

## POLITICS, ROOTEDNESS IN THE EARTH AND TECHNIQUE IN MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S ONTO-HISTORICAL THINKING.

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### *Abstract*

The paper deals with the political aspects of Martin Heidegger's thought, also tackling, albeit in a marginal way, some aspects connected to his relationship with National Socialism. To do so, the concepts of "rootedness in the earth" and "technique", in particular, will be examined in the framework of Martin Heidegger's so called "onto-historical thinking", to which Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann has dedicated several interesting studies. First, the paper covers Martin Heidegger's utter rejection of the National Socialist ideology, in spite of what his critics have variously claimed; Alfredo Marini's important studies, besides the contributions of von Herrmann and Francesco Alfieri, were taken into particular consideration. Secondly, it introduces the concept of "onto-historical thinking" which Heidegger mostly developed in his *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, in order to demonstrate its value in the field of political philosophy. Thirdly, "onto-historical thinking" was compared to "fundamental ontology". Fourthly, following Martin Heidegger, the necessity to refound ontology is demonstrated to be the prerequisite in order to rethink politics: the concepts of "rootedness in the earth" (and of "uprooting") are here considered. Fifthly, the concept of "earth" was analyzed, together with its philosophical-political value. Finally, the connection of all this to the key notion of technique was illustrated.

**Keywords:** Heidegger, political philosophy, rootedness in the earth, technique.

Clarification for dunces [...]:  
anti-Semitism is [...] deranged and reprehensible  
*[M. Heidegger]*

After it has been proven unequivocally  
that [Martin Heidegger] interpreted the National Socialist  
philosophy as an absurdity and that he rejected any  
form of anti-Semitism as deranged and abominable,  
a “re-interpretation” of Heidegger’s  
onto-historical works is not necessary.

The suggestion that some of the convention organizers  
made [...] to submit Heidegger’s texts to a second reading  
in the attempt to find traces of anti-Semitism appears to be nonsensical.

*[Fr.-W- von Herrmann]*

## **1. Introduction: on Martin Heidegger’s complete dissent regarding the National Socialist ideology**

From 21<sup>st</sup> April 1993, the day in which Martin Heidegger was declared Rector of the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, until today (and probably for a long time still), too many historians of philosophy have preferred to remain in the dimension of gossip with regard to “Heidegger’s alleged Nazism”, rather than engage with the investigation of Heidegger’s deep thought from which the West had the opportunity to re-think itself, its origins and its faith.

The account of Heidegger’s detractors is beginning to sound ancient as well as outmoded: Victor Farias’ work, *Heidegger e il nazismo (Heidegger and Nazism)*<sup>1</sup>, Emmanuel Faye’s *Heidegger, l’introduzione del nazismo in filosofia (Heidegger, the introduction of Nazism into philosophy)*<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> V. Farias, *Heidegger e il nazismo*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1988.

<sup>2</sup> E. Faye, *Heidegger, l’introduzione del nazismo in filosofia*, L’Asino d’oro, Roma 2012.

Donatella Di Cesare's *Heidegger e gli ebrei. I "Quaderni neri"* (*Heidegger and the Jews. The "Black Notebooks"*)<sup>3</sup>, and Peter Trawny's *Heidegger e il mito della cospirazione ebraica (Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish Conspiracy)*<sup>4</sup>, to mention but a few. Countless articles may also be cited, Italian as well as international, published on specialized journals, newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals which served as an echo chamber for the amplification of such empty and groundless gossip.

On the other hand, much narrower, but also much more credited, is the niche of scholars of Heidegger's ontology who, unfortunately, could not abstain from taking part in the debate in order to show the inaccuracy and the factionalism, which was at times built on mistakes and misunderstandings, at others on well-constructed falsehoods, often with commercial purposes: one such instance is the recent media case of the so-called *Black Notebooks*<sup>5</sup> – which, as Massimo Cacciari, among others, noted (in a recent conference held on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 in Milan), probably would not have stirred so much uproar, had their covers been of a different color. If in Germany the most authoritative voice is without doubt that of Martin Heidegger's direct pupil, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in Italy, instead, the scholar who had already dispelled any doubt on such matters surely was Alfredo Marini, a very deep thinker and a true expert of Heidegger's thought, a direct knowledge of which he can flaunt. His monumental work published in 2006, namely the new translation of *Essere e tempo (Being and Time)*<sup>6</sup>, which he published with Mondadori's Meridiani, shows how he was able to lower himself into the thick web of Heidegger's terminology as well as in the depth of his ontological and onto-historical questions. However, in 1987 Alfredo Marini had already edited the Italian translation of the famous interview that Martin Heidegger had released on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1966 to *Der Spiegel*, which was then published by the same in May 1976, a few days after the philosopher's death, with the title *Ormai solo un dio può salvarci (Only a*

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<sup>3</sup> D. Di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli ebrei. I "Quaderni neri"*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2014.

<sup>4</sup> P. Trawny, *Heidegger e il mito della cospirazione ebraica*, Bompiani, Milano 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. M. Heidegger, *Quaderni neri 1931-1938. Riflessioni II-VI*, Bompiani, Milano 2015; Id., *Quaderni neri 1938-1939. Riflessioni VII-XI*, Bompiani, Milano 2016; Id., *Quaderni neri 1939-1941. Riflessioni XII-XV*, Bompiani, Milano 2016; e Id., *Quaderni neri 1942-1948. Note I-V*, Bompiani, Milano 2018.

<sup>6</sup> M. Heidegger, *Essere e tempo*, edited by A. Marini, Mondadori, Milano 2006.

*God can save us*)<sup>7</sup>. Here, it becomes very evident how senseless it is to look for new scoops on Heidegger's alleged Nazism, since he himself, by means of a series of proofs, effectively demonstrates some fundamental points, among which: 1. the fact of having assumed the rectorate, following the advice of the outgoing Rector, in order to avoid the imposition from the top of a National Socialist Rector; 2. the refusal of having posters against the Jews affixed; 3. the fact of not having authorized the burning of books by Jewish authors, 4. his refusal to dispose of the works of Jewish authors; 5. the fact that he continued to cite and discuss works by Jewish authors, Husserl's *in primis*; 6. the fact that he always maintained good relationships with his Hebrew colleagues and students, often helping them to enroll in foreign Universities; etc. In what follows, Heidegger also clarifies some of the compromises he had to accept during the time he was in office as Rector (among which only one truly compromising sentence stands out, which was published on a student magazine, in which Heidegger declared that "the Führer alone is the actual German reality" – although he will disassociate himself from such a statement immediately after his resignation), in which he explains the continuous disagreements with the regime as well as with the Ministry, until his resignation in February 1934, namely less than one year since he had become Rector. In this regard, he wrote:

The Minister [...] expected me to substitute the Deans of the departments of Law and Medicine with other colleagues who were preferred by the party. I declined the demand and handed in my resignation from the rectorate<sup>8</sup>.

Heidegger's detractors have often forgotten to report that during the National Socialist regime he was regarded as a person under special surveillance, and that during the war he was appointed to excavation works, something which was very unusual for a Professor of his age (evidence of his distance from the party). Moreover, after the end of the war, he had to bear the shame of being barred from teaching until 1949.

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<sup>7</sup> M. Heidegger, *Ormai solo un dio ci può salvare*, Guanda, Parma 1976.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 123.

Heidegger's intent, as clarified in these pages, but also and especially in the famous speech *L'autoaffermazione dell'Università tedesca* (The Self-Assertion of the German University)<sup>9</sup>, was to attempt a renewal of the German University through the reintroduction of a new Greek start of Western philosophy; however, already around Christmas 1933, he had understood the impossibility of such a renewal within that political scenario, from which he started to distance himself well before it manifested the real obscenities and the true horrors, which are by now well rooted in our imaginary, that is to say, the racial laws, war and the Holocaust, etc.

All this, as state above, has already been comprehensively clarified by Alfredo Marini, particularly in his introduction to the Italian edition of the *Ormai solo un dio può salvarci* interview, entitled *La politica di Heidegger (Heidegger's politics)*<sup>10</sup>: here not only is the absolute distance between Heidegger and National Socialism together with any concrete compromise with it clearly demonstrated (with the exception of the ten months in which he was appointed Rector, although the reasons behind this are explained), but also and especially his radical non-involvement in the politics of the time, which was primarily due to the choice of dedicating his life to the study of philosophy. Reading these pages carefully, and above all closely studying Heidegger's thought and life, it becomes very difficult to think of him as an ideologist but also as a supporter of National Socialism. However, recently, putting together a media campaign turned out to be useful to better sell both the so-called *Black Notebooks* and all the highly misinformative trinkets which arose from it. As we know, the *Black Notebooks* consist of 34 notebooks (one of which is missing) with several and accessorial notes with regard to the more systematic works – the only reason why their publication was conceived as secondary. Assigned to the unlucky editing of Peter Trawny, they were published in 2014, and from the start they were presented as the dark place in which Heidegger had hidden his antisemitism. The press gave great emphasis to 14 implicated passages (out of a total of 1.250 pages), taking them out of their context, misunderstanding their content and, in Italy, often translating them in a biased manner.

In a comment published on the *Corriere del Ticino* the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2016, Alfredo Marini wrote:

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<sup>9</sup> M. Heidegger, *L'autoaffermazione dell'Università tedesca*, Il Melangolo, Genova 2001.

<sup>10</sup> A. Marini, "La politica di Heidegger", Introduzione a M. Heidegger, *Ormai solo un dio ci può salvare*, pp. 5-99.

If there is something that is anti-Heidegger, that would be philopisizing on an ideological base (i.e. starting from ‘Hitler’ or ‘the Jews’ [...]), that is, idealizing an entity: it would only be a polished form of the old idolatry. His thought is the reverse! [...] Doctor Peter Trawny, the German scholar to whom von Herrmann entrusted the publication of these texts (nine volumes in total), showed himself to be ill-suited for the role. He took advantage of his role to write, and let the Heideggerian text drive, his own interpretative and parallel biased work (something which had already been forbidden by Heidegger in contract). Even worse, he exploited Heidegger’s work by unworthily using, of about 1.250 pages, those few fourteen passages concerning the Jews and Judaism, [...] letting the naïve reader believe that precisely the critique of the Jews was the main point of Heidegger’s philosophy [...] and represented, at the same time, the famous ‘evidence’ of his anti-Semitism. [...] In the end, with a correct translation [an operation which has been attributed, with honors, to Professor Francesco Alfieri], it seems that the texts cannot motivate any of the pseudo-philosophical suppositions which are rumored about<sup>11</sup>.

Confirming what Alfredo Marini wrote, in those pages there are statements like:

Clarification for dunces [...]: anti-Semitism is as deranged and reprehensible as the bloody, and above all bloodless, intervention of Christianity against the “pagans”<sup>12</sup>.

Statements like these have been completely ignored by the editors of the German and Italian editions, who have rather preferred to emphasize some ambiguous expressions which, if misinterpreted, could have corroborated the deranged thesis according to which one of the main thinkers not only of the twentieth century, but also of the whole history of Western thought, could have supported an ideology which was racist, homicidal and deranged.

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<sup>11</sup> A. Marini, in: *Corriere del Ticino*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

<sup>12</sup> M. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M. 2015, vol. 97, p. 159.

For these and other reasons, two important scholars such as Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and Francesco Alfieri, with the collaboration of Arnulf Heidegger, Herrmann Heidegger, Leonardo Messinese and Claudia Gualdana, published the precious volume entitled *Martin Heidegger. La verità sui Quaderni neri (Martin Heidegger. The truth about the Black Notebooks)*, which was published in 2016 by Morcelliana.

Von Herrmann and Alfieri's volume offers a rich theoretical and historical-philosophical apparatus, by means of which every doubt on the possible ideological adhesion of Martin Heidegger to National Socialism is rejected. The only flaw of the book, in my opinion, was that of not having involved Professor Alfredo Marini, nor cited his studies, which represent the only possibility of rethinking Heidegger, at least in Italy, giving his thought the depth that it is worth of, as well as freeing him from the ignorant prejudices which still linger on his philosophy and his biographical affairs. Similarly, a text like this can definitively eliminate any doubt regarding Heidegger's alleged Nazism, in order to give us a philosopher who is worthy of his name, "spotless", and worthy of being studied and examined in depth as a crucial point of the history of the West.

## **2. Preliminary considerations on onto-historical and philosophical-political thinking**

As has been endorsed by several influential scholars as well as by some direct acquaintances of Martin Heidegger, such as Hermann Heidegger and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, there is not a place in Martin Heidegger's thought in which one could recognize, not even between the lines, any anti-Semitic or racial element: it is thus useless to say that, had there been such traces, he could not represent the end and departure point of the history of Western thought.

Surly, Heidegger's thought does not amount to a political philosophy, nor did he himself (as he often repeated) ever exhibit a great familiarity with or inclination for politics (*politics*) in the strict sense of the term. Even at a biographical level, his life saw the alternation of long periods of study, reflection and writing at his lodge in Todtnauberg, and periods of university teaching and research; notwithstanding this, he had never been interested in the internal policies (*policy*) of the university, its bureaucracy, etc. (reason why he wanted to refuse the rectorate in 1933). This sort of political "inability" was probably due not only to the lack of a personal inclination or predisposition, but also and especially to a deliberate choice of dedicating completely to a very different area of research: ontology.

Even in the *Lettera sull' "umanismo"* (*Letter on "Humanism"*)<sup>13</sup> Heidegger had clarified that his thought could not be classified as either humanist or existentialist, since his interest concerned the ontological dimension only. This implies that each human problem, evidently also including political concerns, can only be understood from an onto-historical reflection, namely from an originating and fundamental discourse which dictates the necessity to rethink the structure of being, of there-being and of being as such.

Our time, be it called "The sunset of the West", "post-modern era" or, as Heidegger would have said, "the era of the oblivion of being", or more simply "contemporaneity", just like all the previous eras, is characterized, according to Heidegger, by the different ways in which the human being relates to being and, at the same time, by means of which he *happens* (*ereignet*), manifests and unfolds itself in relation to there-being. Ancient times, the Middle Ages and Modernity are regulated by a relationship with being which does not correspond to that which actually *happens* (in the sense of *giving-itself*) – or, better, which at present *does-not-give-itself* (*enteignet*) since ours is the era of abandonment, of the oblivion of being and of its entification, as well as of the ignorance of the ontological difference. The concealment of being opens up a space for the dominance of technique, which brings with it the uprooting of the human there-being from the earth – and all of this, evidently, brings with itself deep political consequences, which is the reason why it has become unavoidable, in order to understand the politics of our times, to continue to refer to such a thinker as Heidegger, who attempted, probably more than anyone else, to comprehend our time in the light of this inevitable oblivion of being and of dominance of technique.

For these reasons, it is difficult to accept Peter Trawny's thesis according to which:

There is an onto-historical anti-Semitism in Heidegger's texts that seems to contaminate quite a few aspects of his thought. This fact sheds a new light on Heidegger's philosophy and its reception. If until now Heidegger's involvement during Nazism was a problem that led in part to excessive condemnations and partly to legitimate reservations, the publication of the *Black Notebooks* makes it impossible to

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<sup>13</sup> Cfr. M. Heidegger, *Lettera sull' "umanismo"*, Adelphi, Milano 1995, p. 39 e ss.



ignore the existence of a specific form of anti-Semitism which, mostly, emerges at a time in which the philosopher strongly criticizes Nazism<sup>14</sup>.

Donatella Di Cesare's position, which is in some ways related to some mistakes in Alessandra Iadicicco's translation of the Italian edition of the *Black Notebooks* for Bompiani, appears to be even less valid – however, all of this has already been largely noted by Alfieri and von Herrmann in their 2016 volume. Di Cesare, in her 2014<sup>15</sup> work, maintains that the infamous passages of the *Black Notebooks* should not be neglected just because quantitatively of little relevance, and that they express Heidegger's actual position towards the Jews, which should, therefore, be considered outside the history of being. In this way Di Cesare sets Heidegger among those authors who, from her perspective, from Kant to Fichte, from Hegel to Schopenhauer, constitute a sort of common thread of German anti-Semitic thought. Why Heidegger concealed the essence of his deepest thought in exactly those 14 sentences remains incomprehensible.

François Fédier in his *Heidegger: Anatomia di uno scandalo (Heidegger: Anatomy of a scandal)*<sup>16</sup>, offers a better interpretation, in which the author does not limit himself to dismantle the completely inadequate image that Farias<sup>17</sup> had offered of Heidegger, he also proves that Heidegger, already in the time frame between 1934 and 1944/45 had fought a silent “heavy struggle” against Hitler's National Socialism.

Francesca Brencio's interpretation appears to be more sensible. According to her, Heidegger's disassociation from Jewish thought (rather than from the Jewish community) should be read in continuity with the “ruthless critique levelled by Heidegger against Christianity”.

Unfortunately, not even the great scholar Gianni Vattimo<sup>18</sup> remained free from the para-philosophical gossip à la Trawny and Di Cesare: in his blog, albeit still declaring himself to be “Heideggerian”,

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<sup>14</sup> Cfr. Peter Trawny, *Heidegger e il mito della cospirazione ebraica*, cit.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. D. Di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli ebrei. I “Quaderni neri”*, cit.

<sup>16</sup> F. Fédier, *Heidegger e la politica: anatomia di uno scandalo*, EGEA, Milano 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. V. Farias, *Heidegger e il nazismo*, cit.

<sup>18</sup> Any type of comment on some of his former students every type is omitted, because of the utter inconsistency of their positions, which denote an inadequate knowledge of the facts as well as an inability to think philosophically.

Vattimo unfortunately continues to look at antisemitism (even mentioning Di Cesare's "metaphysical antisemitism"!) as one of the main aspects of Heidegger's ontology. Vattimo writes:

But even those who have for long time professed themselves to be Heideggerian (the undersigned still is) were deeply shaken by the *Notebooks* precisely because of the explicitness of the positions found in them. And this not even so much for the filio-Nazism, largely mitigated by harshly critical statements against its "vulgar" version which characterized the politics and the characters of the regime. Not even for the anti-Semitism, which, with Di Cesare, we can call metaphysical anti-Semitism, also not at all to be confused with the practical politics of the "final solution" which inspired the genocide<sup>19</sup>.

Luckily, Vattimo adds:

By borrowing – guiltily and uncritically – the stereotypes and the prejudices of the German culture of the beginning of the twentieth century, Heidegger considered the Jewish community the most emblematic representative of the technological civilization which he abhorred: the Jews were, according to him, a people without a land (the diaspora) and thus without any historical rootedness; a calculating people (the banks) and thus bearer of an abstract rationality which was at the base of the world's rationalization (capitalistic, but also of Stalinist stamp) and of the oppressions which accompany it<sup>20</sup>.

These words make us think about the general misunderstanding originated around Heidegger's thought. That is, going back to the main thesis of authors like Francesca Brencio but also Massimo Cacciari (in the above mentioned conference), it is possible to state that Heidegger's position should

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<sup>19</sup> G. Vattimo, "Non basta un quaderno nero per liquidare Heidegger", in: <http://giannivattimo.blogspot.com/2015/12/non-basta-un-quaderno-nero-per.html>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

not be considered to be anti-Semitic (especially if intended as an aversion against the Hebrew community), rather, it should be considered as anti-Semitic in the same way in which it can be anti-Christian.

On this note, let us just remark that an author like Nietzsche has been (justly) praised because for his *Antichrist*, that is, for having maintained overtly anti-Christian positions, whereas to this day, attempting to express anti-Semitic positions, albeit with Heidegger's typical caution, still appears politically incorrect and inconvenient, as well as a reason for denigration.

If it is not possible to find traces of anti-Semitic racism against the Jewish community anywhere in Heidegger's writings (or in his biography), on the other hand, his thought, together with Nietzsche's, appears as the greatest upheaval and transvaluation of ontology, metaphysics, theology, ethics and politics, which are as much implied in Judaism as in Christianity. Heidegger is well conscious of how much his thought represented a breaking point with regard to the history of Western metaphysics, which was fulfilled in Nietzsche: if, paraphrasing Nietzsche, the history of metaphysics is to be thought of as "the history of a mistake" (which, according to Heidegger, coincides with the downplay of the ontological difference), then it becomes necessary to get back to the roots of Western thought, to that beginning which is still producing effects, and which reveals itself to be free of every metaphysical mystification.

In the *Rectorate Talk* Heidegger wrote:

If we want to get to the essence of science, we cannot avoid asking ourselves the decisive question: if *there* should still *be* a science for us or if we should let it collapse in an abrupt end. That there should be a science is not in any way unconditionally necessary. But if there should be, and it should be *for us* and *thanks to us*, then to what condition should it really exist? To the condition that we subject ourselves, again, to the power of the *beginning* of our historical-spiritual being. This beginning is represented by the advent of Greek philosophy. In that moment of its history, for the first time, the Western man on the firm foundations of an ancestry in virtue of his language, faced the entity in its totality and interrogated and comprehended it as the entity which it is. Every science is philosophy, either that it knows it and wants it or not. Every science remains bounded to the beginning of philosophy. From it, science

takes the strength of its essence, if it is worthy of such a beginning. [...] The beginning *is* still. It is not *beyond our backs*, as an event long gone, but is *in front of* us, *opposite* us. The beginning, as the greatest thing of all, precedes everything which is going to happen and as such it is already beyond us, above us. The beginning is inscribed in our future, it stands in front of us as the injunction that calls us from remote distances to reconquer its greatness again. Only if, by obeying to such an injunction, we prepare ourselves to reconquer the greatness of the beginning, science will become the most intimate necessity of there-being.<sup>21</sup>

For these reasons, having refuted every gossip and every calumny regarding Heidegger's alleged approval of the National Socialist ideology, going back to Heidegger's ontology as the starting point and instrument of understanding not only of our onto-historical reality but also of our philosophical-political one, still seems to be unavoidable.

Before moving on with the discussion, it is necessary to clarify the difference between fundamental ontology and onto-historical thinking – especially because some of Heidegger's detractors, such as Trawny, have sometimes made inappropriate use of such terminology (consider, for example, the above cited passage, which begins with: “there is an onto-historical antisemitism in Heidegger's writings”).

### **3. Fundamental ontology and onto-historical thinking**

The most important clarification of the notion of “onto-historical thinking” is identifiable in the works of Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and, for the purpose of this short essay, we can find it emblematically summed up in an article entitled “La purezza del pensiero onto-storico” (*The purity of onto-historical thinking*)<sup>22</sup> published on the magazine *Magazzino di filosofia* directed by Alfredo Marini, in an excellent translation edited by Marini himself together with Riccardo Lazzari. In the article, von Herrmann, with the aim of clarifying Heidegger's absolute distance from National

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<sup>21</sup> M. Heidegger, *L'autoaffermazione dell'Università tedesca*, cit., pp. 36-39.

<sup>22</sup> Fr-W. von Herrmann, “La purezza del pensiero onto-storico”, in *Magazzino di filosofia*, B10/Segmenti, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2017, pp. 5-10.

Socialism and of proving the total unrelatedness of the *Black Notebooks* to such an ideology, begins by explaining in a simple manner the difference existing between “fundamental ontology” and “ontological-historical thinking”. The first one, which has to do with the great treatises on Being, represents the main instrument of analysis of Heidegger’s ontology, which aims at retracing the formal structure of that Action (fsoA) which is Being (*Sein*). The second one relates to how, historically speaking, Being *happened* and *revealed* itself (*Ereignis*), or *retreated* and *concealed* itself (*Enteignis*):

Heidegger thinks the historicity of the truth of being, starting from the experience of abandonment and oblivion of being intended as expropriation [*Enteignis*] arriving to the appropriation [*Ereignis*] as complete essentiation of the truth of being<sup>23</sup>.

Being should thus be thought in “*eventual*”, that is onto-historical, terms, not anymore as *Sein*, but rather as *Seyn*, which Marini rightly translates with the Latin word *Esse* and which can be rendered in English as *Bēon*<sup>24</sup> and, according to our Graphia, in italics and with the capital letter. Von Herrmann wrote:

The 34 notebooks designated by Martin Heidegger as the *Black Notebooks* because of the color of their cover, but which, because of their use, could also be referred to as philosophical notebooks or working notebooks, are only *gregarious* to the incipient onto-historical thinking or to the appropriation [*Ereignis*], and are secondary to the great works of this thought, especially to the seven great works on the history of being. The philosophical content of their annotations, which starts again every time, can only be reconstructed from the fundamental links to his other works which were written at the time or before. The second instrument for the elaboration of the question of being, which springs from fundamental ontology through an immanent transformation,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Since Martin Heidegger opted for an ancient form (*Seyn*) of the verb “to be” (*Sein*), we propose an analogous solution in English, namely Anglo-Saxon “*Bēon*” (cfr. Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/>, and The Dictionary of Old English, <https://www.doe.utoronto.ca/pages/index.html>)

namely the onto-historical way of elaboration of the same question about the (clarified) truth of *Bēon* [*Seyn*], starts, like the first, from the ontological experience of the oblivion of being, but experiences it as a Western happening referred to as ‘the uprooting of the West’ (GA 94, 292). From the truth of the *Bēon*, that ‘uprooting of the entity from the *Bēon*’ (GA 94, 388), which takes place in the ‘assumption of nature as calculation’ (*ibid.*) and thus in ‘the tyranny of technique’ (GA 94, 363)<sup>25</sup>.

It is important to note that, as has already been clarified in our other works on the fsoA, the Totality of Action should be distinguished into three levels: the Action as such (with a capital letter), its *giving-itself* or *actuating*, namely the *event* (or the *happening*) of the Action (in italics), and lastly the three basic elements of the Action: agent, act and acted (with lower-case initials). Since the Action is nothing else than either its *event* or its basic elements, and especially since the Action should not be thought of in substantial but in “*eventual*” terms, the thought of the Action has the intuition according to which It is a *Unicum* with its *event*: the Action is not something different from its *actuating*, so that we can state that the *Action* coincides with its *Actuating* (rendering both in italics and with a capital letter) – that is, the *Actuating* of the *Action* coincides with the *Action* of the *Actuating*. Going back to Heidegger’s terminology, it is possible to understand that *Sein* and *Seyn* refer to the same: what prevails in the first is the ergative aspect, in the second the “*eventual*” one – and, in this sense, the *Seyn* happens onto-historically, whereas the *Sein* is the object of study of philosophical-fundamental thinking.

Following this clarification, it is possible to understand that – as von Herrmann clarified at the beginning of the above cited article – the *Black Notebooks* have a gregarious function of accompanying and commenting on the “secondary” thought, that is, the “second way” through which Martin Heidegger does not look *ab-solutely* for the formal structure of Being, but rather through which he relates himself to the history of the West by re-thinking it, in its own phases, as made up of eras in which the formal structure of the Action of Being *makes room* to *happen* and to *be-appropriated*<sup>26</sup>, and of other eras which are destined, instead, to the *oblivion* of Being: in its onto-

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Alfredo Marini translates “*Ereignis*” with “*approprio*”, “*appropriate*” (“*eigen*”, in German, means “*own*”).

historical-giving-of-itself, Being is not something different from its *Ereignis* and, in this sense, we refer to it as *Bēon* (*Seyn*).

The concepts of rootedness and uprooting should be re-interpreted in this sense, as here they assume a new and strictly philosophical value. The “rootedness” happens when fsoA of Being *reveals-itself*; the “uprooting”, on the other hand, happens when fsoA of Being *conceals-itself*. When does Being *conceal- and oblivate-itself*? Precisely when “calculating thought” and the “dominance of technique” impose themselves. Von Herrmann writes:

The happening of the uprooting appears to Heidegger as the beginning and the course of modern age and the more recent, or contemporary, age<sup>27</sup>.

Therefore, Heidegger, in perfect continuity with the dominant thought of authors like Nietzsche, Spengler or Schmitt, thinks the same thing of the thought: Nietzsche’s *décadence*, *Spengler’s* sunset of the West or Schmitt’s decline of the nomos of the earth and of the *Jus publicum europaeum*, in Heidegger coincide with the “beginning” of modernity, which is indeed based on the uprooting from the “earth”, which was already happening, for instance, with Cartesian rationalism.

In the light of this perspective, we can better understand how Martin Heidegger, in the very first months in which National Socialism came into view, thought that, from the point of view of the history of metaphysics, it could represent a breaking point, thus marking a new “beginning” which could salvage the by then lost rootedness in the “earth”. From this point of view, Heidegger was dazzled, without approving in any way of the biological-racist ideology of National Socialism nor its anti-Semitism: and such dazzle will be recognized by him quite early on. Von Herrmann writes (also quoting from the *Black Notebooks*):

In retrospect, starting from the end of the Thirties, this means: “thinking in a purely ‘metaphysical’ sense (i.e. according to the history of the *Bēon*), in the years 1930-1934 I considered National Socialism as the possibility of a passage to a new beginning and

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<sup>27</sup> Fr-W. von Herrmann, “La purezza del pensiero onto-storico”, cit., p. 5.

I interpreted it in this sense” (GA 95, 408). The other beginning is the beginning of the overcoming of the uprooting of being through the thinking foundation of the truth of *Bēon*. This was Heidegger’s positive assessment of National Socialism at the beginning. But here is the recognition of the mistake he made in his evaluation: “That being said, this 'movement' was [...] underestimated and undervalued with regard to its true forces and internal needs [...]. What begins here is rather [...] the fulfilment of the modern era” (GA 95, 408) and thus is the accomplishment of the uprooting. This is, therefore, Heidegger’s critical stance on National Socialism. [...] A recognition of his mistake, dating back to the first years of the war, reads: “the real mistake of the rectorate of 1933 was not so much the fact that I [...] did not identify Hitler’s essence [...], but rather having believed – not with Hitler, but with a revival of the people to their common western mandate (*abendländisches Geschick*) – that that was the moment for all to become historical-initials (GA 97, 98)<sup>28</sup>.

Going back to the *Black Notebooks*, it is now easier to see how rich they are in passages in which Heidegger disassociates himself from National Socialism (which, evidently, are not tempting for his detractors), rich in wide-reaching reflections on the history of *Being*, and thus on the different historical periods, and different thought experiences (from Hellenism, to Judaism, to Christianity, etc.). Notwithstanding this, it appeared useful, most probably to the advantageous commercial ends of those that von Herrmann refers to as “convention organizers”, to focus on thirteen or fourteen sentences out of a total of 1,250 pages, misinterpreting them completely as compared to the frame of thought in which they were inscribed. That is, Heidegger can easily criticize Cartesian rationalism without being described, automatically, as a fanatical persecutor of Cartesian rationalists; on the contrary, it seems that he cannot make an analogy between Cartesian rationalism and Jewish thought without being immediately portrayed as a racist and Nazi anti-Semite, whose works should cease to be studied – and therefore condemned to an at least ideal book burning, thus punishing an alleged racism whose mere traces are impossible to find in Heidegger’s works.

Von Herrmann writes:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 6.



The conceptual terms, which support Heidegger's critical stance with regard to 'international Judaism', are: a lack of foundation [*Bodenlosigkeit*], an inexistence of historical import, a mere calculation of the entity, the colossal [*das Riesige*], the absence of a world, an empty rationality and a calculating attitude, the ignorance of the question of being, the manipulation [*Machenschaft*] of the entity, the absolute disengagement, the uprooting of the whole entity from being. Those who are familiar with the above-mentioned onto-historical treaties of the Thirties and beginning of the Forties and have studied them deeply and systematically, can easily see how the listed conceptual terms are those onto-historical concepts with which Heidegger marks the spirit of the most recent era, the contemporary era [*die Moderne*], in so far as such an era is understandable on the basis of the spirit of the modern science of nature, namely of the mathematical science of nature, and of contemporary technique. Thus, those terms do not only refer to the Jewish spirit, but to the present spirit which characterizes the contemporary era, to which also belongs the international Jewish character<sup>29</sup>.

#### **4. Re-founding ontology to re-think politics and the relation with the uprooting from the "earth"**

The question on the beginning (namely, on the *archè*) represents the original question of fundamental ontology (*die Frage nach dem Sein*), on which not only ontology, but also any other kind of knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) should be founded, be it political, scientific, technological, etc. The question on the beginning is the question on the meaning of being, which implies the understanding of the ontological difference between being and entity.

In order to better understand all this, it is necessary to reflect on the fact that Heidegger was the first to suggest thinking of Being not anymore as a substance (that is, as an entity among entities, although in the form of the Thomistic *summum ens*), but rather as an Action: Being is first of all a Verb which, as such, refers to an Action and not to a substance, a concretion of the Action or a subject-agent which performs the Action. On the contrary, the entity (in German *das Seiende*, present participle of the Verb *Sein*, to Be) should be thought of as subject-agent.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

Being, in Aristotelian terms, cannot be thought of as a predicate, that is, the nominal part of a nominal predicate, since, in that way, it would become so general that it would cease to be a predicate (it would thus be a whole which includes everything, since of anything can be said that “it is”, and as such it would cease to be a whole). This requires a change in perspective: it becomes necessary to get out of the copulative logic of judgement, on which Western metaphysics is founded, which means rethinking being not only as a mere copula anymore, which transforms it in so general a predicate that it cannot even function as a predicate anymore, and to rethink it in a verbal sense. Just like any other Verb, Being refers to an Action: that is, the Action of the entity, which is the subject-agent of the Action of Being.

Re-thinking Being as Action means re-thinking it not as a thing among other things, as an entity or as a substance, but rather in the dynamic terms of movement – the original motility of Being is the *event* of Being. *Being* intended as Action that actuates is *Event – das Ereignis des Seins, oder dal Wesung des Seyns*: the *event* of Being, that is, the *Essentiating* of *Being*.

Thus, the route of *Being and Time* (and already of previous Courses), in which it is necessary to repeat the famous *ghigantomachia perì tes ousias*, of Platonic memory, which first of all addresses the Being of that entity which we ourselves have been since the beginning, namely there-Being, in order to find out that such Being, referring to that entity that is there-Being, should be thought, in a unitary and complete sense, in terms of “*Sorge*” – a calque from the Latin “*cura-æ*”, which in English means “concern”<sup>30</sup>. The *Sorge* already possesses an “*eventual*” value, in that it constitutes that original existential from which it is possible to distinguish in there-Being an agent (the “who?” of there-Being), an action (the worldliness of the world) and a relation (the being-in), which are all co-originally structured in the *Sorge* as “ahead-of-itself already-being-in”. There-Being, indeed, cannot be composed of heterogeneous parts, but by only ideally isolated parts, and always originating from a unitary root. Similarly, there-Being, far from referring to a subject-agent (for instance man), should be thought of as a total Action whose basic elements (“who?”, worldliness and being-in) *happen* (in the sense of *coming-forth*: Latin *e-venire*), *differentiating themselves*, and thus *happen* (in the sense

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<sup>30</sup> E. S. Storace, *Essere e preoccupazione. Studio sui concetti di Sorgen, Sein e Wollen in Essere e tempo* di Martin Heidegger, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2008; cfr. in particular “Nota terminologica”, pp. 137-142.

of *coming-about*: Latin *ad-venire*) in the “*eventual*” structure of *the concern* (*Sorge*). The *concern* is the *happening/event* of there-Being as Action.

In this sense, the *essence* of there-Being (or even better, its “*essentiating*”: the *actuating* of its Action) is *concern*: this means that there-Being cannot be thought of as mere rationality anymore (think of Aristotle’s *zoon logon echon*) nor as mere will (from Schopenhauer’s *Wille* to Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*), but rather as a constant tension towards an ahead-of-itself, an already-being and a being-in. In this sense, the concept of “*concern*” is the only one which allows this tripartite directionality: it is, in fact, possible to be concerned about something which is going to happen, about something which has already happened or about something which is happening (note that by translating “*Sorge*” with the English term “*cure*” the whole semantic area gets completely lost, as it recalls a completely different meaning, close to German “*Pflege*”<sup>31</sup>).

To simplify, in sum, we note that Heidegger inscribes himself in that tradition of philosophers who attempt to accomplish the de-construction of the notions of subject and object, intended as two separated substances: it is not anymore possible to think (already since Kant) that subject and object exist as two heterogeneous substances, which only afterwards might establish a relation. Already Kant had helped to show the priority of the transcendental, that is, that the transcendental dimension of the relation between the two precedes such correlates. The influence of Heidegger’s contribution consists in having rethought the two correlates (agent and acted) and the relation itself (act) as being co-original, having set their origin in the *event* of the Action of Being – or, in the case of there-Being, in the *concern*.

All of this is clarified in the original reading that Heidegger suggests of the concept and of the method of hermeneutics, thought of as in opposition to Husserl’s intentionality structure. Hermeneutics, in Heidegger, basically refers to the original familiarity that every part of the Whole has with It in a constitutive way. The Action of there-Being *happens* as *concern*, that is, through an agent (the “*who?*”) which acts (is-in-) an acted (the worldliness of the world), where the in-being, as is well-known, does not refer to a mere relation of spatial inclusion, but rather to a co-belonging and familiarity, so that it is possible to say that the “*who*” of there-Being has always lived the worldliness of its world – “*in-being*” appears to be etymologically related to the old German verb “*innan*”, “*live*”.

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<sup>31</sup> Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

It is only after having comprehended such aspects that one can approach the reasons why Jewish-Christian thought represents a mystification of the far more original Greek one. Indeed, for the Greeks, nature is *physis*, it is an organism, which lives, develops and “ripens”, and not something else that needs to be either dominated or protected. Already in the Genesis, in which JHWH orders Adam to govern the rest of nature, man is thought of as something different from the world which he inhabits: and this, most probably, represents the root of the irreconcilable dualism on which the differences between the I and the world, subject and object, soul and body, etc. are based – and precisely on this thought, therefore, is the uprooting of man from the earth based. In this sense, Heidegger could state that the Jewish-Christian man lives in a condition of uprooting from an onto-historical perspective – and this, far from being either a criticism or a racist statement, only aims at recognizing a different *Weltanschauung* with regard to the Greek one (and only a biased reading may see the latter in terms of a hypothetical as much as absurd Nazi “metaphysical anti-Semitism”). Totally different was the more ancestral thought of the pre-Socratic Greek man, who perceived himself as part of that living organism, in consonance with which he was born, lived, breathed, fed, reproduced himself and lastly, naturally, died, without having the need of believing in a world beyond the world, nor in a soul beyond the body. It is useless to recall here Nietzsche’s lesson, according to which Platonism, Judaism and Christianity have transvalued this *Weltanschauung*, which authors such as Nietzsche and Heidegger attempted to restore, firstly, by eliminating the “much too strong differences” between subject and object, which cannot be thought of as something original and originally heterogeneous. Subject and object, the I and the world, are made of “the same substance”, and nature cannot anymore be thought of as a not-I: on the contrary, man and nature are the same, and *happen by differentiating themselves* exactly through the same *event*. Hermeneutics, not by chance, explains that the subjective moment of there-Being has always been set (*sich-befindet – Befindlichkeit*) in a *Stimmung*, in an original pre-comprehension, that is, in a primogenial relationship of familiarity with the world, on which any other kind of comprehension must necessarily be based (*Verstehen*)<sup>32</sup>. One could simplify by stating that the history of Western metaphysics is the history of a mistake, first of all, because it persuaded man of being something different from his world, of having a soul which is different from his body, and of being destined to a further life beyond the earthly one.

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<sup>32</sup> M. Heidegger, *Essere e tempo*, edited by A. Marini, cit., §§ 28-32, p. 378 e ss.

And all of this, moreover, is only possible if one misunderstands Being and entity, that is, firstly, by regarding the subject-agent as something which is original, rather than originated by the *event* of the Action, and, secondly, which is heterogeneous with its own correlate, the action. Heidegger's ontological difference, on the contrary, is the condition of thinkability of the formal structure of the Action, in which the Action is, for the first time, thought of in a verbal rather than substantial sense, that is, as an *event* which *allows* the basic elements of the Action, which are co-original and co-belonging, *to happen*: agent, acted and act. Indeed, the ahead (worldliness), the already (the "who?") and the in (the in-being) co-belong with themselves in the *event* of the *concern* (*Sorge*), which constitutes the *happening* and the *unfolding* of there-Being – and thus it becomes clear that there-Being is not a subject-agent (man) but an Action.

*Concern* plays a central role in Heidegger's revolution: only by understanding this notion will it be possible to show the political value that, albeit in a mediated way, these notions can originate.

Speaking of *concern* means speaking of the concept of "earth" in its multiple acceptations, as well as of the possible relations of rootedness in and uprooting from it. As already mentioned, it is possible to deduct that, according to Heidegger, Jewish-Christian thought led to an uprooting of man from the "earth", which is fundamentally linked to the essence of the technique which dominates the relationship between the Western man and his world.

From this perspective, Heidegger merely aims at "preparing (Vorbereiten) in thinking and in composing poetry, a willingness (Bereitschaft) to the appearance"<sup>33</sup> of that "earth", with which man should make himself available to begin a new relationship of rootedness, like the one that could be found at the beginning of Hellenism. Today, instead, man's uprooting from the "earth" is complete, with post-Socratic philosophical thought, Jewish-Christian thought and Cartesian-Galilean and illuminist rationalism, as well as positivism and the technical-scientific approach which is typical of contemporary men, having contributed to its completion.

In order to better understand all this, it is necessary to better examine the concepts of "concern" and of "earth", which Heidegger analyzed in Igino's famous fable.

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<sup>33</sup> "Only a God can save us. What is left, as the only possibility, is to prepare (Vorbereiten) in thinking and in composing poetry, a willingness (Bereitschaft) to the apparition of the God or of the absence [ab-essence] of God in the sunset, with regard to the fact that [vulgarily speaking, we do not "snuff it" but, when we set,] we set in the presence of an absent God" (M. Heidegger, *Ormai solo un dio ci può salvare*, cit., p. 136).

## 5. The “earth”: its meanings and man’s uprooting

Here is a translation of Alfredo Marini’s version of the above-mentioned fable of Igino, in which we will substitute “care” (Italian *cura*) with English “concern” (Italian *preoccupazione*).

One day “Concern”, crossing a river, saw some clayey soil: she distractedly took it and started to shape it. While thinking about what she had done, Jupiter came forward. “Concern” begged him to infuse with spirit the piece of mud it had molded. Something which Jupiter willingly granted her. But when she wanted to give her work her name, Jupiter forbade it, demanding that she used his. While “Concern” and Jupiter were quarrelling about the name, Earth [*Tellus*] also arrived expressing the wish that they gave the work her name, since she had offered a portion of her body. Saturn was chosen as judge. And Saturn gave them this apparently fair verdict: “Jupiter, as you gave the work its spirit, you will have its spirit when it dies, and Earth, as you gave it your own body, its body you’ll have. But since Concern first shaped this creature, Concern will have it all its life. And since you quarrel about its name, just name it ‘homo’, since it is made of humus (earth)”<sup>34</sup>.

The mark of man’s life, or better, of Being of there-Being, is thus, according to Heidegger, *concern*, which *happens* in the three basic elements of the already-being (subjective-agent moment), of the being-ahead-of-itself (objective-acted moment) and of the being-in (relational moment of acting). Man would derive his own name, “*homo*”, from “*humus*”, “earth” – where “*humus*” does not refer anymore to the “*tellus*” which is juxtaposed to the spirit, but which should rather be thought of as that condition of possibility, that original familiarity, in virtue of which man should go back to think of himself as essentially rooted in that “*humus*” which he has been part of from the beginning – of which he is a portion, something which should not be thought of as different-from-, but as an integral-part-of-.

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<sup>34</sup> M. Heidegger, *Essere e tempo*, edited by A. Marini, cit., pp. 563-565; in particular: differently from A. Marini, here we used “Concern” rather than “Care” to translate “Sorge”.

This fable thus turns out to be emblematic to comprehend the idea of rootedness in the earth, a concept which can be interpreted in a strictly ontological sense, but which can also be thought of in a philosophical-political one.

In this story there emerge at least three possible meanings connected to the concept of “earth”: the first one is the “*cretosum lutuum*”, “clayey soil”, that is, clayey earth, which in Heidegger’s language could refer to the existentive level, or maybe even connected to corporeality or materiality, that is, of the mere objectiveness which traditional metaphysics juxtaposes to subjectiveness, following the old contraposition between subject and object from which Heidegger resolutely disassociates himself; it is as if the “*cretosum lutuum*” refers to a pre-ontological level, or maybe even pre-philosophical, thus, far from our question about the origin: it represents the object thought of as something heterogeneous from the subject, namely in terms of a thing among things, as object of the knowing intellect.

The two most interesting levels for us are the following. The other two names which Iginò, and thus Heidegger, uses to refer to the “earth” are “*Tellus*” and “*humus*”. “*Tellus*” refers to, not anymore in an existentive, but in an existential sense, “actual earth” meaning the “world”, intended as the object-action and correlated to the subject-agent. In this sense, the dimension of objectiveness (the acted: worldliness) is rethought in the light of Heidegger’s ontology as something co-original with subjectiveness (the agent: the “who?”) and with relation (the act: being-in), and these three basic elements of the Action should be rethought as co-belonging to themselves in *being* (or better: *essentiating*) of there-Being, that is, in the *concern* of there-Being. “*Tellus*” represents the action in the sense of the world’s worldliness: a dimension of planning, of pro-jection (*Entwurf*) onto the future, that original dis-closure (*Erschlossenheit*) which allows man to pro-ject himself ahead-of-himself. There-Being, indeed, is already and from the beginning “outside-of-itself”: differently from the rock, which is out-of-hand (*vor-handen*) and devoid of the world, or from the animal which is lacking of the world, man exists, that is, *ek-sists*, in the sense that he is-in-the-world. This is the meaning of *tellus*, earth, as the objectual moment of the original relation between Agent and acted: according to this second meaning, the earth represents the world’s worldliness, that is the acted of the fsoA.

Thirdly, “earth” can be understood in an even more original sense, as that which is conveyed by the term “*humus*”. If “*Tellus*” has an existential value, “*humus*” has a strictly ontological one. “*Humus*” is Earth in the sense of Matter, of *Materia Mundi*, and should not be thought of as connected to the

form (nor as the opposite of “spiritual”, “immaterial”, “abstract”, etc.). “*Humus*” is Matter which disregards the empirical distinction between form and matter: it is the thing in which we are (*in-sein*), in which we find ourselves rooted in (*Befindlichkeit*) and in which we live (*innan*), with a relationship of original familiarity: it is that Everything, that Totality of Action in which the basic elements of the Action itself, even before *happening*, in the sense of *coming-forth*, *happen*, in the sense of *coming-about*, in it confused. It is that unique Thing of thought which each single thinker would have thought of: Anaximander’s *Apeiron*, Heraclitus’s *Logos*, Parmenides’s *One*, Plato’s *Idea*, Plotinus’s or Bruno’s *Uno*, Spinoza’s *Substance*, Hegel’s *Absolute*, Schopenhauer’s *Wille*, Nietzsche’s *Meaning of the earth*, etc., that is, Heidegger’s *Being as Action*.

The contemporary man uprooted himself exactly from this Earth, that is, from the Action-which-actuates, from Being-which-comes-forth, from the Matter-in-movement, ceasing to feel a part of it and pretending of having been elected as the dominator of the animals and the plants of earth, air and sea (cfr. *Genesi*) – having thus lost his original relationship with this abyssal fundament (*abgründiger Grund*); the *Humus* as original Earth. It is impossible not to perceive, in such expressions, the echo of Hölderlin’s “Mother Earth”<sup>35</sup>, of Nietzsche’s “Meaning of the earth”<sup>36</sup> or of Rilke’s “Handful of Earth unspeakable to all”<sup>37</sup>, etc. These expressions all attempt to state the same Unspeakable, to evoke by means of images the same Invisible which represents, for every great thinker, *die Sache des Denkens* – that Unspeakable which the language of metaphysics cannot correspond to. The first real uprooting, therefore, is the linguistic one: from the Socratic revolution onwards, the dominion of the “definition”, hinged in the apophantic language of Western metaphysics, causes the first great uprooting of man from the Earth, that is, of the agent from the Action. The agent will only be able to take root in the Womb of the Great Mother of Action by *happening* as entity – that is, *happening* as agent of the Action of Being, in which the Absolute Identity between the agent (the entity: *das Seiend als Wesend*) and the acted (the been: *das Gesein*<sup>38</sup> *als Gewesen*) happens. The entity is the been, that

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<sup>35</sup> Cfr. for instance the poem “Patmos”, in F. Hölderlin, *Tutte le liriche*, translated and commented edition and revision of the German critical text edited by L. Reitani, Mondadori, Milano, 2001, pp. 314-327; cfr. In particular verse 15.

<sup>36</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Così parlò Zarathustra*, Newton, Roma 1993; cfr. for instance p. 26: “the *Übermensch* is the sense of the earth. Your will must say: the *Übermensch* be the sense of the earth! I pray you, my brothers, *remain faithful to the earth* and do not trust those who speak about divine hopes!”.

<sup>37</sup> R.M. Rilke, *Elegie Duinesi*, BUR, Milano 1994; cfr. IX Elegia, vv. 29-36.

<sup>38</sup> German dialectical form of the past participle of the verb to be; we read, for instance, in an article published on Die



is, it is one thing with the *Sutum*, whose substantiality shows itself to be illusory and reveals itself according to the same dynamism which characterizes, in the fsoA, the Action *qua talis* in its own *eventuality*.

The beginning of the uprooting produces a tension firstly towards a worldly and future planning, so much so that the Earth (*Humus*), in the *Enteignis* of the *Seyn*, initially *gives itself* as “*Tellus*”, that is, the existential and objectual-action horizon towards which each single agent, because of its essence, tends. When, instead, the uprooting is completed, the agent becomes a cognitively posed mere intellect which has to do with a multitude of earthly and material “things”, “*cretosum lutuum*”, “clayey soil” which, because of the diairetic-synthetic activity of the knowing intellect, every time assumes a different form. Thus, the intellect, in the Concept, immortalizes uncountable “things”, with which it relates with faith and superstition, by believing them to actually exist – and in this way allowing the worst deviations of the pseudo-thought, better known as realism, or worse, “new realism”, to proliferate, as the last extension of the calculating thought derived from Cartesian rationalism, that is, from that substantialism which has dominated the history of Western metaphysics for the last two millennia. It is precisely on this basis that the technical-scientific attitude of the Western man, who believes he can dominate “the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, the cattle, all the wild beasts and the reptiles that slither around the earth” is founded, both practically and theoretically, by giving them names through which these living events of the living Whole are immortalized and abstractly thought as “things”.

However, Heidegger’s thought (and that of the Twentieth century) had the merit of exposing such an illusion, that is, the fallacy which has always burdened the post-Socratic and Jewish-Christian Western man – and, at the same time, of “preparing (*Vorbereiten*) in thinking and composing poetry, a willingness (*Bereitschaft*) to the appearance” of a new rootedness in the Earth, which first of all must be philosophical and linguistic, in order to have meaningful political repercussions, also tracing

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Zeit: “Das Partizip Perfekt “gewesen” für sich genommen, begründet noch kein Plusquamperfekt. “Ich bin gewesen” ist Perfekt, das im gesprochenen Deutsch weitaus häufiger angewendet wird als das Präteritum. Die meisten Dialekte kennen das Präteritum gar nicht. Schwäbisch: “I be g'wea”; alemannisch: “I bi g'si” (“gesein”); platt: “Ik bün 'west.” (S. Andersen, “Ich war gewesen. – War da ebent wat jewesen?”, ZEIT Nr. 39, 8. Oktober 1998, Quelle: DIE ZEIT, 42/1998; [https://www.zeit.de/1998/42/Ich\\_war\\_gewesen/seite-2](https://www.zeit.de/1998/42/Ich_war_gewesen/seite-2)).

it back to man's rootedness in his (own) earth and, more generally, in the Earth intended as the Womb of the Inorganic, that is, the Great Death to which the living are destined to go back.

In the 1935-36 essay entitled "L'origine dell'opera d'arte" (*The origin of the work of art*), which was later published as part of *Holzwege* in 1950, Heidegger goes back to the relationship between Earth (*Humus*) and the world (*Tellus*), claiming that it is necessary:

to start from the belonging of the thing to the Earth. The essence of the Earth, as the unconstrained self-closing-supporter, only reveals itself in its emergence within a World, in a reciprocal opposition. This struggle is consolidated in the image of the work and, in it, it manifests itself<sup>39</sup>.

## **6. Conclusion: the fulfillment of the uprooting from the earth and of the dominance of technique**

To conclude, we would like to quote the famous and already cited interview that Heidegger released the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1966 to the magazine *Der Spiegel*, and which was posthumously published, 5 days after his death – Heidegger died the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1976, the interview was published the 31<sup>st</sup> May. Here Heidegger, as already mentioned, retraced some of the aspects linked to his biography, by answering the questions of the journalist, who focused on the always intense gossip regarding his alleged adhesion to Nazism.

Heidegger managed to bring the subject of the interview to a deep philosophical level, meditating, in particular, on the concepts, which are of great philosophical-political significance, of "rootedness in the earth" and of "technique". Heidegger, indeed, explains how it is technique that produces man's uprooting from the earth, since technique, in its essence, represents something which man, by himself, is not able to dominate anymore. Heidegger writes:

Everything works. This is precisely what is unsettling, that it works and that the functioning always pushes further towards a new functioning and that technique tears

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<sup>39</sup> M. Heidegger, "L'origine dell'opera d'arte", in *Sentieri interrotti*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1968, p. 54.

away and uproots man more and more from the earth. I do not know if you are scared, I got scared as soon as I saw the photographs of the Earth taken from the Moon. There is no need for an atomic bomb: the uprooting of man is already complete. All that remains is a purely technical situation. It is not the Earth anymore, that on which man lives.<sup>40</sup>

Technique, far from being an instrument in the hands of man, is a way of being-in-the world of there-Being, that is, it is the way in which the human being of our times relates himself to his world, by thinking of it as something to dominate, as a resource to take advantage of or, in a similar and opposite way, as something to protect. Not much changes: both scenarios show the complete uprooting of man from the Earth: indeed, he puts himself in a superior position of domination, from which he can decide whether to take advantage of his world or protect it; in both cases, the natural world is thought of as something completely different from the human. Technique, intended as the essence of the contemporary man, does not represent a mere strengthening of certain human faculties, but a radical change, starting from which a new kind of humanity originates. The problem of the contemporary man lies in the fact that he still does not have a way which may correspond to the essence of technique.

In such a background, philosophy will not be able to produce any immediate modification of the actual state of the world, that is, it cannot promise salvation. Only the Jewish-Messianic view of waiting and especially the Christian-Soteriological-Apocalyptic one of the resurrection of souls and bodies, corroborated by the Socratic-Platonic doctrine of immortality and unfolded according to a linear temporality, may found concepts such as the one of salvation and hope. Going back to the Greek beginning of thought means ceasing to set the meaning of life beyond life itself in order to recover, in Nietzsche's terms, that meaning of the Earth that our contemporaneity has left abandoned, obliterated and concealed.

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<sup>40</sup> M. Heidegger, *Ormai solo un dio ci può salvare*, cit., p- 134.



Sesto San Giovanni (MI)  
via Monfalcone, 17/19



& Ass. AlboVersorio Edizioni  
Senago (MI)  
via Martiri di Belfiore, 11

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