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# Radical conservatism and the Heideggerian right: Heidegger, de Benoist, Dugin

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The paper studies the significance of Martin Heidegger's philosophy of history for two key thinkers of contemporary radical conservatism and the Identitarian movement, Alain de Benoist and Aleksandr Dugin. Heidegger's often-overlooked affinities with the German "conservative revolution" of the Weimar period have in recent years been emphasized by an emerging radical-conservative "right-Heideggerian" orientation. I first discuss the later Heidegger's "being-historical" narrative of the culmination and end of the metaphysical foundations of Western modernity in the contemporary Nietzschean era of nihilism and of an emerging postmodern "other beginning" of Western thinking, focused on historical and cultural relativism and particularism. In Heidegger's work of the 1930s and 1940s, we find attempts to apply this historical narrative to interpreting contemporary geopolitical and ideological phenomena in ways that connect Heidegger to certain central ideas and concerns of the conservative revolutionaries, especially Carl Schmitt's geopolitical particularism. De Benoist, the key name of the French Nouvelle Droite and a founding figure of contemporary Identitarianism, is particularly inspired by Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as the culmination of the "metaphysics of subjectivity" dominating Western modernity. For de Benoist, this modern metaphysics is the root of the "ideology of the Same" underlying the liberal universalism and individualism that he opposes in the name of a cultural ethnopluralism. De Benoist's Russian disciple Dugin bases the pluralistic geopolitics of his radical-conservative "fourth political theory" on the legacy of the conservative revolution, the key intellectual model of which Dugin discovers in Heidegger's notion of the "other beginning".

KEYWORDS

**radical conservatism, Heideggerianism, conservative revolution, ethnopluralism, Martin Heidegger, Aleksandr Dugin, Identitarianism, Alain de Benoist**

## Introduction: The conservative revolution and right Heideggerianism

As a historical label, the term "conservative revolution" most often refers to a loosely demarcated intellectual platform of Weimar-era Germany, consisting of a younger generation of conservative and nationalist writers, academics, and political activists who were generally opposed to liberal democracy, liberal ideas of progress, and liberal individualism, but did not represent classical reactionary ideas calling

for the preservation of traditional institutions such as monarchy, the aristocracy, or the church. Names typically associated with the conservative revolution include philosopher and psychologist Ludwig Klages (1872–1956), writer Thomas Mann (1875–1955), cultural historian Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (1876–1925), philosopher, sociologist, and economist Othmar Spann (1878–1950), historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), sociologist and philosopher Hans Freyer (1887–1969), legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt (1888–1985), writer and politician Ernst Niekisch (1889–1967), jurist Edgar Julius Jung (1894–1934), the brothers, philosopher, writer, and soldier Ernst Jünger (1895–1998) and writer and jurist Friedrich Georg Jünger (1898–1977), and writer and activist Ernst von Salomon (1902–1972). While the term was occasionally used in the interwar period—for example, by Mann (1960, p. 598) in 1921 to designate a Nietzschean type of revolutionary romanticism, by von Hofmannsthal (1980, p. 41) in 1927 in the sense of an aesthetic and cultural rebirth of cohesive national identity, and by Jung (1932, 1994) to describe the ongoing political upheaval of which National Socialism was, for him, only one facet—the conservative revolutionaries typically did not see themselves as a cohesive and unified movement, let alone as a political faction or party.

The concept was consolidated by the conservative politician and one-time Nazi party member Hermann Rauschning's (1941) book *The Conservative Revolution*, published in exile in the United States, and especially by the 1949 doctoral dissertation (*Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932*) of Armin Mohler (1920–2003), Swiss journalist, right-wing activist, and one-time private secretary to Ernst Jünger. Both Rauschning and Mohler took a primarily apologetic approach, taking pains to establish the Weimar conservative revolution as a category sharply distinct from, and in its key aspects opposed to, National Socialism; Mohler's further ambition was to legitimize the emergence of a new, non-fascist and non-Nazi postwar political right (see Mohler and Weissmann, 2005, pp. 3–8, 2018, pp. 7–12). For Mohler, the conservative revolution was defined by the Counter-Enlightenment legacy of German Romanticism and, above all, of Nietzschean elitism and pessimism, particularly by Nietzsche's model of history as an eternal recurrence of the same (*ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*), rather than linear progress (Mohler and Weissmann, 2005, pp. 17–21, 47–57, 2018, pp. 22–26, 54–66; see also Bullivant, 1985, p. 53; de Benoist, 2018a, p. xxii). It was Nietzschean affirmative nihilism, voluntarism, and decisionism that inspired the antiegalitarian, antidemocratic, and antiliberal attitudes of the conservative revolutionaries, as well as their general dislike of the pseudoscientific and totalitarian mass aspects of National Socialism. It was also the model of eternal recurrence that made the conservative revolutionaries "revolutionary", rather than reactionary, in the sense that they did not yearn so much to return to a lost ideal from the past but rather sought to "push ahead" with social and technological transformation—not in order to progress toward a utopian aim, but rather to complete the ongoing cycle historical cycle or "revolution" in the literal sense, so as to reattain an ideal that is in itself timeless but must be reactivated in the transformed light of new circumstances. As Moeller van den Bruck puts it in his *Das dritte Reich* (1923; translated as *Germany's Third Empire*), a key "programmatic" work of the conservative revolution whose title was infamously appropriated by the Nazis:

> The conservative... seeks to discover where a new beginning may be made. He is necessarily at once conserver and rebel.... Conservative thought perceives in all human relations something eternal and recurrent that, now in the foreground, now in the background, but never absent, ever reasserts itself, and does not simply recur as the same.... But even this eternal principle must be recreated from the temporal, ever anew. (Moeller van den Bruck, 1931, pp. 189, 206, 1934, pp. 203, 219–220; translation modified)

However, this definition of the conservative revolution remains rather abstract and largely negative and leaves ample room for disagreement on several central issues such as questions of private ownership and state socialism, the role of modernization and technology, the concepts of the nation, the people, race, and so on. The conservative revolutionaries' relationship to Nazism also remained deeply ambivalent: while Schmitt had an initially rather successful, if more or less opportunistic, career as a committed party member and legal theorist in the Third Reich with connections to top Nazis like Reichminister Hans Frank, Jung was murdered during the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934 for having authored Hitler's conservative vice-chancellor Franz von Papen's critical Marburg speech a few weeks earlier, and the pro-Stalinist "National Bolshevik" Niekisch spent the years 1937–45 as a political prisoner. For these reasons, Breuer (1993, pp. 180–202) has argued that the "conservative revolution" is a misleading and non-informative title that should preferably be replaced by "new nationalism" as a more accurate description of the novel aspirations of the non-Nazi right-wing intellectuals in Weimar Germany.

More recently, a somewhat different account of the philosophical underpinnings of the conservative revolution has been proposed. This account shifts the focus from Nietzsche to a prominent Weimar-era thinker who was not regarded as "political" at the time and is barely mentioned by Mohler (see Mohler and Weissmann, 2005, pp. 197, 208, 2018, pp. 214, 227), despite well-known connections with figures like Ernst Jünger: Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger's affinities with the conservative revolutionaries have been pointed out by Pierre Bourdieu, who described Heidegger's project as a

"conservative revolution in philosophy" (Bourdieu, 1988, pp. 67–82, 1991, pp. 55–69), as well as Radloff (2007, pp. 117–172) and Mehring (2018).[1] Generally speaking, however, Heidegger's political significance has been completely overshadowed by his notorious Nazi episode—his party membership since May 1933 and his pro-Hitler activities, mainly in the form of a number of public speeches, during his period as rector of Freiburg University in 1933–34. Even though Heidegger withdrew from the rectorship after only a year in office, became increasingly distanced from public and political activities, expressed disillusionment with Nazism in private notes, and was classified into the relatively mild category of *Mitläufer* (fellow traveler) in the postwar Denazification process, his 1945–51 teaching ban put an effective end to his active academic career. Heidegger's reputation in West Germany was irreparably tarnished, and renewed international attention was attracted to the "Heidegger affair" by works such as Victor Farías's *Heidegger and Nazism* (Farías, 1989) and Emmanuel Faye's *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy* (Faye, 2005, 2009). Heidegger's (apparently largely nominal) membership since 1934, alongside figures such as Schmitt and Alfred Rosenberg, in an advisory expert committee on philosophy of right appended to Hans Frank's Academy for German Law has often been seen as damning.[2] Since 2014, the publication of Heidegger's personal "thought diaries" from the 1930s and 1940s—the so-called *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarze Hefte*)—has created new uproar due to several clearly anti-Semitic (even if highly idiosyncratic and by no means representative of an orthodox party line) remarks, unparalleled in Heidegger's previously published work.[3]

Probably the main reason why Heidegger's political commitment has for many been decisively more unpalatable than that of, for example, the much more outspokenly racist Schmitt (see Gross, 2007), is that Heidegger's main intellectual influence both before and after the Second World War was within liberal and left-leaning intellectual circles. Already in the 1920s his key student circle in Marburg and Freiburg included, in addition to several more or less liberal-minded pupils from Jewish backgrounds (Karl Löwith, Leo Strauss, Günther Stern, Hans Jonas, Hannah Arendt), the Marxist and later New Left icon Herbert Marcuse, and in France, Heidegger's legacy was initially appropriated by committed leftists such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Later waves of "left Heideggerianism" in a wide sense can be taken to include main representatives of French deconstruction (Jacques Derrida, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy) and Italian Heideggerians such as Gianni Vattimo and Giorgio Agamben. Very generally speaking, the left-Heideggerian orientation has tended to emphasize the affinities between the philosophical projects of Nietzsche and Heidegger—downplaying the importance of Heidegger's extensive readings of Nietzsche as "the last metaphysician of the West"—and the antiauthoritarian implications of Heidegger's hermeneutics of finitude and situatedness. Vattimo (1997, p. 13; see also Marchart, 2007, pp. 11–34; Millerman, 2014) explicitly identifies "left Heideggerianism" with his own Nietzsche-inspired "weak thought" (*pensiero debole*) that desists from pursuing absolute or even universal perspectives and resigns itself to the irreducibly interpretive and context-dependent nature of thinking. A politically motivated Heideggerianism of the right, if it existed at all, remained a marginal phenomenon. One of the few visibly right-wing figures in Germany personally influenced by Heidegger was the historian Ernst Nolte (1923–2016), who studied with Heidegger and Eugen Fink in Freiburg during and after the war, authored an influential history of fascism as antimodernism (Nolte, 1963a,b), and in the 1980s became embroiled in the German *Historikerstreit*, a heated debate on the appropriate way of relating to Nazi crimes in historiography, sparked by Nolte's (1986) controversial suggestion that they should primarily be understood as a reaction to and an imitation of Bolshevik terror. Nolte later also published an apologetic review of Heidegger's career (Nolte, 1992), presenting Heidegger's political commitment as a consistent and legitimate one given Heidegger's philosophical position and the historical circumstances.

More recent years, however, have seen the emergence of a new type of right-wing thought—perhaps most accurately described as "radical conservatism", as Muller (1997) and Dahl (1999) have suggested (see also Radloff, 2007, pp. 13, 124)—accompanied by a novel form of "right Heideggerianism". While Mohler's aspiration to establish a new right inspired by the Weimar conservative revolution remained without much consequence, the French Nouvelle Droite, centered around the rightist think tank GRECE (*Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne*) founded in 1968 by Alain de Benoist (b. 1943), philosopher and personal friend of Mohler, has been more prominent and has given rise to the initially

1 For a wider account of Heidegger as an heir of the cultural relativism of the German Counter-Enlightenment, see Pankakoski and Backman (2020).

2 The committee on philosophy of right included, in addition to Heidegger, Nazi bigwigs like Rosenberg and Julius Streicher and conservatives such as Freyer and Schmitt. Since the relevant documents were destroyed, the activities of the committee are largely unknown; however, like those of the Academy for German Law itself, these activities and their importance appear to have been very limited, and the committee seems to have been discontinued in 1938. The committee and Heidegger's role in it are discussed in Nassirin (2018a,b).

3 See Heidegger (2014a, p. 97, 2014b, pp. 46, 56, 133, 242–243, 262, 2015a, p. 20, 2017a, pp. 75–76, 2017b, pp. 37, 44, 104, 191, 208). For a discussion of anti-Semitism in the *Black Notebooks*, see Trawny (2014b, 2015).

French and now increasingly pan-European movement known as "Identitarianism".[4] Radical-conservative thought has gained heightened public attention since the start of the ongoing Ukrainian-Russian conflict in 2014, when the international media spotlight turned on Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin (b. 1962), philosopher and political theorist and younger collaborator of de Benoist, sometimes suspected (apparently without very much basis in reality) of being a key intellectual "Rasputin" behind Vladimir Putin's new conservative-nationalist agenda. Like de Benoist, Dugin has declared himself an heir of the conservative revolution; like de Benoist, he has also emphasized the intellectual importance of Heidegger for radical conservatism, but much more intensely. In his book *Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning* (2010, trans. 2014)—the first of several volumes on Heidegger's philosophy—Dugin presents his arguments for regarding Heidegger as the quintessential thinker of the conservative revolution. He maintains that in terms of systemic connections and contacts, intellectual influences and political sympathies, Heidegger must be regarded as an "integral part" of the conservative-revolutionary movement (Dugin, 2014b, pp. 23–26, 171–173). Heidegger, as read by Dugin, is concerned precisely with an intellectual and spiritual "revolution" in the radical-conservative sense: an impending culmination and end of Western modernity and the possibility of a new beginning, a new Western foundation that would not be simply a return to the past but rather a retrieval or reappropriation of Western traditions in a new, transformed framework, no longer situated within the confines of modernity.

> He [Heidegger] was a "conservative revolutionary" in the sense that, as he understood it, man was called upon to be the "guardian of *Being*"... and at the same time—to take a risky *leap into another Beginning* (the "Revolutionary" moment, the orientation toward the future). (Dugin, 2014b, p. 172)

It is specifically the notion of the "other beginning", *der andere Anfang*, introduced by Heidegger at the outset of the later period of his thought in the mid-1930s, that makes him, in Dugin's eyes, the founding figure of the philosophical twenty-first century. Precisely as the thinker of "another beginning" of the West, Heidegger was, for Dugin, *the* philosopher of the conservative revolution.

> The twentieth century, having recognized Heidegger as a great thinker, essentially failed to understand his thought.... [P]ractically no one fully and wholly grasped Heidegger's thought or followed the path leading to *another Beginning*.... The twenty-first century, in essence, has not yet begun: that which is around us today in terms of meaning is still the twentieth century.... The twenty-first century will start when we truly begin to grasp Heidegger's philosophy. And then we will gain the opportunity to make another decision, a choice in favor of transitioning to *another Beginning*. (Dugin, 2014b, pp. 277–278; tr. mod.)[5]

What exactly is this other beginning and how does it relate to a conservative revolution? In what follows, I first briefly clarify the role of this notion in the later Heidegger and in Heidegger's overall philosophical project, summarizing the Heideggerian philosophy of history and historical narrative underlying it. I explicate in what sense Heidegger's notion of the completion and end of metaphysics as a radical rupture in the intellectual history of the West and the ensuing possibility of another beginning of Western thinking can provide a philosophical conceptual model for a revolutionary or radical conservatism. In fact, we see that in applying it to interpret contemporary ideological and geopolitical events, Heidegger himself drew tentative conclusions that closely connected him to conservative revolutionaries such as Schmitt. For the contemporary radical conservatives, Heidegger constitutes a main theoretical alternative to Nietzsche, initially the main philosophical impetus for the Weimar-era conservative revolutionaries and their heirs. I sketch here the outline of an intellectual and conceptual genealogy of a new, "right-Heideggerian" form of radical conservatism by looking at the main Heideggerian elements and the explicit and implicit Heideggerian influences in the work of the two most prominent contemporary radical-conservative heirs of the conservative revolution, de Benoist and Dugin. I show that for both, and in clear contrast to the "left-Heideggerian" orientation described above, the notions of an end of the metaphysics of subjectivity that, for Heidegger, dominates modernity and culminates with Nietzsche, and of an emerging postmodern other beginning centered around a hermeneutics of historical and cultural finitude underpin an ethnocultural particularism and relativism and a pluralistic geopolitical theory sharply opposed to all forms of liberal universalism.

## Heidegger, the end of modernity, and the other beginning of the West

In order to understand the idea of the other beginning, it is necessary to look briefly at the philosophical development that led Heidegger to adopt it in his later thought. The "fundamental ontology" of his early incomplete magnum opus, *Being and Time* (1927), announced the task of posing anew a foundational philosophical question that had, in a sense, become obsolete in

4 For a thorough account of contemporary Identitarianism and its intellectual foundations, with an emphasis on the roles of de Benoist and Dugin, see Zúquete (2018). Zúquete (2018, pp. 15, 34) also acknowledges, in passing, the significance of Heidegger's philosophy of history for Identitarianism.

5 Mehring (2018, p. 33) makes a similar suggestion regarding the Heideggerian "other beginning" as a model for revolutionary conservatism. Love and Meng (2017) particularly emphasize the significance of the concept of the other beginning for Dugin.

the unfolding of the modern philosophical tradition: the basic question of Aristotelian metaphysics, the ontological question concerning being *qua* being—being (*Sein*) as such, apart from the specific determinations of particular categories or kinds of beings. However, this is not a "return" to Aristotle or ancient philosophy: the question of being is not to be simply reiterated but rather posed anew in a decidedly non-Aristotelian manner, as a question of the meaning or sense (*Sinn*) of being (Heidegger, 2001b, pp. 6–7, 2010, pp. 5–6). For Heidegger, this signifies the phenomenological and hermeneutic question of how the meaningful presence or accessibility of beings (see Heidegger, 2001b, pp. 151–152, 324–325, 2010, pp. 146–147, 309–310) to the human being is possible—the human being now famously designated with the term Dasein, primarily in order to emphasize her function as the "recipient" or locus, the "there" (*Da*) of any meaningful being-there, in other words, as the entity for whom being as such "makes sense" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 325, 1998e, p. 248).

The existing version of *Being and Time*—consisting of the first two divisions of the first part of an intended two-part work and comprising the existential analytic of Dasein and its temporal reinterpretation—was published prematurely, largely due to extraneous academic pressures (see Kisiel, 1993, in particular pp. 477–489). In the missing third and final division of part 1, announced in the table of contents under the title "Time and Being", the meaning of being was to be finally identified with the temporally contextual structure of being—the situatedness of any meaningful presence in a dynamic and multidimensional, temporally articulated network of meaning with which Dasein's own temporally articulated, dynamic, and context-sensitive understanding of being correlates structurally (Heidegger, 2001b, pp. 17–19, 39, 2010, pp. 17–18, 37; see also Heidegger, 1988, pp. 1n1, 227–330, 1997, pp. 1n1, 322–469). In this way, the fundamental ideal of being implicitly established in ancient philosophy—constant presence, that is, permanent intelligibility or accessibility to thinking, as the basic criterion of the degree to which something *is* (Heidegger, 1998a, p. 154, 2000b, p. 216)—would have been made explicit and transformed into a hermeneutic model of the irreducibly temporal and historical situatedness and context-embeddedness of all intelligible presence. However, the methodological and conceptual shortcomings of the project of fundamental ontology prevented Heidegger from completing *Being and Time* in the way he had originally envisioned and forced him to reconsider the premises of his project in the 1930s (see Heidegger, 1996, pp. 327–328, 1998e, pp. 249–250).[6]

In his seminal work of the early 1930s, this reconsideration leads Heidegger to develop a new "being-historical" (*seinsgeschichtlich*) metanarrative of the entire history of Western thought. In this narrative, the "first beginning"—*Anfang*, not simply in the sense of a chronological starting point but rather in the pregnant sense of the Greek *archē*, governing initial principle—of the metaphysics of constant presence that has dominated the Western philosophical tradition is to be found in the earliest Presocratic philosophers, first and foremost Parmenides of Elea, who sought to reduce all differences, oppositions, and negativity to the pure undifferentiated positivity of the accessibility of all things to thinking, their intelligibility (see, for example, Heidegger, 1992a, pp. 10–11, 1992b, pp. 7–8, 2002a, p. 280, 2003, p. 371). In its modern phase inaugurated by Descartes, in which the emphasis gradually shifts from being to thinking or, more precisely, to the self-consciousness, the presence-to-itself of the thinking and willing subject, the Western metaphysics of presence takes on the form of a metaphysics of subjectivity (Heidegger, 1991d, pp. 85–138, 1998d, pp. 112–171). Through its Kantian and Hegelian transformations, this modern metaphysics finally finds its culmination and completion in Nietzsche's metaphysics of absolute subjectivity. For Nietzsche, as Heidegger reads him, being is mere inherently meaningless and disposable raw material that is ceaselessly reconfigured by subjectivity, interpreted by Nietzsche not in terms of the autonomous Enlightenment subject but as superindividual life and as will to power. In its fundamental self-referential and aimless movement of self-preservation and self-enhancement, the Nietzschean will to power imposes temporary and instrumental meanings or "values" upon the world. Nietzsche is not yet a genuinely "postmodern" but rather a late modern or even ultramodern thinker who makes explicit the metaphysical basis of the modern Western technoscientific domination and instrumentalization of reality.[7]

In the Nietzschean ultramodern and nihilistic technical world of fundamental meaninglessness, in which meanings and values have become mere temporary subjective constructs, mere instruments of domination and control, the Western metaphysics of presence reaches its ultimate point of culmination. Philosophy in the classical sense now becomes "complete" as its implicit metaphysical presuppositions and their ultimate implications become completely unfolded. Due to this completion, philosophy can also increasingly be replaced as obsolete by modern technoscience and social ideologies as means of controlling and configuring nature and society (see Heidegger, 2000d, pp. 61–65, 2002b, pp. 55–59). If there is to be any genuinely innovative philosophical thinking in this ultramodern condition, Heidegger claims, it can only start from a reconsideration of the foundational premises of Western metaphysics—from a retrieval and reappropriation of the

6 For an extensive discussion of Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology, see Backman (2015, pp. 69–120).

7 For Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as the end of metaphysics, see Heidegger (1991a, pp. 3–6, 1991b, pp. 198–208, 1991c, 3–9, 150–251, 1991d, pp. 147–196, 1998c, pp. 1–4, 415–423, 425–432, 585–594, 1998d, pp. 1–22, 177–229, 231–361).

"first beginning" (*der erste Anfang*) of Western thinking that would result in its transformation into what he calls the "other beginning" (*der andere Anfang*; Heidegger, 1989, pp. 171, 185, 1991c, p. 182, 1998d, p. 21, 2012b, pp. 135, 145–146). In the later and mature phase of his thought, Heidegger understands his own philosophical project precisely as a preparation for another philosophical beginning in this sense. This project is never systematized into a formal philosophical "program"; Heidegger's posthumously published monographs of the 1930s and 1940s, particularly *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* (*Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, composed 1936–38, published 1989), merely tentatively intimate the "other beginning" of Western thought from different perspectives.

In very general terms, in the intellectual and cultural other beginning envisioned by Heidegger, Western thought opens up to the transcendence, inaccessibility, and non-presence inherent in and presupposed by all meaningful accessibility and presence but disregarded by the metaphysical tradition, which was focused solely on the accessibility and, ultimately, the availability and manipulability of beings. What becomes philosophically topical in the other beginning are the contextualizing temporal and spatial background dimensions that are not in themselves present as substantial entities but are rather directions or vectors of meaning that orient and structure each singular situation or instant of meaningful presence. This contextual background/foreground structure is most famously captured by the later Heidegger in the enigmatic and evocative figure of the *Geviert*, the "fourfold", a model consisting of four background dimensions or vectors of meaningfulness—referred to as the sky and the earth, divinities and mortals—converging in concrete things as singular configurations of meaningful presence (see, in particular, Heidegger, 1994, pp. 5–23, 2000c, pp. 157–175, 2001a, pp. 161–180, 2012a, pp. 5–22). Approached in terms of the fourfold, a meaningful thing is meaningful insofar as it points beyond itself toward a horizon of ultimate purposes and ends ("divinities") shared by a finite and historical human community ("mortals"); this axis, in turn, opens up a space of intelligibility, visibility, and appearance ("sky") in which sensuous materiality ("earth") can become meaningfully articulated and contextualized.[8] In contrast to Aristotelian metaphysics, the other beginning no longer approaches being in terms of already constituted and accessible beings or entities. Rather, it views being as an ongoing, dynamic event of meaning-constitution that constantly situates and (re)contextualizes meaningful presence—as *Ereignis*, the temporal and spatial event or "taking place" of meaningfulness in and through the reciprocal correlation between the givenness of meaning and human receptivity to meaning. Very roughly put, the "other beginning" is the step from the late modern Nietzschean metaphysics of total subjective domination of nature and of humanity itself as accessible resources to a relativistic hermeneutics of finitude focusing on the historically and culturally situated, dynamic, and context-dependent character of human access to a meaningful world.

Heidegger's recently published "thought diaries" from the years 1931–48, the so-called *Black Notebooks*, are an important testimony to the way in which Heidegger himself tentatively applied these key ideas and concepts to concrete contemporary political events. In spite of their undeniably anti-Semitic aspects, the notebooks in fact make it clearer than ever that Heidegger's commitment to the Nazi movement was short-lived and highly ambivalent at best. If anything, they lend support to Dugin's view of Heidegger's attachment to a form of radical conservatism that he saw, for a relatively brief period and in concert with many other German intellectuals, as a path Nazism could plausibly take. The notebooks show how Heidegger's interpretation of ideologies such as fascism, communism, and liberalism, as well as his ominous designation of "world Judaism" as an avatar of modern technical manipulation—an idea that Trawny (2014b, 2015) has shown to be closely reminiscent of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory promoted by the infamous forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—are dominated by his idea of an impasse or closure of Western modernity and of a forthcoming transition to another, truly postmodern beginning. After his gradual disillusionment with National Socialism in the mid-1930s, Heidegger sees Nazism itself as a radical symptom of the "completion of modernity", more "comprehensive and pervasive" than fascism in that the former brings about "a complete 'mobilization' of all the resources of a humanity that now relies solely upon itself" (Heidegger, 2014a, p. 408, 2017a, p. 318; tr. mod.). This is especially true of Nazi racial ideology: racialism, Heidegger (2014b, p. 48, 2017b, p. 38) notes, is a logical conclusion of modern subjectivism in the form of a biologism that no longer distinguishes sharply between humanity and biological animality. Nazism, for the later Heidegger, is simply modernity let loose, and in this capacity, it is "metaphysically identical" in essence with (Italian) fascism and Soviet Bolshevism (Heidegger, 2014b, pp. 109, 262, 2017b, pp. 85–86, 208). In a curious remark written soon after the war, Heidegger (2015a, p. 130) notes that had National Socialism and fascism been "successful", they would in fact have prepared Europe for "communism"—this latter term to be understood here in the metaphysical sense of an extreme culmination of modernity in a complete and boundless manipulation and mobilization of the "human resources" of a fully homogenized and biologized humanity.[9]

It is precisely this concern over "metaphysical communism", over the homogenization of the human world, the leveling

8 On Heidegger's "contextualism" and the associated reading of the fourfold, see Backman (2015, especially pp. 135–154, 190–202, 2020b). For an extensive study on the fourfold, see Mitchell (2015).

9 For Heidegger's elaboration of his "metaphysical" concept of communism, see Heidegger (1998b, pp. 179–214, 223–224, 2015b, pp. 151–180, 188).

and evening out of cultural, historical, and local differences in favor of a global or "planetary" world order, that informs Heidegger's rather sketchy geopolitical ideas. It also clearly connects Heidegger to the conservative revolutionaries and their similar concerns, most notably to Schmitt's vision of the geopolitical articulation of the world into "great spaces" (*Großräume*) as an alternative to the universalistic and unipolar global world order allegedly represented by the League of Nations.[10] In November 1933, Rector Heidegger (1993, pp. 47–49, 2000a, pp. 188–189; tr. mod.) enthusiastically greets Hitler's decision to withdraw Germany from the League; a true community of peoples, Heidegger maintains, cannot be founded upon the "baseless and non-committal world fraternization" of the League any more than on "blind domination by force", but requires each nation to take responsibility for its own particular historical "destiny". However, Heidegger does not think here in merely national terms, but in the light of a wider cultural relativism: in spite of his rhetoric on the destiny and spiritual task of Germany and the German people, he makes it clear that he sees Germany as the key representative of a wider European civilization and of European philosophy, in particular, basing this claim primarily on the fact that the last great philosophers in his narrative of the Western metaphysical tradition—the German idealists and Nietzsche—were Germans. "Europe", Heidegger declares in 1935,

> lies today in the great pincers between Russia on the one side and America on the other. Russia and America, seen metaphysically, are both the same: the same hopeless frenzy of unchained technology and of the rootless organization of the average man.... Our people, as standing in the center, suffers the most intense pressure—our people, the richest in neighbors and hence the most endangered people, and for all that, the metaphysical people. We are sure of this vocation; but this people will gain a fate from its vocation only when it... grasps its tradition creatively. (Heidegger, 1998a, pp. 28–29, 2000b, pp. 40–41)

In the geopolitical vision shared by Schmitt and Heidegger, the initial promise of National Socialism was to create a European "great space"—under German supervision—to counter the two emerging superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. In contrast to the universalistic ideologies of the supranational superpowers, the European-German *Großraum* was to be distinguished by a particular political idea, based, in the words of Schmitt (1995, p. 306, 2011, p. 111), on the "respect of every nation as a reality of life determined through species and origin, blood and soil". As opposed to Schmitt, Heidegger, who despised racialism and biologism, saw this non-universal European identity as defined rather by its cultural and intellectual traditions crystallizing in European philosophy. This illusion of the Nazi empire as in principle territorially limited or as nationally or culturally particularistic was definitively shattered by the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and by Hitler's concomitant announcement of a coming, supranational "New Order" (*Neuordnung*) of Europe, based on racial principles.[11] Nazism definitively disappointed the conservative revolutionaries by revealing the planetary scope and the homogenizing, biologistic, and technical nature of its destructive ambitions. In 1941 or 1942, Heidegger writes, in a resigned tone and with an unmistakable reference to Hitler's announcement:

> The New Order of Europe [*Neuordnung Europas*] is a provision for planetary domination, which, to be sure, can no longer be an imperialism.... "Europe" is the historiographical-technical, that is, planetary, concept that includes and integrates... West and East in terms of its appointment as completion of the essence of modernity, an essence which in the meanwhile dominates the Western hemisphere (America) in the same unequivocal manner as the East of Russian Bolshevism. Europe is the completion of both. (Heidegger, 2009, p. 95, 2013, p. 80; tr. mod.)

Rather than an alternative or counterforce to the modernity represented by American liberalism and Russian communism, the Nazi vision of Europe is now seen as an extreme consummation of this modernity. Thus, the Cold War, described by Heidegger (1994, p. 51, 2012a, p. 48) already in 1949 as the "battle for mastery of the earth" by the "two contemporary 'world' powers", is essentially a mere continuation of the Second World War. These planetary wars, whether hot or cold, are for Heidegger fundamentally conflicts between ideologically opposed but "metaphysically" identical powers competing for the control of the earth's material resources and populations—they are the "global civil wars" described by Schmitt (1974, p. 271, 2006, p. 296), rather than genuine conflicts between truly distinct political communities with unique identities. In spite of Heidegger's critical assertion, in a 1934–35 seminar (Heidegger, 2011, p. 174, 2014c, p. 186), that Schmitt's conception of politics is ultimately rooted in liberal individualism, we thus see that the two contemporaries are united by a particularistic geopolitics of cultural and identity differences that is firmly rooted in the conservative revolution and the wider tradition of the German Counter-Enlightenment.[12] It directly foreshadows

10 Schmitt initially introduced the notion of *Großraum* in his 1939 lecture "The *Großraum* Order of International Law"; Schmitt (1995, pp. 269–371, 2011, pp. 75–124).

11 The New Order of Europe was initially announced by Hitler in his speech at the Berlin Sports Palace, January 30, 1941.

12 The affinities between Heidegger's and Schmitt's geopolitics have been studied by Korf and Rowan (2020). For other discussions of the Heidegger-Schmitt constellation, see Radloff (2007, pp. 256–290),

the localism and ethnopluralism of the postwar Identitarian movement originating with de Benoist's Nouvelle Droite.

## De Benoist: The ideology of the Same and the metaphysics of subjectivity

Alain de Benoist is one of the most established radical-conservative and new-right thinkers in today's Europe. After his youthful experiences with several French far-right movements, he largely gave up direct political activism in 1968 and devoted himself to a Gramscian-type "metapolitics", that is, political theory and discourse aiming at ideological hegemony. His GRECE think tank, created as a countermove to the mobilization of left-wing student protests in the tumultuous spring of 1968, has been the focal point of what the French media in the 1970s dubbed the *Nouvelle Droite,* New Right, and the starting point of the current pan-European Identitarian movement. The legacy of the German conservative revolution has been de Benoist's key intellectual framework ever since he became personally acquainted with Armin Mohler in the early 1960s (see de Benoist, 2018b). In keeping with this heritage, de Benoist has rejected both the aims of the progressive left as well as some central tenets of the traditional French conservative Gaullist right, such as its liberal ideals of a free-market economy and the primacy of human and individual rights as well as its emphasis on a narrowly defined French nationalism and the Christian aspects of the European tradition.[13]

Camus (2019, pp. 76–78) identifies three central ideas at work in de Benoist's intellectual undertaking. The first key idea is an antiliberal criticism of the Enlightenment's prioritization of individual rights, elaborated in works such as *Beyond Human Rights* (de Benoist, 2004, 2011). According to de Benoist's argument, the ideology of human rights is a universalistic and ethnocentric projection of Western Enlightenment individualism that seeks to reduce other cultures and their conceptions of the relations between community and individual to this Western model (de Benoist, 2004, pp. 11–14, 2011, pp. 21–24). The second key idea is an anticapitalist attack on late modern neoliberal market economy, most recently developed in *Contre le libéralisme* (2019). The perspective here, however, is not a Marxist critique of the exploitative private ownership of the means of production—rather, the continuing expansion of market ideology and of its underlying model of the rationally self-interested individual is, for de Benoist, ultimately a variation of the individualism manifested in the ideology of universal human rights. De Benoist's third, more positive, central idea is the principle of ethnopluralism, a form of radical-conservative identity politics that favors, in the place of the traditionally ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation state, a federal political community (for example, a European federation) comprising a multitude of heterogeneous and separate identity communities based on various background traditions such as ethnicity, language, or religion. In his mature work, de Benoist has been careful to distance this ethnopluralistic and ethnoparticularistic vision of the separate existence of identity communities from all kinds of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and other typical trademarks of traditional far-right discourse. However, he is equally strongly opposed to any vision of a liberal political community attempting to downplay the differences and incommensurabilities between identity communities in favor of a unifying universal or national identity, such as proposed, for example, by Fukuyama (2018).

It is important to note that the principal adversary in all the main aspects of de Benoist's thought is what he calls the liberal "ideology of the Same" (de Benoist, 2004, pp. 28–29, 2011, p. 36, 2017, pp. 17, 131, 136–137), an ideology that seeks to reduce all differences between local, historically constituted and communally shared identities and their roots in different traditions to the late modern Western uniform model of the autonomous, individual, rational, and self-interested (consumer) subject.

> Since the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth centuries, the notion of freedom becomes confounded with the idea of the independence of the subject, henceforth free to assign to itself its own ends. Each individual is taken to freely determine her own good through her will and her reason alone. This emergence of the individual operates within a double horizon: the devaluation of affiliations situated over and above the subject and the rise of the ideology of the Same [*idéologie du Même*].... Modernity... is constructed upon the radical devaluation of the past in the name of an optimistic vision of a future that is held to represent a radical rupture with what precedes it (ideology of progress). The dominant model is that of a human being who must emancipate herself from her affinities, not only because they dangerously limit her "freedom" but also and above all because they are posited as not being constitutive of her self [*moi*]. (de Benoist, 2019, p. 131; my translation)

We encounter here the type of attack on Enlightenment individualism and progressivism that has always been a core point of the Counter-Enlightenment. However, it is interesting to note the specifically Heideggerian philosophical footings of de Benoist's version of this attack. For him, the fundamental theoretical support of the "ideology of the Same" is precisely a modern "metaphysics of subjectivity" as analyzed by Heidegger (de Benoist, 2004, p. 11, 2011, p. 21, 2017, p. 69). De Benoist was never as outspokenly Heideggerian as his younger collaborator

Franco de Sá (2014), Lindberg (2014), Marder (2014), Trawny (2014a), and Hemming (2016).

13 For a comprehensive and concise overview of de Benoist's project, see Camus (2019). On the Nouvelle Droite, see also Bar-On (2001).

Dugin—especially not in the early part of his career which, in keeping with the conservative revolution as interpreted by Mohler, was philosophically dominated by Nietzsche, on whom de Benoist wrote extensively (see, for example, de Benoist, 1973). In a 2009 interview published in the volume *Ce que penser veut dire*, de Benoist tells us that for the first 20 years of his career, Nietzsche—the Nietzschean notion of the eternal recurrence of the same, in particular—was for him the key reference (de Benoist, 2017, pp. 321–328). Here he adds, however, that since the 1980s, Heidegger—especially Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche—has held the primary place among his philosophical influences (p. 321).

In the same volume, we find one of de Benoist's rare extensive discussions of Heidegger, titled "Nihilism and Metaphysics of Subjectivity" (de Benoist, 2017, pp. 109–125). Here, de Benoist looks in detail at the Heideggerian interpretation of Nietzsche as the culmination of the modern, post-Cartesian metaphysics of subjectivity that, for Heidegger, is "nihilistic" in the sense that it seeks to completely reduce being, meaningful presence, to the meaning-bestowing and meaning-constituting activity of subjectivity. For Heidegger's Nietzsche, being is nothing but inherently meaningless and chaotic raw material that only receives meaning or "value" through the evaluating activity of subjectivity as life and as will to power. It becomes clear that this Heideggerian "postmodern" reading of Nietzsche as an "ultramodern" culmination of metaphysics provides de Benoist with the key framework for relativizing and deconstructing the liberal "ideology of the Same" as a facet of the modern subjective homogenization and domination of the world and of humanity—and also a means for detaching the Heideggerian radical-conservative approach from Nazism as an avatar of modern nihilism.

> It is indeed by virtue of his reading of Nietzsche that Heidegger is able to lay the foundations of a fundamental critique of the thinking of pure power, of the thinking of domination and the total enframing [*arraisonnement*] whose typical representative he sees in National Socialism but which he regards as characteristic of modernity as a whole, beyond the Third Reich, insofar as modernity has brought forth a humanity that complies with the essence of modern technicity and its metaphysical truth, that is, a humanity for which nothing is *ever enough* in any domain. In Heidegger's eyes, the totalitarian impulse based on the outburst of the will to power and incarnated in National Socialism is obviously based on a metaphysics of subjectivity. (de Benoist, 2017, pp. 124–125; my translation)

Above, I have pointed to the conflation of Nietzsche and Heidegger and disregard for Heidegger's "postmetaphysical" reading of Nietzsche as the culmination and end of the metaphysics of subjectivity as characteristic of the "left-Heideggerian" approach represented by Vattimo and others. By the same token, I argue that de Benoist's attention to this same reading as Heidegger's decisive philosophical contribution, and his admission that Heidegger has for decades been for him the key philosophical inspiration, are sufficient grounds for classifying de Benoist as a "right Heideggerian" who draws antiuniversalistic, ethnoparticularistic, and ethnopluralistic conclusions—the hallmark of radical conservatism—from the Heideggerian analysis of the Western metaphysics of subjectivity. What de Benoist essentially takes from Heidegger is the idea that the "ideology of the Same", to which de Benoist reduces his key enemy, political, social, and economic liberalism, is further reducible to a metaphysical foundation underlying Enlightenment modernity as a whole and that this metaphysics—and, with it, modernity itself—has reached its point of completion with Nietzsche, opening the door for a radical "postmodern" critique of liberal universalism. This idea is developed considerably further by Dugin.

## Dugin: The fourth political theory and multipolar geopolitics

Aleksandr Dugin is first and foremost known as a political theorist. After a youth spent among the emerging far-right political and intellectual fringe of the final years of the Soviet Union, the Gorbachev years gave Dugin the opportunity to travel abroad and create contacts with like-minded groups in Western Europe; de Benoist has been his most important foreign collaborator since 1989. Since the early 1990s, Dugin has been a prominent figure in Russian nationalist and conservative politics, first in the National Bolshevik Party of Eduard Limonov and, after the turn of the millennium, as the head of the neo-Eurasian movement. Neo-Eurasianism is rooted in the older Eurasian movement founded in the 1920s by Russian émigré intellectuals such as the structural linguist, Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890–1938), the geographer and economist Pyotr Savitsky (1895–1968), and the historian George Vernadsky (1887–1973); some of their key ideas were revived in the post-Stalinist part of the Soviet period by the ethnologist Lev Gumilyov (1912–1992). Generally speaking, Eurasianism insists on the non-European, eastern, and "Asian" elements of Russia's national identity, distinctly marked by its religious and cultural connection with the Byzantine Empire (thanks to which the Grand Duchy of Moscow, after the fall of Constantinople, claimed the status of a "third Rome") and by the period of Mongol and Tatar overlordship from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The post-Soviet, Duginist version of neo-Eurasianism specifically calls for the reestablishment of a Eurasian geopolitical sphere of influence, headed by Russia and its rediscovered traditionalist values, to counter

the "Atlanticist" sphere dominated by the United States and NATO.[14]

While Dugin's political ideas have in recent years gained international prominence and notoriety as translations of his works have begun to appear, it is less widely acknowledged that Dugin also, and perhaps primarily, identifies as a philosopher, and that in recent years, the paradigm and main influence of his philosophy has been Heidegger.[15] As pointed out above, Dugin finds—no doubt under the guidance of his mentor de Benoist—in Heidegger, particularly in the Heideggerian notion of the "other beginning", the quintessential philosophical support of the conservative-revolutionary tradition within which Dugin situates his own "fourth political theory". Dugin's announced project is to "develop the implicit political philosophy of Heidegger into an explicit one" (Dugin, 2014a, 114).

Dugin's key pursuit in his most prominent mature work, *The Fourth Political Theory* (2009, trans. 2012), is to sketch out an alternative to the three dominant ideologies of the twentieth century—liberalism, communism, and fascism, the first and oldest of which entered the twenty-first century as an ostensible victor after the well-nigh demise of the two others in the Second World War and the Cold War. Dugin's "fourth" ideology claims to incorporate the best elements of the three previous ideologies—freedom in liberalism, the critique of capitalism in Marxism, and ethnoparticularism in fascism—while rejecting their respective individualism, materialism, and racism, in short, their universal, unipolar, and monotonic historical teleologies (Dugin, 2012, pp. 43–54, 2014a, pp. 101–114). The result is an eclectic combination of spiritualistic, communitarian, and particularistic approaches emphasizing the significance of cultural and linguistic traditions—particularly their different religious, spiritual, and intellectual ways of relating to dimensions of ultimate meaningfulness—and the importance of preserving intercultural differences.

Dugin's fourth ideology rejects the modernistic grand narratives common to the great twentieth-century ideologies and the secular teleology as well as the progressive and utopian conception of time underlying them (Dugin, 2012, pp. 55–66, 2014a, pp. 129–165). In this sense, it draws its "dark inspiration" from "postmodern" critiques of the program of the Enlightenment and of the autonomous rational individual subject presupposed by this program, and rejoices in their alleged deterioration. At the same time, however, Dugin (2012, pp. 12, 21, 23) also calls for a "crusade" against postmodern nihilism and indifference, seen as the culmination and completion of modernity. The strategy of the fourth ideology vis-à-vis postmodernity is characterized by Dugin, using an expression borrowed from Evola (2003), as "riding the tiger", that is, exploiting the strength of the beast and at the same time discovering its weak points and hacking them, rather than attempting to avoid or ignore it or confronting its fangs and claws directly (Dugin, 2014c, p. 286).

> It is not possible to just walk past postmodernity.... Hence why the Fourth Political Theory must turn to the precursors to modernity and to what modernity actively fought, but what became almost entirely irrelevant to postmodernity. We must turn to tradition, to pre-modernity, archaism, theology, the sacred sciences, and ancient philosophy. (Dugin, 2014c, p. 286)

Exploiting postmodernity's indifference to premodernity by retrieving the latter in a transformed sense—this strategy makes the fourth ideology a postliberal conservatism that Dugin (2012, pp. 83–94, 2014c, pp. 145–153) carefully distinguishes from the fundamental conservatism or traditionalism of thinkers such as René Guénon and Julius Evola, which advocates a reactionary return to premodern values, as well as from liberal or "status quo" conservatives (among whom Dugin numbers Jürgen Habermas), who uphold the classical Enlightenment project of modernity but are opposed to its unfolding into extreme, "postmodern" manifestations. The particular strand of conservatism within which Dugin (2012, pp. 94–98, 2014c, pp. 153–159) situates his own work and which he seeks to develop theoretically is the German interwar conservative-revolutionary movement.

Dugin's main interest has always been geopolitics, especially the opposition between the Eurasian and the Atlantic geopolitical spheres. This opposition has an important ideological dimension. The "fourth political theory" is intended to provide a radical-conservative solution to a situation in which state communism is gone and Eurasia needs to come up with a new ideology, suited to its particular traditions, to counter and rival the dominant Atlantic ideology—political and economic liberalism. Dugin (2012, pp. 101–120) draws attention to the fact that the end of the Cold War gave new relevance to Schmitt's contrast between a unipolar global system and a multipolarity of great spaces, now in the form of a contrast between the liberal and democratic "new world order" envisioned by President George Bush Sr. in 1990 and corresponding to Fukuyama's (1992) thesis on the "end of history", on the one hand, and Huntington's (1996) prediction of the replacement of the Cold War by a postideological "clash of civilizations", on the other. Huntington's vision, Dugin maintains, has in hindsight proved closer to the truth, and his articulation of the world map into seven or eight major "civilizations" or cultural regions has the merit of providing a way to rehabilitate Schmitt's model of

14 For Dugin's views on neo-Eurasianism and its aims, see Dugin (2014a, 2014c, pp. 163–187). For overviews of Dugin's life and career, see Laruelle (2006), Umland (2010), and Backman (2020a). For a comprehensive critical discussion of Russian Eurasianism and neo-Eurasianism, see Laruelle (2008).

15 On Dugin's Heideggerianism, see also Love and Meng (2017), Millerman (2020), and Sharpe (2020).

"great spaces".[16] However, Dugin sees Huntington's idea of inevitable intercivilizational clashes as overly pessimistic; the decisive contemporary conflict does not, for Dugin, take place between the individual civilizations, but between civilizational multipolarity and Fukuyaman liberal unipolarity, that is, between a particularistic or regional continuation of history and a universalistic end of history.

> [A] multi-polar world... will create the real preconditions for the continuation of the political history of mankind.... Surely, both dialogue and collisions will emerge. But something else is more important: history will continue, and we will return from that fundamental historical dead-end to which uncritical faith in progress, rationality and the gradual development of humanity drove us.... There will be no universal standard, neither in the material nor in the spiritual aspect. Each civilisation will at last receive the right to freely proclaim that which is, according to its wishes, the measure of things. (Dugin, 2012, pp. 116, 120)

In Dugin's multipolar world, history will thus continue, but no longer as History, as the "world history" represented by the teleological grand narratives of the Enlightenment. Rather, history assumes the form of the regional narratives of civilizational great spaces, capable of living and acting in concert provided that they adopt a hermeneutic respect for otherness and for the plurality of historical traditions. We see that this vision is entirely in keeping with at least the spirit of Heideggerian and Schmittian multipolar and pluralistic geopolitics—with the obvious difference that it is not the possibility and future of the European great space that first and foremost concerns Dugin, but that of the Eurasian-Russian space.

Interestingly from Dugin's point of view, however, the Eurasian idea itself finds certain resonance in Heidegger. In his remarks inspired by the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, Heidegger (2009, p. 95, 2013, p. 80) notes in passing that Russia as well as Japan are part of Eurasia—that is, they are not simply European or non-European, but situated in between the European and Asian spaces. Heidegger (1998b, pp. 119–120, 2015b, pp. 100–101), too, seems to attach an important spiritual potential to this trans-European character of Russia: Hitler's planetary war campaign, which amounts to nothing more than a "limitless exploitation of raw materials", is for him an intensified application of the "metaphysical essence" of Soviet Bolshevism upon the Soviet Union itself and risks depriving both Russianness and Germanness of their historical being, not simply in the sense of military subjugation or material destruction, but in the sense of the biological-technical reorganization of both. This is the diametrical opposite of the kind of encounter that Heidegger considers, in the contemporary situation, to be "more essential than the encounter of the Greeks with their Orient" and that would consist in "releasing Russia to its essence"—an encounter with Russia in its historical particularity and an engagement in a fruitful exchange between the metaphysical West and its trans-European and transmetaphysical Eurasian other. Remarks such as this give Dugin (2014b, p. 186) all the more reason to regard Heidegger as "the greatest stimulus for our rethinking the West and ourselves [the Russians] faced *vis-à-vis* the West".

16 On Schmitt's influence on Russian conservative thinkers (including Dugin) and on *Großraum* thinking in Russian foreign policy, see Auer (2015), Lewis (2020, pp. 24–28, 161–192).

## Conclusion

The later Heidegger's notion of the Nietzschean culmination of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity in the technoscientific domination of an increasingly homogenized reality is rooted in his wider historical narrative of how the Western metaphysical tradition has equated being with presence, accessibility, and availability. As this tradition becomes completed with Nietzsche, its inherent limitations come into sight and space is cleared for a forthcoming "other beginning", in which Western thought becomes sensitive to the historical and cultural situatedness and context-dependence of all meaningful being/presence. In spite of their initially purely philosophical context, we see that these ideas lend themselves to a radical-conservative reading and application; in fact, such an application was attempted by Heidegger himself in his tentative comments on contemporary ideologies and geopolitics voicing a concern over the increasing homogenization of the modern world. These thoughts connect him directly to the geopolitical concerns of Schmitt and the conservative revolution and thus make him an attractive alternative intellectual support for radical conservatism, which was initially under the philosophical sway of Nietzsche.

Among postwar right-wing thinkers, this conservative dimension of Heidegger's legacy has most prominently been picked up by de Benoist and his disciple Dugin. Both have sought to reassert and further develop the revolutionary conservatism of the Weimar era, which has otherwise been largely ignored in the postwar period with the exception of fairly marginal figures like Mohler. They adopt a novel philosophical foundation for a new right ideology from Heidegger's later thought, and their insights into the political importance of the later Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and the associated notion of a post-Nietzschean "other beginning" of Western thought introduce a new "right-Heideggerian" perspective on the intellectual foundations of the conservative revolution. While the radical-conservative, ethnopluralistic, and ethnoparticularistic vision of the world shared by de Benoist and Dugin is nothing radically new, but in many ways a continuation of the

conservative Counter-Enlightenment tradition, especially its German strain, their main original contribution is to incorporate the political implications of the Heideggerian "being-historical" hermeneutics of finitude into this tradition more elaborately and systematically than Heidegger himself ever attempted to do.

The notion that Enlightenment universalism and liberal individualism can be referred back to a particular historical phase in the unfolding of Western metaphysical thinking—the modern "metaphysics of subjectivity"—and that this phase has now essentially been completed and closed off provides contemporary Counter-Enlightenment thought with a new theoretical and critical tool: the historical relativization and demarcation of Enlightenment modernity in terms of its alleged metaphysical presuppositions. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the entire "Identitarian" variant of current radical-conservative identity politics, which largely takes its cue from de Benoist's Nouvelle Droite and is focused on cultural relativism and opposition to the perceived homogeneous universalism of liberal multiculturalism, rather than traditional national chauvinism and racism, rests—most often without acknowledging it—on a heavily right-Heideggerian foundation.

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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