

An intricate, colorful illustration of a Baroque-style architectural structure. It features a central panel with a sunburst and a reclining figure, surrounded by ornate carvings, columns, and a large circular medallion at the bottom. The structure is topped with a cross and a plumed helmet. The entire scene is set against a dark background.

Alain Renaut

THE ERA OF THE INDIVIDUAL

A Contribution to a
History of Subjectivity

*Translated by M. B. DeBevoise
and Franklin Philip*

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A CONTRIBUTION TO A HISTORY OF SUBJECTIVITY

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With a Foreword by Alexander Nehamas



NEW FRENCH THOUGHT

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The Era of the Individual



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UNTIL RECENTLY, Martin Heidegger's philosophy attracted and repelled, with equal intensity, a large number of American readers. To his admirers, Heidegger was one of the great philosophers in history, the thinker who understood most clearly the impasse that Western technological civilization is supposed to have reached, who may have had a glimpse, if only dimly, of another world. To his detractors, Heidegger was an obscurantist with an odious political past, with a talent for coining impenetrable neologisms that appear to display deep understanding but really serve only as a barrier to systematic, rational criticism.

Was he a genius? Was he a fraud? This debate has finally been left behind. Though Heidegger is still a suspicious figure to a number of American philosophers, his reputation has gradually become firm and his authority broad. Now his admirers seem to outnumber his detractors. The fact is that Heidegger has arrived in America. This is due partly to some connections between his thought and American pragmatism, particularly his view that practice precedes theory. It is a central thesis of *Being and Time* (1927) that our fundamental interactions with the world are practical and essentially unreflective, as long as everything functions as expected; we become reflective, theoretical, when things begin to break down, and we need to understand them in order to fix them. More important, Heidegger's increasing respectability is due to the dissemination of postwar French thought, on which his influence has been seminal. As Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu, Louis Althusser, and Jacques Lacan have come to be studied seriously, Heidegger, whose disgust with modernity lurks behind their own adversarial thinking, has come to be read more positively by American readers than ever before.

In France, however, the fate of Heidegger's reputation has been changing. The tables have been turned. As a result of a general change in the philosophical atmosphere, and in the wake of a number of revelations about Heidegger's politics in Nazi Germany, the question in France is now whether one should be allied with him at all, philosophically or politically. In the aftermath of the 1960s, Foucault and the other authors of his generation became almost canonical figures in Paris, but by the early 1980s an intellectual and political backlash against them began to emerge. As the Socialists gained control of the government, the intellectuals moved away from the left, toward the center and the right. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut

are important figures in this new movement. Their *French Philosophy of the Sixties* appeared in 1985. It contains a spirited defense of the accomplishments of liberal democracy in the West and a sustained attack against "the thought of '68," whose distrust of liberalism Ferry and Renaut attribute to the influence of an "antihumanism" inherited from Heidegger and, to a lesser extent, from Marx.

Ferry and Renaut believe that the wholesale rejection of modernity and democracy that Heidegger advocated is profoundly mistaken. They argue, as we shall see, that "antihumanism," in eliminating the very idea of the human subject, also eliminates the possibility of the existence of basic rights, which belong to human beings precisely because they are human. They are firm believers in such rights, which they describe as one of the great "promises of modernity." But they are not simply defenders of democracy, they are also its critics. They claim that "the democratic world endlessly makes promises that it does not keep," and they propose to criticize that world in the name of those very promises. Their criticism, however, unlike the rejectionism of the Heideggerians, is meant to be internal: it upholds the goals of democracy, but it demonstrates how far we still are from meeting them.

The contemporary recoil from Heidegger and his influence has not been only conceptual. Heidegger had never been known as an admirer of democracy, but it was not until 1987, when Victor Farias's *Heidegger and Nazism* appeared, that the issue of the extent and the systematic nature of his involvement with National Socialism took center stage. Farias's book established beyond any doubt that Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis was far deeper and longer than the notorious ten months when he was the rector of the University of Freiburg. He remained a dues-paying member of the party, and maintained ties, political and ideological, with a number of leading Nazi figures. Worse, perhaps, he never really saw his attitude or his behavior as a serious error.

The main thesis of Ferry and Renaut's *Heidegger and Modernity*, which appeared in France in 1988, is that Heidegger's criticism of modernity—indeed, his criticism of the whole history of "the West"—is rooted in his authoritarian, nostalgic, right-wing politics. Such a politics, they argue, was extraordinarily ill-suited to the radical, left-wing, and utopian uses to which Heidegger's French followers put it: "We cannot overestimate the amount of political purification that went into the translation of Heidegger's philosophy into a leftist intellectual context. . . . Until a few months ago [they wrote in 1988] Heideggerianism made it possible to hang onto . . . the crepuscular task of salvaging thought from the general collapse of humanity into American-style businessism."

Heidegger believed that democracy and technology, the two central institutions of modernity, correspond closely to one another. Technology turns what had been prerogatives of the few into the necessities for the many. The power over nature that technology gives each individual is translated, in political terms, into the power within society that democracy allows us. Both technology and democracy place individual human beings in the center of the world. They are, in that sense, "humanist." (For Heidegger, their "humanism" was precisely the problem.)

Ferry and Renault's own attitude toward technology and mass culture is not at all unlike Heidegger's. They wish to drive a wedge, however, between the contempt for technology and mass culture and the denial of democratic politics. They consider it part of "the tragic side of modernity" that it is associated with "the emergence of the world of pure technology and its consequent transformation of culture into industrial mass culture." They believe that their criticism and Heidegger's can share the same "object," that is, technology and mass culture, but they insist that their "purpose" and his do not overlap.

Heidegger's main philosophical weapon in his criticism of modernity and democracy, they argue, was his "antihumanism," his conviction that human beings neither know nor control their basic nature and desires. In *L'ère de l'individu*, Renault offers a philosophical diagnosis of the origins and the nature of antihumanism. The book develops in great detail some ideas only briefly alluded to in *French Philosophy of the Sixties*. It traces the notion of the individual back to Leibniz, and charts its progressive liberation from all constraint from Berkeley to Nietzsche. And it supports the controversial view that the continued growth of individualism ends in nothing short of the dissolution of the idea of the subject: when no limits are anywhere acknowledged, the notion of autonomy, which always places one in relation to people or to norms, also disappears. Thus Renault concludes that two of the main features of modern philosophical thought, usually considered to be part of a single strain, finally cancel each other out. Modernity does not only give rise to the idea of the subject, as Heidegger believed. It also, paradoxically, leads to its disappearance. To some extent, then, antihumanism is part of the modern tradition itself.

Ferry and Renault's philosophical project is to preserve the most valuable aspect of modernity, the idea of human rights, which are shared by all simply by virtue of the fact that we are human, whatever our particular circumstances. They argue for a new faith in our sovereignty over ourselves, a view that they characterize as a "modest" and "nonmetaphysical" humanism. The articulation of that humanism is the central aim of

their many works. Their aim is admirable. And their idea that criticism should only be "internal" or piecemeal, that grand rejections are often nothing more than grand illusions, is deeply right.

French Philosophy of the Sixties, however, is a thoroughly polemical work, which simplifies the position of its adversaries and overstates its own case. Its central argument is that with the exception of Marx, whose influence in France (though still obvious in Bourdieu, Althusser, and some of Foucault) had already begun to wane by the 1970s, Heidegger has been the single most important influence on the movement represented by the thought of '68, on Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan. Why was Heidegger so important to postwar French thought? And what exactly is the "antihumanism" that underwrites his criticism of modernity?

For a start, it is important to recall that in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, which appeared in 1935, after Heidegger's supposed break with Nazism, he still felt free to write that "from a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same: the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man." And he concluded: "We are caught in a pincers. Situated in the center, our nation incurs the severest pressure. It is the nation with the most neighbors and hence the most endangered. With all this, it is the most metaphysical of nations. . . . All this implies that this nation . . . must move itself and thereby the history of the West beyond the center of their future 'happening' and into the primordial realm of the powers of being."

Now if one were to forget that the political structure of the nation whose "metaphysical" nature Heidegger is praising was National Socialism, his thought might appear to provide a way of criticizing both great postwar powers at the same time. As a result of such a feat of intellectual acrobatics, one might even think that to reject the individualist and the consumerist madness of the West would not have to imply an endorsement of the totalitarian and bureaucratic insanity of the East. Heidegger, in sum, seemed to offer the devoutly desired middle way: both powers could now be seen as products of the "spiritual decline of the earth" brought about by "the reign of technology." Adversarial intellectuals could use such a purified version of Heidegger to avoid a direct political stand in favor either of the United States or of the Soviet Union.

For Heidegger, moreover, the reign of technology is in its "essence" identical with the essence of "Western metaphysics." And this metaphysics, in turn, is centrally characterized by "humanism." The humanism that Heidegger attacks is the belief that human beings are the ultimate "subjects" of the world, in reference to which all things, or "objects," are thought and classified. It involves two main ideas. First, it holds that the world conforms to the principles that govern our own intellectual life, especially the

principles of reason; like the self, therefore, the world contains no irresolvable mysteries. Second, it maintains that, again, like our own self, the world is fully consonant with our desires and will; the objects of which it consists are thought to derive what reality they possess from their amenability to our use and exploitation. Things are what we can make of them.

Heidegger was not willing (perhaps he was never able) fully to articulate this alternative attitude, which considers nature as a system with its own order and integrity, and the best human life as a harmonious contemplative relationship with it. But he wrote at length against the victory of "metaphysics," the long line of thought that leads from Plato through Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant to Nietzsche. That tradition, in Heidegger's account, conceived of nature only in relation to its usefulness, only as an object of exploitation and mastery. In Descartes, Heidegger conceded, technology and science still aimed at the mastery of nature in order to secure greater freedom and happiness for people, but in Nietzsche mastery became a goal in itself, serving no further purpose. Nietzsche's "will to power," according to Heidegger's controversial but influential interpretation, is a self-perpetuating activity: it is a will that aims at nothing beyond itself, a will to will, no matter its object. "Nature" has ceased to be something in its own right altogether; it is simply raw material to be shaped, a source of resistances whose only function is to provide new opportunities for domination.

Heidegger's high criticisms were easily adaptable to the lower phenomena of modern life. The language of advertising, for example, provides a vulgar but accurate emblem of what Heidegger finds distasteful in modernity. All we are now concerned with is the search for "new and improved" versions of whatever means are already available for attaining whatever goals such means make possible. The value of the goals themselves is irrelevant; the only valuable goal is the endless proliferation of means. What counts is doing things better than before. Whether such things are worth doing in the first place is no longer a question.

According to Heidegger, the blind desire for manipulation came about because modernity turned reason—which was, for the ancients, and even for the medievals, a source of valuable goals—into a purely instrumental faculty. And here, as it turns out, we have a crucial point of contact between Heidegger and the left. The war of the members of the Frankfurt School, especially Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, against "instrumental reason" was as vicious as the war against it that Heidegger waged. And though the changes that the critical theorists advocated led exactly away from Heidegger's nostalgic desire for a return to an earlier, most authentic relationship to nature, both they and he were united in their distaste for what they saw as the crudeness and the vulgarity of technological progress and mass culture.

According to Ferry and Renault, Heidegger and his followers unleashed an uncompromising attack on modernity on the grounds of its humanism, of its thinking of "Man" as the ultimate subject, as "lord and master of the earth." Subjectivity, which is closely connected to humanism, involves personal autonomy on the practical level and self-knowledge on the theoretical. The two levels are connected: that is, a subject knows itself through and through; it contains no opaque or inaccessible parts of the operation of which it remains unaware. The subject is also the absolute master of its decisions, able to make them on its own without interference from any factors over which it has less than perfect control. In view of the fact that external objects obey the same theoretical and practical principles, nature, the totality of things, is completely open to human understanding and manipulation. As the subject is "present" to itself, in knowledge and control, so what is, is "present" to the subject. Indeed, "being present," in this not always intuitive sense, is the mark of what it is to be.

To attack humanism is to deny that a subject conceived in such terms exists, to deny that human beings are fully self-aware and autonomous. According to Ferry and Renault, Heidegger and his followers dispute, in just this way, the sovereignty of human beings. Permeated or even fully constructed by lines of impersonal power, domination, and normalization (Foucault), by codes whose ability to communicate fully is undermined by their own structure (Derrida), by unconscious forces and desires (Lacan), or by economic and social factors (Bourdieu, Althusser), the human subject is held to be anything but transparent to itself. And what the subject does not know, it cannot control. Autonomy disappears, since apparently free decisions turn out to be effects of these unknown and independent lines of force.

And if the subject is not, in this sense, "present" to itself, there is even less reason to believe that the world is present to it. What things are, therefore, is not necessarily exhausted by their availability for human use and consumption. "Metaphysics"—the dominant mode of thought in the West, according to which to be is to be available for use, and which is therefore in its "essence" identical with "technology," with the systematic manipulation of the world—represents only one possible path of human history.

In the incantatory, almost hieratic language of his late works, Heidegger attempted to evoke what some other relationship to the world might look, feel, or be like. He tried to develop a vocabulary that would embody a "nonmetaphysical" attitude to the world, though he was also aware that any effort to leave metaphysics behind might always appear as just one more metaphysical system. Can an effort to escape the totality of one's tradition avoid being a desire to know and control the totality of one's history, of one's world? This is, famously, the charge that he himself

made against Nietzsche, "the first of the last metaphysicians"; it is the charge that Derrida eventually made against him; and it is the charge that others are now making against Derrida. No doubt they will have it made against them in the future.

I believe that this charge is correct. An attempt to leave one's history and tradition behind, combined with the view that this history is unitary, is bound to fail. For it will necessarily have to preserve some parts of the old tradition as building blocks for the new. And since "metaphysics" permeates the old tradition through and through, it will also infect its successor. Heidegger was haunted by this problem. To solve it, he developed the strange poetic vocabulary of his late works. His hope was that individual words could be liberated, as it were, from their earlier subjection to metaphysics, and that the story they could be used to tell would be free of that subjection. His urging us to turn away from metaphysics as the study of "the being of beings" toward "the question of Being," his calling language "the house of Being" and man "Being's poem," were all parts of his effort to construct a nonmetaphysical language and a nonmetaphysical attitude—an attitude that would place us "at home" on the earth and not at odds with it.

But Heidegger's effort was a failure. Even a home is something we use. It was a failure, moreover, that sometimes seemed designed to terrorize those who perceive it as such. For qualifications like "the essential nature of . . .," "metaphysically," or "the inner truth and greatness of . . ." (in this case, "the inner truth and greatness of" National Socialism, which turns out to be "the encounter between global technology and modern man") suggest that Heidegger is always concerned with a deeper level of whatever he is addressing, and that one's lack of agreement only betrays a lack of understanding and sensitivity.

Heidegger's effort to leave metaphysics behind was based on serious philosophical misreadings, beginning with his tendentious interpretations of the pre-Socratics and culminating in his massive, if brilliant, deformation of Nietzsche. The continuity between the pre-Socratics and Plato is much greater than he ever imagined. And Nietzsche was too canny, too prolific and protean, too aware of the complexity of the tradition that he attacked, to be pinned down as a metaphysician on the basis of a few passages from *The Will to Power*, a haphazard collection of notes edited posthumously by his sister and doggedly interpreted by Heidegger as the skeleton of his major and unfinished work. Heidegger's tendency to consider "Modernity" and "the West" as monolithic structures with a single essence, whether it is "technology" or "metaphysics," also presents a great problem; I doubt that even "technology" designates a single phenomenon.

And I believe that the wholesale rejection of one's time, brave and brilliant as it may sometimes be, is bound to lead to nothing. Nothing is left when everything is left behind.

I share, in sum, many of Ferry and Renaut's criticisms of Heidegger, as well as their positive goal of an internal criticism of democracy that does not reject it completely. Still, I cannot escape the feeling that their own positive approach remains too deeply indebted to Heidegger's analysis of modernity. For surely "humanism" is itself as complex and ambiguous a concept as "the West" or "metaphysics" or the others. To characterize oneself as a humanist is not necessarily to be a friend of the human; and to be antihumanist is not necessarily to be its foe. Heidegger's antihumanism, in fact, springs from precisely his sense that it is humanism that has made us slaves of the technology that it fostered and engendered.

Humanism, at its most extreme, is a position that attributes to human beings absolute importance in the universe, absolute freedom from any outside forces in the world, absolute knowledge and control of themselves. It is a little like attributing God's features to his erstwhile creatures (and some of this extreme humanism originated in such a heaven-storming impulse). Antihumanism, at its own extreme, holds that individual human beings are of no consequence in the universe, that they are totally controlled, even constituted, by outside forces (economic, social, sexual) that are the real subjects of history, that they are essentially incapable of seeing themselves for what they are. The two extremes, of course, are at the opposite ends of the continuum of the history of philosophy, which contains a large number of positions, differing in the degree of importance, freedom, and self-knowledge they attribute to us. Toward the middle, where individual and social factors begin to merge and to influence one another, it becomes difficult to say exactly to which side a particular position belongs. It could even be that a proper mixture of these factors might constitute a position to which neither label could be correctly applied.

Now Ferry and Renaut believe, again, that Heidegger's main objections to modernity proceed from his particular brand of antihumanism, his belief that technology and democracy have given the individual more power in the world and in society than is appropriate. They agree with him that modernity possesses what they call a "tragic side." This has two aspects. The first is constituted by the erosion of the authority of tradition during modern times. Generally accepted answers to serious questions no longer exist; individuals, however ill-equipped, must answer such questions by themselves. The second aspect, again, is "the emergence of the world of pure technology and its consequent transformation of culture into industrial mass culture."

Ferry and Renaut conclude that these features of modernity explain "how appealing and persuasive Heidegger's criticism" can be. Still, they want a subtler and more complex approach than Heidegger's total rejection of the modern. They insist that some form of humanism is necessary for the preservation of human rights, the nature of which they leave generally unspecified, but which, they believe, the thought of '68 was intent on abandoning: "Whether conducted in the name of a radiant future [Marx] or a traditionalist reaction [Heidegger], the total critique of the modern world, because it is necessarily an antihumanism that leads inevitably to seeing in the democratic project, for example, in human rights, the prototype of ideology or of the metaphysical illusion, is structurally incapable of taking up, except insincerely and in spite of itself, the promises that are also those of modernity."

Ferry and Renaut insist that "it would be absurd today . . . to attempt philosophically to restore figures of subjectivity whose deconstruction dates . . . at least as far back as Kant." Traditional humanism, the optimistic Enlightenment view that human beings can become complete masters of the world, cannot be recaptured. But its virtues can be preserved. A more modern criticism is possible. "Between 'collaboration' and external criticism," they ask, "is there really no place for an internal critique?" And they answer that because "the democratic world endlessly makes promises that it does not keep," it is "in the name of these promises . . . that one should perhaps criticize it, in the name of the present."

These are all commendable sentiments. Ferry and Renaut refuse to take a stand outside modernity as a whole. (That is an impossible task, in any case.) They wish to vindicate a moderate humanism, a view that attributes significant but not "absolute" or "metaphysical" autonomy and self-knowledge to human subjects, a view that supplies a solid foundation for human rights.

Humanism is a flexible concept. Ferry and Renaut present their own "modest" version of it—rather surprisingly—on the basis of the famous definition that Sartre offered in "Existentialism is Humanism," the definition "which he was unfortunately to recant." In that essay, Sartre explicates his famous formula, "Existence precedes essence," by contrasting artifacts with human beings. An artifact, he writes, is produced according to a conception of the function that it will serve, and therefore "its essence—that is to say the sum of the formulae and the qualities which made its production and its definition possible—precedes its existence." Religion, Sartre continues, thinks of human beings as God's artifacts. But since, according to him, God does not exist, "There is one being whose existence comes before its essence": "Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. . . . To

begin with he is nothing. . . . Man simply is . . . what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing. . . . Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself." This is how Ferry and Renaut gloss Sartre's account:

The authentic subject is "nothingness" since it escapes any attempt to capture it in a definition. This is the freedom by which he distinguishes himself from manufactured objects, which in order to exist had to be conceived, thus defined, from the start by the mind of the artisan. If, therefore, objects are "something" (definite), the true, properly human subject is *nothing* determined, is *not* identifiable; in other words, he breaks with himself since he is always beyond everything that might define him, even in his own eyes.

In their view, Sartre's humanism belongs to a "tradition going back to Rousseau." In such a tradition, "the distinguishing feature of man is to be indefinable; his essence is to have no essence." According to this conception, we can deny ourselves the freedom that such humanism grants us by acting in "bad faith." This is to identify ourselves with a single one of our roles or features, to act "as though one were a creature, as though nature or history could become our codes."

That nature or history is our "code," that we are completely determined by forces exterior to us, is precisely the view that Ferry and Renaut attribute to the "thought of '68." I could argue with this attribution, at least in regard to Foucault's later work on the history of sexuality, but a general question concerning the "moderate" nature of their brand of humanism seems more urgent.

Sartre's humanism may well hark back to the Enlightenment, and even to Fichte, on whose exquisitely obscure thought Ferry relies for his conception of rights in the first volume of his *Political Philosophy*, but it is anything but "moderate." Appealing to Sartre, with his absolute distinction between human beings ("beings for themselves") and everything else in the world ("beings in themselves") and to Rousseau, who in his *Discourse on Inequality* envisages that an unbridgeable gap separates us from every other living thing, seems to me to lead Ferry and Renaut right back to the "undeconstructed figures of subjectivity" to which they believe we cannot return. And why can't we? Their reason seems to be that what we are and what we can do is at least partly a function of our history, that what we are and what we can do differ according to our historical period, our social and cultural situation—the forces, in short, that partly constitute both ourselves and the world we live in.

Ferry and Renaut want to deny that we are totally subject to such forces. This, I think, is right. But Sartre believed that we are totally independent of such forces, perfectly sovereign over ourselves and our choices: this is precisely what he means when he writes that "man . . . is not defin-

able . . . because he is at first nothing." For Sartre, we could be free agents only if we were something over and above *everything* that could be said of us, something beyond *every* situation in which we happened to be found. This, I think, is wrong.

All that is necessary in order to avoid reducing human beings to their situations, to forces over which they have no control, is to think that we are able to distance ourselves from any specific situation in which we happen to be. Our ability, our need, to occupy various roles, to belong to various groups, to accept various standards of description and evaluation, to be, in a word, complex, is sufficient to allow us to criticize and to "transcend" particular roles, groups, or standards. All that we need in order not to be defined by one role is our ability to occupy another role. What we cannot do is criticize them, and thus abandon them, all together and concurrently. We can indeed pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps—but only one boot at a time. And this view that individuals are a combination of strands as complex as the world to which each is related owes something to Nietzsche and Foucault; it is not antihumanist in any objectionable sense. It is still too early, therefore, to declare that "the French philosophy of the '60s," which criticized humanism, is dead. Some of its strands may be, others may not.

In the end, for all the admirably un-Heideggerian motive of their campaign for a theory of human rights, Ferry and Renaut are still under Heidegger's spell. They claim to pursue "an internal criticism of the world of democracy," but they actually share his contempt for the world of technology: "Who doesn't deplore chopping up movies with commercials?" they ask in an irresponsible aside—irresponsible, because the technology that broke new ground in cultural vulgarity also brought us indoor plumbing, mass inoculations, and the increased availability of information. By their own account, the world of technology is the world of modernity; and the humanism to which they appeal does not belong to that world.

It is impossible, in the end, to speak in disapproval of technology, of the world of "mass" culture, without speaking also in disapproval of democracy, as if the two were independent of one another in the modern world, as if one could be "against" technology and "for" democracy. Technology and democracy cannot be easily separated from each other. The idea that they can be separated is an error as grave as it is common, and we must guard against it. "Mass culture" may just be the price at which democracy comes. To find it distasteful is also to find the people whose culture it is (and whose culture isn't it?) themselves distasteful. And further reflection on "mass culture" may reveal it to be less objectionable than it seems.

It is their insistence on dissociating technology from democracy that forces Ferry and Renaut to subscribe to a conception of human beings that

belongs, by their own definition, to a “premodern” world. They characterize such a conception, which they correctly attribute to Heidegger, as a “traditionalist reaction.” Those are harsh words, especially since Ferry and Renaut are not above traditionalism themselves. It would be kinder and more accurate to say that though Ferry and Renaut are engaged in what they consider a revival of traditional liberalism, they are also at the same time traditional conservatives. They are respectful of the ideals of a free society, but they are suspicious of some of the means for achieving them, and they might appear disdainful of the people for whom these ideas are to be secured.

Alexander Nehamas