

## Review Articles



### Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*, 1931–1941

#### Martin Heidegger

*Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*. Edited by Peter Trawny. Vol. 94 of Gesamtausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014. 536 pp.

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*Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39)*. Edited by Peter Trawny. Vol. 95 of Gesamtausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014. 456 pp.

#### Martin Heidegger

*Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*. Edited by Peter Trawny. Vol. 96 of Gesamtausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014. 286 pp.

To review the first three volumes of Heidegger's *Schwarze Hefte* (there will eventually be nine of them) is an unpleasant obligation.<sup>1</sup> I was struck with amazement when at a recent conference I heard a distinguished Heidegger scholar use these *Notebooks* to good effect, finding in them material that made a useful addition to some issues in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936–38). Struck with amazement because I myself find very little in these thousand pages that is thought provoking. They do present a dire view of Heidegger in a

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1 The editor of these volumes, Peter Trawny, notes that eventually nine volumes of the Martin Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe* will contain the material of these notebooks, namely, volumes 94–102. The *Schwarze Hefte* cover a period of some forty years, roughly 1931 to 1971. In this review parenthetical references to the *Gesamtausgabe* (*GA*) volumes cite the volume number followed by page number.

The present review summarizes the contents of two chapters of Krell, *Ecstasy, Catastrophe: Heidegger from "Being and Time" to the "Black Notebooks,"* forthcoming from SUNY Press in 2015.

dire time, and it is important that they be made available to the public. Yet, to repeat, there is precious little here that adds to Heidegger's more considered *Beiträge* and other published works of the 1930s. To be sure, I have my own difficulties with the *Beiträge* as well. Yet in my view the *Schwarze Hefte* never rise to the level of the *Beiträge*.

The first volume of the *Schwarze Hefte*, volume 94 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, is by far the most worth examining, principally, though not only, because it stretches from October 1931 to the year 1938. Yet already here the polemic is more strident than anything that Heidegger's published works or even his lecture courses prepare us for; nevertheless, the thoughts are not as disconnected and rambling, the repetitions not as mind-numbing, as in the second and third volumes, *Gesamtausgabe* volumes 95 and 96. Heidegger's attention to the political events of the day is already noteworthy in volume 94, yet here the manner is not as reactive and compulsive as it is later. Some of the early notes are eerily jubilant. "The world is being renovated," he writes, "a grand faith is moving through the young land" (94:26–27). That, at least, is the positive side of things, the "romantic" side of things—which, to be sure, will soon enough manifest its shadow side. A further look at the jubilation, presumably from the year 1931:

In turn—the world is being restored to itself. We are getting closer to the truth and its essentiality—we are becoming reflective [*gesonnen*], we are of a mind to assume all that is demanded of us and to take our stand in it—to stand our ground [*boden-ständig zu werden*].

Only one who stems from the ground can stand his ground and be nourished in it—this is the original thing, this is what often elevates my mood and energizes my body—as though I were trudging across the field behind a plow, or walking along lonely field paths in the midst of ripening grain, through wind and fog, sun and snow, the kinds of things that kept the blood circulating and invigorated in my mother and in her ancestors. (94:38)

This is one of the very few references to family—here the mother and her ancestors, as though the soil were hers. A second reference to the mother is perhaps more revealing: "My mother—my simple memory of this pious woman, who without bitterness beheld in a prescient intimation the path of her son who had *apparently* turned away from God" (94:320). A third reference connects the mother and her farm to some of the Swabian heroes of the past, whom Heidegger is careful to exclude from the *Alemannerei* of the Third Reich: "My homeland, the village and the farm of my mother, is blessed by the breezes