctions made *inter alia* by Ferdinand

8 See, however, the writings from 1933/34 collected in Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*; as well as the speeches Heidegger gave in support of leaving the League of Nations, reprinted in Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*, 40–60; See also Heidegger, "Wege zur Aussprache"; For a discussion see Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 179–82.

9 See further Ringmar, *War and Willpower*.

Tönnies and Émile Durkheim.[10] According to Heidegger, a defining feature of people in traditional, agricultural, society was their feeling of being perfectly at home in their world. To be at home means more than anything that we know in advance what we are going to encounter and what we need to do. At home life is familiar and we deal with the environment by means of well-established habits and well-honed skills.[11] We are at one with a situation into which we fit both comfortably and comfortingly.

Life in modern society, according to Heidegger-the-sociologist, does not work this way. In modern society we are not at home, we do not fit comfortably into situations, and we cannot relax. Instead of being at one with the world, the world is set before us in the form of a *Bild*, a picture.[12] The world is *gestellt*, "enframed," as it were, and instead of simply living our life, we reflect on it. That which should be immediately present is represented. As a result we are alienated from the situations in which we find ourselves, and instead of relying on habits and well-honed skills, we come to rely on explicit procedures — of which technology provides the best example. In a speech which Heidegger gave in 1961 on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the founding of his native town of Meßkirch, he provided an example of this process at work. When he looked around at the rooftops of the houses in the town what he saw were endless rows of TV antennas. "What do these signs point to?," he asked.

> They point out that men are precisely no longer at home in those places where, from the outside, they seem to "dwell." Rather, by the day and the hour people are being pulled away into strange, enticing, exciting, at times also entertaining and educational realms. These realms, to be sure, offer no abiding, reliable resting-place; they change unceasingly from the new to the newest. Captivated and absorbed by all this, man "moves out" as it were.[13]

10 Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism*, 68–86; Cf. Bond, "Ferdinand Tönnies's Romanticism," 487–504.

11 Cf. Heidegger's notion of *wohnen*, to "dwell." Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 319–39.

12 Heidegger, "The Age of the World View," 341–55.

13 Heidegger, "Meßkirch's Seventh Centennial," 43, 45.

When the world stands before us as a picture on a TV screen, we are bound to be absorbed by it and as a result we lose contact with our familiar surroundings. Heidegger called this an *unheimlich* condition, usually translated as "uncanny" but better understood as the "un-home-like."[14] In a world where everything is *gestellt* before us, he insists, we are not at home anywhere, not even at home. In an un-home-like world we can find no place to rest; our well-established habits no longer apply and our well-honed skills have become redundant. Instead we have to make explicit sense of everything we encounter.

The result is a particular, modern, mood. Heidegger talked about the *Grundstimmungen*, "fundamental moods," of life in modern society, and he gave two examples — anxiety and boredom. People in modern society are anxious first of all.[15] We are anxious since there is no place to which we necessarily belong and no life which necessarily is ours. Too many options are available to us, and since we have no firm basis on which to make a choice between them, we have no idea how to live. Moreover, the unpredictability of life means that our future necessarily is uncertain. The risks are high; we never know what will come towards us or what we might be forced to do. And we are bored for much the same reasons.[16] Separated from a life which once was ours, we are never satisfied with what we manage to attain. In modern society we are constantly on the lookout for things that can excite us, and once we have tried the new, we want the *new* new.

> The mystery is lacking in our Dasein, and thereby the inner terror that every mystery carried with it and that gives Dasein its greatness remains absent. The absence of oppressiveness is what fundamentally oppresses and leaves us most profoundly empty, *i.e.* the fundamental emptiness that bores us.[17]

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14 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 232–33 All references to Heidegger's works below refer to page numbers, not paragraphs.

15 Ibid., 228–35.

16 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 78–167; See further Ringmar, "Attention and the Cause of Modern Boredom," 193–202; Slaby, "The Other Side of Existence."

17 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 163–64.

Compare life in traditional society where no one was anxious and few people were bored. People in traditional society were not anxious since they felt at home in their world and they were not bored since comparatively few tasks, and little of their time, required their conscious attention.

In order to escape both anxiety and boredom people in modern society take refuge in crowds. By imitating what others do we are no longer required to make our own decisions. Even if the future is full of uncertainty and risk, at least we confront it together. In this way the normalcy of the world is restored and the crowd becomes a sort of substitute home, a temporary location much like a shelter for the homeless. In addition, the crowd helps us keep our boredom at bay. When we are together with others, after all, it is far easier to be distracted than when we are alone; we gossip about things, make jokes, spend and kill time together.

> We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* judge; likewise we shrink back from the "great mass" as *they* shrink back; we find "shocking" what *they* find shocking.[18]

The problem is only that this makes for a perfectly inauthentic life. People in modern society live the life of a generic member of the indistinct multitude; we are an anonymous face in a crowd, a piece of statistics, an unknown soldier in an unmarked grave. In modern society we are always hanging with *das Man*, as it were, with "the they" or "the one," despite the fact that — or rather because — we know that there is no being-there there.

Heidegger, the philosopher

This sociologizing version of Heidegger's philosophy makes it clear how close he was to the concerns of his contemporaries, but Heidegger was no sociologist and to treat him as such is obviously unfair. In order to take him seriously, we must turn him back into a

18 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

philosopher. A first step is to consider the role which moods played in his analysis. A comparison with the methods employed by Edmund Husserl, Heidegger's teacher, is helpful in this regard. Husserl sought to reach philosophical insights by means of what he called a "phenomenological reduction," a form of reflection which aimed at stripping away the psychological features and empirical facts that influence our everyday understanding of the world.[19] Husserl's question was not "are you in pain?" but "does pain have a temporal dimension?"; not "why did you do that?" but "does action have cognitive antecedents?" These, according to Husserl, are scientific questions, but scientific questions which only can be settled by means of an investigation of subjective experiences. Yet as Heidegger saw it, phenomenological reduction was a too reflective, too detached, methodology and as a result it was always going to transform and thereby distort the experiences under investigation.[20] Heidegger's investigation of the phenomenology of moods was intended to provide a more engaged, more immediate, and thereby more convincing method. But just as in the case of Husserl, the aim was to draw conclusions regarding matters of ontology, not psychological facts. Heidegger is not interested in how people feel but in what moods can tell us about Being.[21]

But what does Heidegger mean by *Stimmungen*? In our everyday terminology of affect, "mood" is often used interchangeably with "emotion" and "feeling." We feel a certain way, we say, meaning that we have certain emotions or that we are in a certain mood. And yet, speaking more circumspectly, we should distinguish between these uses.[22] Basically, emotions have a cognitive content whereas moods do not. Emotions are about something or

19 Zahavi, "Phenomenology of Reflection," 177–93; Føllesdal, "Husserl's Reductions and the Role They Play in His Phenomenology," 240–52.

20 Zahavi, "Phenomenology of Reflection," 184–88.

21 On the *Seinsfrage*, see Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 28–35; "[D]asein," as Heidegger put it, "is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, I its very Being, that Being is a issue for it." Ibid., 32.

22 Carroll, "Art and Mood," 521–55; Cf. Ringmar, "Outline of a Non-Deliberative, Mood-Based, Theory of Action."

someone whereas moods concern a general attitude or stance. Yet, curiously, moods are not affective states that we have as much as affective states that we experience and go through. We *find ourselves* in a certain mood, we say, implying that the mood precedes our explicit recognition of it. Or rather, a mood concerns the interaction between a person and the situation in which she finds herself. In fact, situations can have moods too, denoting their "atmosphere."[23] Thus a restaurant may have a "cozy" mood, an Italian seaside town a "romantic" mood, a meeting a "constructive" mood, and so on.

Moods can often be interpreted already from a person's posture, gait or general demeanor. A bored person rests her head in her hands, she is slumped on a sofa in a limp and listless position, and a depressed person is often literally pressed down by life.[24] Since the body always has a certain posture, we must always be in a certain mood. There can be no mood-less engagement with the world just as there can be no body-less engagement.[25] We see the world *through* the mood. Yet since it is the mood that makes seeing possible, the mood itself becomes opaque; just as the eye, a mood is not itself available for inspection.[26] Our bodies are in a mood before we are; or perhaps better: we are in our bodies before we are fully present to our conscious selves.

Slightly differently put, we can see a mood as a question of attunement.[27] That is, a question of whether, and how, we fit into the situation in which we find ourselves. In fact, *stimmen*, "to tune," is a cognate of *Stimmung*, and to tune an instrument is to adjust its pitch to other instruments or its strings to each other. Likewise, when somebody asks us how we feel, we tell them — "I feel rootless," we say, "worried," "hopeful," "pensive" or "over the

23 Böhme, "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics," 113–26.

24 Straus, "The Upright Posture," 549.

25 Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 170–75.

26 Ratcliffe, "The Feeling of Being," 49.

27 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 64–77; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 172–79.

moon."[28] These answers provide a report on the state of our attunement, that is, a report on the mood in which we find ourselves. But *Stimmung* in German can also mean "voice," and it is possible to think of the process of attunement as an interaction between a call and a response. The situation is calling out to us, as it were, and we respond to it.[29] Whether and how we respond determines how we fit into the situation. Take the homelessness which Heidegger discussed in the address to the people of Meßkirch. Although they seemed to enjoy themselves well enough in front of their respective TV sets, Heidegger suspected that they secretly were profoundly bored, and it is in profound boredom that he discovers a feeling of *Heimweh*, "homesickness."[30] The home we have lost is calling out to us, as it were, calling us to come home.[31]

Thus understood all moods imply a particular way of paying attention.[32] From the Latin *ad-* meaning "to" and *tendere* meaning "to stretch," to attend to something is "to give heed to" or "to direct one's mind or energies towards" something. Depending on the mood we are in, we will pay attention in a certain fashion, more or less intently, carefully, and with more or less interest and degree of absorption. Yet as we all know, paying proper attention to something is difficult under the best of circumstances and often we cannot do it for more than a few seconds at a time. In order to help us here, we need the presence of a *Gestalt* of some kind; that is, the presence of a pattern, a figure, or some overall structure.[33] Paying attention becomes a lot easier if we can grasp the *Gestalt* as a whole while its individual components gradually come to be revealed. We pay attention since we want to see, hear or feel what is about to happen; since we want to know how the story, the piece of music or the

28 Ratcliffe, "The Feeling of Being," 54–55.

29 Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," 359–67.

30 Heidegger, "Meßkirch's Seventh Centennial," 49.

31 Ibid., 53.

32 On the role of attention in Heidegger's work, see Berger, "Dasein as Attention."

33 Heidegger, "The Age of the World View," 341–55; Cf. Ruin, "Enframing as the Essence of Technology," 183.

film, is going to end. We are entrained, as it were; meaning that we are "captured," "held" and "carried along" by that which is unfolding. Sustained attention requires entrainment.

A mood is where we find ourselves, we said, but it is in extreme, depersonalizing, moods that we find Being. In everyday moods, that is, Being is concealed by all kinds of social facts and psychological baggage, but this, according to Heidegger, is not true of anxiety and profound boredom which strip us of all individualizing features. In profound boredom, life is drained of meaning and we are completely unable to engage with the situations in which we find ourselves. It is life itself which drags; life itself is the *Langeweile*, the "long while," which we cannot fill with any conceivable content. When confronting profound boredom time loses its sense of direction and our very identities begin to unravel.[34] Something similar happens in the case of anxiety.[35] Anxiety does not concern specific objects or persons but describes instead an object-less unease. What we are anxious about is existence as such, and since human life always and necessarily projects itself into the future, what we are anxious about is more than anything what will become of us. "[T]hat in the face of which we have anxiety, is thrown Being-in-the-world."[36] Correctly understood, profound boredom and anxiety are not predicaments as much as opportunities; or rather, they are opportunities because they are predicaments.[37] When everything else is stripped away, when we are pushed to the brink, it is Being alone that appears.

As all moods, profound boredom and anxiety are affective states to which we are called to respond. Being is calling out to us, as it were, and provided we can come up with an answer, attunement should be possible also under these extreme circumstances. Indeed, to attune oneself to Being is to live an authentic life and thereby the most important of all the

34 Slaby, "The Other Side of Existence," 18–19.

35 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 228–35.

36 Ibid., 235.

37 "[B]oredom impels entranced Dasein into the moment of vision as the properly authentic possibility of its existence ..." Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 153.

tasks we might set ourselves.[38] The problem is only that Being is so devilishly difficult to pay attention to.[39] Take profound boredom. If you are profoundly bored, the world has no overall form; there is no *Gestalt* which can capture, hold us and carry us along, and as a result entrainment fails.[40] The problem posed by anxiety is quite different but the result is much the same. In anxiety there are plenty of *Gestalts* to be sure — there is much that potentially could capture our attention — but we are too restless to let our selves be held by any of them. Our attention-span is contracted to close to zero and we will not let our selves be captured and carried along. Flitting from one thing to the other, our heads eventually start spinning and we are unable to pay attention to anything at all.

The reason why Being is so difficult to pay attention to is that Being has no *Gestalt*. The outrageous fact that we are alive is not itself an observable datum; Being is not an object and it does not look, sound or smell like any thing. As a result it is never clear what we are supposed to pay attention to. Since Being has no *Gestalt* it cannot grab us, hold us and carry us along. Instead we are more likely to be overwhelmed by the encounter. When coming into the presence of Being, we become what Heidegger calls *gebannt*, "entranced" — a state of awe in which our minds freeze, our knees go weak and we lose our faculty of speech.[41] This is a predicament similar to what Edmund Burke referred to as an experience of the "sublime," an affective state in which our mind "is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it."[42] We are quite clearly in dire straits. Here we are, in an extreme mood, where we can hear the call of Being, but not very distinctly and not for very long, yet we have no means of properly responding to it. We seem to be failing in the most basic, and most

38 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 136–42; Cf. Carman, "Must We Be Inauthentic?," 13–28.

39 On the phenomenology of attention, see Arvidson, *The Sphere of Attention*.

40 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 148; See further Ringmar, "Attention and the Cause of Modern Boredom," 193–202.

41 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 147–48.

42 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 41–42.

important, obligation of our lives. Not surprisingly, we are prepared to do just about anything to try to escape the situation. And this, says Heidegger, is exactly what happens. Dasein flees; it flees "in the face of itself and in the face of its authenticity."[43]

The problem of the will

Although he reached this juncture by means of a philosophical and not a sociological route, Heidegger's description of life in modern society is strikingly similar to the descriptions provided by many of his contemporaries. As they agreed, modern society was a problem, and at the turn of the twentieth-century this was often discussed as a problem of the will.[44] Modern society has deprived people of the power to control their own lives, philosophers and sociologists but also medical professionals, newspaper editors and writers of self-help books agreed. Life in modern society is ruled by machines and routines; people are parts of organizations and institutions and everywhere they find themselves as the anonymous members of faceless crowds. As a result, people have become emasculated and irresolute; they are suffering from a *maladie de la volonté,* a will that is weak or which in some pathological cases may be entirely missing.[45]

The obvious remedy was to help people “restore” or “strengthen” their will; they had to learn to take charge of and assert themselves. Advice on how this could be done varied from one author to the next but many stressed the importance of the sufferers first taking charge of their bodies.[46] This could for example be done by means of physical exercise. Compare the turn-of-the-century boom in calisthenics, Swedish gymnastics, nudism, yoga and physical fitness regimes of all kinds; or compare the interest in vegetarianism and

43 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 229.

44 See, inter alia, Cowan, *Cult of the Will*, 24–31, 69–110; Ringmar, “The Problem of the Modern Self,” 67–86.

45 See, *inter alia*, Ribot, *Les maladies de la volonté*; Payot, *L’Éducation de la volonté*.

46 Cowan, *Cult of the Will*, 111–170.

other specialized diets.[47] A second step was to learn how to assert oneself. Acts of the will are sovereign acts, theorists of the will explained; they are creative expressions of the imagination; and as such they allow people to escape the confines within which life in modern society has placed them.[48] In order to exercise one's will, the sufferers to learn how to impose themselves on their surroundings, on nature or on other people.

This was when the works of Friedrich Nietzsche began to be read by large numbers of people.[49] Indeed, after the year 1900 something of a Nietzsche cult began spreading across Europe. Nietzsche had famously nothing but scorn for the "herd instinct" of the crowd and he was disgusted by all the signs of weakness and sickness he saw around him.[50] The remedy he prescribed was a powerful one, and it became more powerful still in texts such as *Wille zur Macht*, 1901, in which his posthumous notes were selectively compiled.[51] In a world in which God is dead, there are no absolutes, Nietzsche declared, and instead we have to create our own values, our own personalities and meaning. We do this as we discipline our will and impose it, with as much force as possible, on ourselves, on the world and on other people.

> Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into unexplored seas! Live in war with your equals and with yourselves! Be robbers and spoilers, ye knowing ones, as long as ye cannot be rulers and possessors! The time will soon pass when you can be satisfied to live like timorous deer concealed in the forest. Knowledge will finally stretch out her hand for that which belongs to her: she means to *rule* and *possess*, and you with her![52]

Exactly what Nietzsche meant by this militant language is admittedly not quite clear, but there is no doubt that at least some of his followers interpreted it as an exhortation to engage in physical violence. Some went to Africa and other extra-European locations in

47 Ibid., 111–70; Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*; Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany*, 67–104.

48 Cowan, *Cult of the Will*, 21–64.

49 Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 51–84.

50 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 116; For a discussion, see Podolsky and Tauber, "Nietzsche's Conception of Health," 299–311; Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, 115–38.

51 Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister and the Will to Power*, 81–109.

52 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 283.

order to exercise their will on the natives — and German imperialism was particularly genocidal.[53] When war arrived in 1914, next to all Europeans had a chance to assert themselves. Or rather, while the vast majority of Europeans were rather reluctant to go to war, there were plenty of people — intellectuals and city-dwellers foremost among them — who marched off to their respective battle-fronts with great enthusiasm.[54] The young men who eventually were to be gassed in the trenches set off hoping for a life of heroic glory, and at least some of them carried copies of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in their knapsacks.[55] As far Germany was concerned, the perceived need for self-assertion was not diminished by the outcome of the war. The Germans had been weak-willed and divided, Adolf Hitler insisted, and that was why they had been defeated, but under the guidance of the National Socialists they were once and for all going to assert themselves. In the Second World War, Germany's willpower was exercised on a pan-European level, and once again the name of Nietzsche was invoked in the bellicose propaganda.[56]

The will in *Being and Time*

Given this historical background, it surprising to discover that the will plays next to no role in Heidegger's *Being and Time*.[57] Although Heidegger's analysis of the modern predicament was strikingly similar to that of his contemporaries, he does not follow them in providing prescriptions for how the will can be strengthened and the self asserted. Indeed, his silence on this topic is as striking a statement as any other in the book.

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53 Brennan, "Borrowed Light: Nietzsche and the Colonies," 3–28; More generally see Lemarchand, *Forgotten Genocides*.

54 Stromberg, *Redemption by War*; Cf. the revisionist account in Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*; For a discussion, see Ringmar, "'The Spirit of 1914'"; The chapter on Zarathustra in the trenches," in Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 128–63.

55 In England, it was commonplace to draw a connection between German self-aggrandizement and Nietzsche's philosophy. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 135.

56 Ibid., 232–71.

57 Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 24–59.

Consider for example his discussion of *Entschlossenheit*, "resoluteness."[58] This, if anything, would seem to be a Nietzschean theme. Willing, as Nietzsche had explained, is a matter of *ekstasis*, of finding oneself beyond oneself; of incorporating the other into the self.[59] When we act resolutely, we respond to the call of Being, whether we can properly hear it or not; that is, we act by *fiat*, by a sovereign act of the will. To be resolute is to be decisive, to take charge of oneself, to be self-assertive, and so on. If Heidegger's resoluteness is the same as a Nietzschean *Wille zur Macht*, there is no difference in their treatment of the will.[60]

But Heidegger does not have access to this argument. The resoluteness he advocated in *Being and Time* was not a Nietzschean project, at least not a Nietzschean project as commonly understood.[61] The reason is that Heidegger's philosophy contained no notion of an individual subject which could define itself apart form, and in opposition to, society and thereby impose itself on other people and the world. Heidegger's *Dasein* is enmeshed with the social right from the start; *Dasein*'s world is always a *Mitwelt,* a "with-world," and always a "Being-with Others."[62] Inextricably bound to the fate of others, man has already subjected himself to ways of living, speaking, and understanding which are not his own. It is true of course that Heidegger often talked about sociability as a problem, such as when *Dasein* decides to hang out with *das Man* and comes to live an inauthentic life, but he never believed there was an alternative. Sociability is an intrinsic part of human nature; it constitutes who we are and is not an added extra. Sociability is simultaneously what makes us human and what makes us inauthentic. The problem of authenticity is the problem of how to make a life for ourselves in the face of these conflicting facts.

58 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 312–48.
59 Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 9–10.
60 Davis discusses four different interpretations of *Entschlossenheit*. Ibid., 40–59.
61 Strong, "Genealogy, the Will to Power, and the Problem of a Past."
62 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 119.

This is why Heidegger has next to nothing to say about the will in *Being and Time*. He discussed the will only briefly and under the rubric of *Sorge*, or "care."[63] The will, at this stage in the development of his thought, is neither a "faculty" nor a "power" properly speaking, and it is only when in a mood and as attuned that something like a will can come into existence. In terms of the language we used above we can think of this as a question of attention. To attend to something is to care about something,; we are engaged, as it were, and this engagement is, in *Being and Time*, what Heidegger understands as a will of sorts.[64] But this also means that the will necessarily is set by, and thereby limited by, the mood in which we find ourselves.[65] The mood comes first and it cannot be altered by acts of the will, but neither can it be altered by politics or by philosophizing; all we can do is to attune ourselves to a mood or to remain at odds with it.[66] Finding our selves in a mood, we find our will there too and the will can for that reason never be understood as anything like a sovereign power. Whatever "resoluteness" might mean under these circumstances, it cannot refer to anything like a Nietzschean project of self-creation.

Perhaps we should have taken the etymology of the word *Entschlossenheit* more seriously. The root here is *schließen*, to "close" or "conclude," and perhaps *Entschlossenheit* is best understood as something like a verdict that one passes on oneself. Resolution is not a matter of imposing ourselves on the world as much as of coming to a judgment regarding who we are and what kind of a life we can live.[67] Ironically, this understanding of resoluteness might not have taken us further away from Nietzsche but instead closer to him. Clearly, the violent interpretation of the thesis regarding *Wille zur Macht* is not the

63 Ibid., 225–73.

64 Ibid., 238–39; Cf. Berger, "Dasein as Attention," 7–49.

65 "[F]or moods," as Heidegger puts it, "are overcome and transformed always only by moods." Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, 99.

66 "Willing and wishing are rooted with ontological necessity in Dasein as care … Care is ontologically 'earlier' than the phenomena we have just mentioned …" Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 238.

67 Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," 647.

only one possible.[68] What Nietzsche had in mind was arguably not acts of sovereign self-determination as much as a determination to, as he put it, "become who we are." *Amor fati*, love your fate, is the phrase Nietzsche repeatedly uses, implying that we must learn to embrace the life that has been given to us and to consciously will it. In this context, *Wille zur Macht* is more than anything a matter of a painstaking process of "character-building."[69] You learn to love your fate by learning to become who you are; that is, by developing the kinds of habits that allow you to fit comfortably into one of the possible lives which is at your disposal.

The will of the Führer

But this was not Heidegger's final word on the topic of the will. Conservative thinkers, we said, were uniformly critical of the changes wrought by modern society. They did not like the upheaval and the commotion; they were afraid that the social pyramid was about to topple and that chaos would ensue. Yet it was far from clear what they could do about the situation. Some conservatives looked back, wistfully, at the world they had lost whereas others presented radical schemes for a political renewal. This unstable mixture of nostalgia and radicalism was never more obvious than in Heidegger's discussion of the will. His begrudging references in *Being and Time* presents the traditional conservative case. Conservative thinkers after all had always been skeptical of the rhetoric of willpower.[70] They did not like the idea of self-assertion which to their ears smacked of self-indulgence, willfulness and social disruption. Conservative thinkers would much have preferred people to stay in their designated places and to live according to their time-honored habits. Yet in a rapidly changing society, there are no such places and no such habits, and here

68 Strong, "Genealogy, the Will to Power, and the Problem of a Past," 93–106.

69 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*; Cf. the discussion of Dewey in Ringmar, "The Problem of the Modern Self," 67–86.

70 The classical text here is of course Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

conservatives too might easily turn into radicals. This, in the 1930s, was the case with Martin Heidegger.[71]

The problem with modern society, we quoted him as saying, is the way the world is *gestellt* before us, and the instrumental attitude we adopt to nature, to other human beings and to ourselves. Behind these concerns, Heidegger found the problem of the forgetting of the question of Being. In modern society we always ask what things are, how they work and where they come from, but we no longer ask what it means *to be*. For political action to make a true difference, it must make it possible for the question of Being to once again be raised. It was, Heidegger came to believe in the 1930s, up to the German people, the *Volk*, to make this happen. Or rather, the German *Volk* was going to do so as led by its leaders, its Führer, who in Heidegger's mind included its leading politician, Adolf Hitler, and its leading *Dichter und Denker*, the nineteenth-century poet Friedrich Hölderlin and Heidegger himself. This is an extraordinary vision, if there ever was one, both in its audacity and its pretensions.[72] Heidegger seems to have believed that the Nazis could be used as a vehicle for promoting his philosophy and that he with their help could establish himself as a sort of philosopher-guardian of the country as a whole. And even more outrageously, he believed that the German people in this way would be able to radically alter the modern way of being-in-the-world; that the Germans as led by the Nazis would help him to once again raise the question of Being.[73]

Before these changes could take place, however, the philosophical obstacles erected in *Being and Time* had to be removed. The problem, we saw above, was that Heidegger's

71 For a biographical account, see Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, chap. 13.

72 Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 167–85; Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," 642–69; A key text is Heidegger, "The Self Assertion of the German University and the Rectorate, 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts," 467–502; A collection of Heidegger's political writings of 1933/34 is Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*; See also Heidegger, "References to Jews and Judaism in Martin Heidegger's Black Notebooks, 1938-1948."

73 Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome, 1936," 115–16; For a discussion, see Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 137–38, 150–53.

conceptualization of the will left little place for sovereign, self-assertive, action. He found the will in moods but moods can be altered neither by means of philosophy nor by politics. Yet, as Heidegger came to point out in the 1930s, the fundamental moods, the *Grundstimmungen*, of an era varies radically from one historical period to the next.[74] *Grundstimmungen* have a history which corresponds to the various ways in which human beings have paid heed to the call of Being over time. Yet the subject of this history is not the individual *Dasein* as much as the *Dasein* of a *Volk*. We attune ourselves together with other people who share our way of life. This is how Heidegger came to introduce the *polis*, the state, into his philosophy. While a *Volk* is a spiritual entity, or perhaps an imagined community, it is in the *polis* that the *Volk* takes concrete shape.[75] It is the *polis* which is attuned to the *Grundstimmungen* of the age and individual citizens in turn are attuned to the *Stimmungen* of the *polis*. Here Heidegger invoked the metaphor of the *Fuge*, referring to a musical composition, such as the fugues of Johann Sebastian Bach, to which all members of the *polis* had to *einfügen* their individual voices. Or, in an alternative etymology in which *Fuge* refers to a "joint" such as the joints that connect different pieces of wood or brickwork, our task is to *zusammenfügen* ourselves in a *fügsam* manner as composite parts of the same political construction.[76]

The advantage of this new, alternative, language over the metaphor of a mood is that it now becomes possible to overturn the entire structure in relation to which we are situated. Instead of making our bodies fit into an illusive and all-pervading atmosphere, we have the option of turning our backs on the *polis* and its demands for conformity. It is in

74 Thus, according to Heidegger, the fundamental mood of ancient Greece was one of "astonishment" and of the modern age one of "terror." Cf. Haar, "Attunement and Thinking," 149–61.

75 Heidegger, *Einführung in Die Metaphysik*, 117; quoted in Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 138.

76 Heidegger, *Einführung in Die Metaphysik*, 123; Here Heidegger ignores the fact that the two senses of the word have different etymologies. Fuge, the musical composition, is derived from a Latin root, *fugere*, "to flee," and Fuge, the carpenter's term, is derived from an ancient Germanic root, *fōgijanǫ*, "to join together." See "Fuge," *Wiktionary*, en.wiktionary.org. Cf. Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 142–48.

this connection that Heidegger discusses Sophocles' Antigone who buried her brother outside of the city-walls of Thebes in defiance of the decisions of its rulers.[77] Antigone refused to *einfügen* herself, as it were, and became effectively stateless, or *apolis*. This is a theme to which Heidegger repeatedly returned in his writings of the 1930s. Or as the reliably *unfüglich* Friedrich Nietzsche explained:

> one must do as the traveller who wants to know the height of the towers of a city: for that purpose he *leaves* the city. Thoughts concerning moral prejudices, if they are not to be prejudices concerning prejudices, presuppose a position outside of morality, some sort of world beyond good and evil, to which one must ascend, climb, or fly …[78]

Yet clearly such ascending, climbing or flying is not for everyone. You need to be a person of exceptional strength, someone uniquely audacious and forceful, in order to break free of the conventions of your society. Ordinary people, the *füglich* ones, will never understand such actions and will necessarily label them as immoral.[79] Ascending, climbing and flying, Heidegger explains, is for the Führer.

> Preeminent in the site of history, they become at the same time *apolis*, without city and abode, lonesome, uncanny, among beings as a whole but with no way out, at the same time without ordinance and limit, without structure and fit, because they as creators must first ground all this.[80]

The new foundation which they establish will be the basis for a new set of conventions, a new morality, which retroactively, will justify their actions.[81] Here Nietzsche's notion of self-creation seems to have made a spectacular return. *Triumph des Willens* indeed.

Yet even in Heidegger's thought of the 1930s, moods cannot be altered by assertive action alone and neither philosophy nor politics is sufficient to the task. Instead, as he

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77 Sophocles, *Antigone*, ll. 361–372; Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, 54. Parmenides:134; Heidegger, "Chorlied aus der Antigone des Sophokles"; For a discussion, see Geiman, "Heidegger's Antigones," 161–182.

78 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 380.

79 Heidegger, *Einführung in Die Metaphysik*, 116.

80 Ibid., 117; quoted in Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 143.

81 Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos*, 144.

came to argue, the powers of creation belong to Chaos.[82] Beneath the ground on which the *polis* is founded, there is an *Abgrund*, an abyss. Obviously an abyss is a flimsy foundation on which to establish a political order and it would seem to be entirely arbitrary too since it is difficult to justify as anything other than a stop-gap convention. Yet Chaos should not be understood as a confusing nothingness but instead as a creative force. What Heidegger had in mind was Chaos as described in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the creation myth most commonly told amount the ancient Greeks.[83] Chaos, to Hesiod, was a sort of fertile chasm from which things could emerge: first the division between earth and sky, then gods and humans, and then everything else.[84] If the powers of creation remained with Chaos, there are inevitably limits to what human beings can do, and these limits applied even to the most audacious of poets, thinkers and political leaders. Instead of willing a certain future into existence, we can only take a leap into the unknown — Heidegger talks about a *Sprung* — and to hope for the best. Exactly what emerges from this audacious act we will never know beforehand but as a result the world will have been made anew and the *Grundstimmungen* of our time will have changed. In 1933, Heidegger identified Adolf Hitler as that *Springer*.[85]

Heidegger, the work-out instructor

This bid for power failed of course. The Nazis were not particularly attentive students of Heidegger's philosophy and to the extent that they needed an abstract justification for their all too concrete crimes there were far more simple-minded thinkers to whom they

82 Ibid., 148–50; Cf. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 7–11; On Heidegger and Hesiod, see ibid., 266–69.

83 Scully, *Hesiod's Theogony*.

84 Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 7–11.

85 The jumping body was an important theme in German popular culture during the first decades of the 20th century. Cowan, *Cult of the Will*, 130–36; "[T]he jump," as Cowan comments, "seemed to offer the most perfect visual realization of energy and willpower." Ibid., 135.

could turn.[86] Heidegger resigned from the rectorship of the University of Freiburg in April 1934 and although he appears to have continued to sympathize with the Nazi cause, he was no longer an active member of the party.[87] In the latter part of the 1930s, in lecture courses on Nietzsche and Hölderlin, he gradually distanced himself from the rhetoric of willpower, and after the Second World War, desperate to rehabilitate himself, he identified willpower and self-assertion as key problems of the modern age.[88] Although he never repudiated what he in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1935, referred to as "the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism," he came to regard politics as part of the problem and not a part of the solution.[89] The will to will, he now explained, was an inevitable consequences of a modern world in which everything is *gestellt* before us. The Holocaust, from this point of view, was only one more example of this modern, instrumental, attitude to life.[90]

The task, from this post-Hitlerian point of view, is how to make people stop treating the world, and themselves, exploitatively. That is, how to convince people to stop willing and stop asserting themselves. Heidegger, in his later philosophy, found the answer in the notion of *Gelassenheit*.[91] *Lassen* in German means to "let," "make" or "allow" something to happen, and *Gelassenheit* is translated as "composure" or "equanimity," and has by

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86 In particular, the Nazi leadership seems to have preferred Alfred Baeumler. See, for example, Baeumler, *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker*; For a discussion, see Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 234, 239–40.

87 Meeting him in 1936, his former student Karl Löwith insisted that Heidegger "was convinced now as before that National Socialism was the right course for Germany; one only had to 'hold out' long enough." Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome, 1936," 115–116.

88 Heidegger, "The Age of the World View," 341–55; Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 283–317; Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 319–43; For a discussion, see Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 146–84.

89 The transformation starts with Heidegger's third volume on Nietzsche. Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume 3*; And continues in his lecture courses on Hölderlin's poetry in the late 1930s. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 100–121.

90 "Agriculture is now a motorized food-industry — in essence, the same as the manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the blockading and starving of nations, the same as the manufacture of hydrogen." Quote from an early draft of Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology"; In the published version all but the first five words are omitted. See ibid., 296; Heidegger's revision discussed in Schirmacher, *Technik Und Gelassenheit*, 25; Sheehan, "Heidegger and the Nazis."

91 Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 216–38; Davis, "Will and *Gelassenheit*," 168–81.

Heidegger's translators been rendered as “releasement,” as an attitude, that is, of letting things be, to live and let live. Such Stoicism has always been common among conservatives who insist that “even if everyone else is going crazy, at least we must remain calm,” and it seems to have returned Heidegger to the stance he held regarding the will in *Being and Time*. As a result, his later thought has often been criticized as defeatist.[92] This, however, is not quite fair. His point is not that we should cultivate our gardens but instead that we should attune ourselves to the world in a particular fashion. *Gelassenheit*, Heidegger argued, requires attentiveness, alertness, even vigilance.[93] This is different from passivity, which implies disinterest and inattention, but it is also different from willful self-assertion. Consider the respective bodily postures involved.[94] While the passive person is leaning backwards, muscles inert, perhaps half asleep, the assertive person is leaning forward, looking for pretexts, ready to pounce. An attentive person, in contrast to both these postures, has rendered herself to the situation much as Vladimir and Estragon rendered themselves to their situation in their *rendez-vous* with Godot.[95] We are standing up straight, keeping our eyes on the horizon like a look-out on the mast of a ship or a watchman in a tower. But what are we waiting for? A sign perhaps, or maybe an instruction or a call, no doubt from Being itself — and it is only by paying proper attention that we are prepared to respond to that call when it comes. We have, as Heidegger explained, to make ourselves “ready for the readiness of holding oneself open for the arrival, or for the absence of a god.”[96]

Here Heidegger is running up against the same difficulty as before. That is, if *Gelassenheit* is a way of attuning ourselves to the situation in which we find ourselves, then

92 See, *inter alia*, Wolin, *The Politics of Being*.
93 Berger, “Dasein as Attention,” 119–27.
94 Ringmar, “Outline of a Non-Deliberative, Mood-Based, Theory of Action.”
95 Beckett’s play was originally written in French. Beckett, *En attendant Godot*.
96 Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us,” 58.

Gelassenheit is a mood. But if moods are the precognitive preconditions for thought, philosophy cannot influence them and neither can politics. And if this is the case then no calls for attentiveness and vigilance, no matter how sternly expressed, are going to be effective. This is not least the case since *Gelassenheit* contrasts sharply with the predominant mood of modern society which is more likely to induce inattentiveness and distraction. So what can we do? Rather uncharacteristically, Heidegger equivocates. He intimates that philosophy indeed can help us, but that surely cannot be right.[97] Later he opts for poetry and arts.[98] He also gets himself involved in Zen-like riddles like the exhortation to "will not to will."

> Non-willing in this sense means: to will-fully renounce willing. And then, on the other hand, the expression non-willing also means: that which does not at all pertain to the will.[99]

At this juncture, let us suggest, philosophy can no longer guide us.[100] Thinking can only get us so far and it has taken Heidegger as far as he can go. Yet as Nietzsche was fond of pointing out, beyond philosophy there is physiology and beyond Heidegger's thought there is the body.[101] Heidegger's own discussion of the body is famously unsatisfactory but subsequent contributions to phenomenological analysis, such as that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, has done much to improve on this state of affairs.[102] So has recent work in neurophenomenology.[103] Perhaps Heidegger was simply wrong: perhaps there indeed are

97 Wolin, *The Politics of Being*, 147.

98 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 149–87; Discussed in Schapiro, "The Still Life as a Personal Object: A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh," 203–209.

99 Heidegger, *Feldweg-gesprache*, Gesamtausgabe 77:106; Quoted in Davis, "Will and Gelassenheit," 176.

100 Gendlin, "The Wider Role of Bodily Sense in Thought and Language," 195–96.

101 Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being*.

102 On physiological metaphors in Nietzsche, see Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, 21–114; On Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, see Aho, "The Missing Dialogue between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty," 1–23.

103 See, *inter alia*, Varela, "Neurophenomenology," 330–49; Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*; Ratcliffe, "Heidegger's Attunement and the Neuropsychology of Emotion," 287–312.

things we can do in order to change our moods. After all, many moods seem to have physiological causes. Thus a toothache may put us in a grumpy mood while a morning jog can make us confident about the day ahead. In fact, both anecdotal and scientific evidence indicate that moods quite easily can be manipulated by means of drugs or by music or by changes in bodily posture.[104] Thus coffee will makes us alert, alcohol will make us carefree, and dancing, singing or marching together will put us in a good mood.[105] Yet if this indeed is the case, Heidegger's discussion of *Gelassenheit* might provide a solution after all, at least if we read it as a work-out manual rather than a philosophical text. The answer is all in the posture he prescribes, in the stretched neck, the vigilant eyes, the watchful wake.[106] Although we cannot think our way through the problems of modern society, we can position our bodies in relation to them. We take a stance and come to create a mood. In this way we will, little by little, come to feel better.

Heidegger and the global

For students of international politics these conclusions are bound to be disappointing. Clearly Heidegger's *œuvre* cannot be mined for "lessons" and there are no "implications for further research" to be found here. And in any case, Heidegger's thought should surely not be *gestellt* before us and treated as a resource to be exploited. His writings on politics are confined to the brief period in the 1930s when he hitched his wagon to the Nazi juggernaut, and that, if anything, is a good reason to ignore them.[107] And yet, as we have seen, Heidegger's philosophy touched on many of the themes discussed by social

104 Among many studies, see Deijen, Heemstra, and Orlebeke, "Dietary Effects on Mood and Performance," 275–83; Strack, Martin, and Stepper, "Inhibiting and Facilitating Conditions of the Human Smile," 768–77.

105 On collective calisthenics in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century, see Cowan, *Cult of the Will*, 111–70; On "social hiking," see Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany*, 67–104; On "mass dancing," see Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 300–320; More generally, see McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*; Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets*.

106 Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being*, 281–317.

107 As forcefully argued in Faye, *Heidegger*.

observers of his day — the impact of industrialization and urbanization, and the nature of the self in modern society — and if noting else this gives his thought a historical interest.[108] It exemplifies the instability of the conservative outlook at a time of rapid social and political change. This is particularly the case for Heidegger's discussion of willpower.

International politics is sometimes regarded as a battle of wills.[109] Rising powers assert their will by making new demands on their neighbors and established powers reassure others and themselves that they have the will to defend the status quo. During a war, the will of the people is sometimes said to compensate for deficiencies in military hardware and once the will of the people is broken everything is lost. Once defeated, the first obligation of statesmen is to assert the position of their country, that is, to impose its will on others. In accounts such as these, the will of the state is often represented as more than the sum of the wills of the individuals who comprise it. To act in accordance with the "national will" is consequently to act on someone else's instructions. The same is true of terrorist who claim to be carrying out "the will of God" or colonial administrators who regard themselves as agents of "the will of History." The danger of this way of thinking should be obvious to anyone who has studied the history of colonialism or the history of the two, twentieth-century, world wars.

Yet as our discussion has shown, this is not an inevitable way of thinking. Although *Realpolitik* and security dilemmas have a long history, the rhetoric of willpower and self-assertion has a history which only is contemporaneous with the changes brought about by modern society. This rhetoric is highly seductive to be sure but there are also ways to resist it. Heidegger's thought illustrates both possibilities. The will, Heidegger pointed out, arises only in a mood and as the result of a certain way of paying attention. Human beings are social before they are subjects. Inextricably bound to the fate of others, man

108 Or, in a philosophical vein, we could argue that the question of Being remains crucial regardless of Heidegger's own answers to it. See Fried, "The King Is Dead," 1–15.

109 Ringmar, *War and Willpower*.

has already subjected himself to ways of living, speaking, and understanding which are not his own. Surely the same is true to the subjects that populate world affairs. A state can never be defined apart form, and in opposition to, the international society of which it is a member. This will not stop states from asserting themselves to be sure, but with Heidegger we could still hope for a change of moods. World peace will not be brought about by philosophy but it might be brought about by states that adopt a different posture. States too have postures after all. We commonly talk about the "aggressive," "neutral" or "forward-leaning" posture of a state, or of states that are "flat on their backs" or that once again have "stood up."[110] Following Heidegger the work-out instructor rather than the philosopher, the task would be to replace these postures with a posture of detached vigilance. *Gelassenheit*, on this account, is how we make peace with the world in which we find ourselves but also with each other.

Consider, finally, Heidegger's discussion of moods.[111] International politics is next to always analyzed in rationalistic terms. It is discussed as a matter of the preferences and goals that guide policy-makers, or in terms of intentions and interests. Digging deeper, a student of international politics might investigate the psychological processes by means of which policy-makers perceive the world and ask questions about cognitive maps, *Weltanschauungen*, or perhaps the policy-makers' relations with their mothers. Other scholars insist that identities are more basic than interests and suggest that we should study the struggles for recognition through which identities come to be constituted. But if Heidegger is right, these are all superficial concerns. All these items of cognition and affect arise only in a mood. The *Grundstimmungen* come first and everything else comes second. This is surely the case for international politics too. International politics too has

110 On the "fall" of France and its subsequent prostrate posture, see Sartre, *Iron in the Soul*, 85–86; On China "standing up," see Zedong, "The Chinese People Have Stood Up!"

111 Cf. therapeutic applications such as those of Eugene Gendlin. See Gendlin, "Heidegger and the Philosophy of Psychology," 43–71; For a discussion, see Ringmar, "Eugene Gendlin and the Feel of International Politics."

moods. The world wars of the twentieth-century were fought in a certain mood, and so was the Cold War and the Global War on Terror. But if this is the case, a new posture is required of students of international politics. We must become more attentive to moods and to the various ways in which states attune themselves to them.

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