

BOOKS

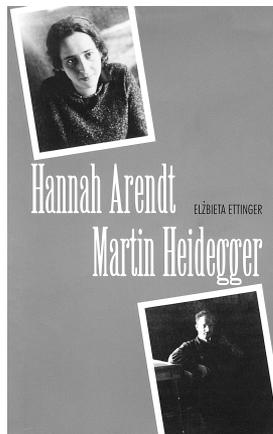
Is Love Blind?

Any book which reminds us that Martin Heidegger—Nobel Prize winner, genius of phenomenology, inspirer of “liberation theology,” of existentialism, of deconstructionism, and of miscellaneous other modern “isms,” not to mention being, arguably, the most-influential academic philosopher of the Twentieth century—was really just a Nazi, is certainly useful.

Unfortunately, that is about the only utility of M.I.T. Professor Ettinger’s slim volume. Otherwise, the book is a quasi-feminist attempt to explain why, in 1924, a Jewish leftist university student named Hannah Arendt could hurl herself into the bed of her married, vaguely Roman Catholic, obviously fascistic philosophy instructor. Arendt, as many people know, left Germany as the Nazis came to power, and became a famous left-wing critic and analyst of totalitarianism; at the same time, her quondam lover Heidegger became a card-carrying National Socialist, and hatchet-man for Nazi purges in German academia.

Professor Ettinger’s conclusions are based on three, interrelated myths. The first, and most important, myth is that Heidegger’s embrace of Nazism was a tragic “lapse,” a momentary betrayal of the philosophical ideals which could attract so many people, both then and since. The second, is that Heidegger, a Catholic seminarian in younger days, somehow became morally deranged under the influence of his wife, who insisted that they not baptize their children—despite efforts by Catholic churchmen like Archbishop Conrad Groeber to recapture him. And the third, is that even an intellectual heavy-weight like Arendt can sometimes fall head over heels, and maintain an unhealthy relationship long after it should have ended.

You may notice that these myths are actually three variations of the same theme: that love is blind, and causes temporary insanity to boot. Therefore, Arendt must be excused, because Heidegger seduced her; just as Heidegger



Hannah Arendt/
Martin Heidegger
by Elzbieta Ettinger
Yale University Press,
New Haven, 1995

150 pages, hardbound, \$16.00

must be forgiven because, first, his wife drew him away from religion, and, later, Adolf Hitler lured him away from rationality in general. It’s all very neat, and, as usual in our politically-correct society, nobody is ultimately to blame.

True Love

These myths must be counterposed to the reality that, in terms of core philosophy, both Heidegger and Arendt changed only cosmetically between 1924 and 1964; there were no fundamental “lapses.” The key to this, is that the true love of both was, actually, *Aristotle*. For instance, Arendt’s original enthusiasm for Heidegger was based on his militant Aristoteleanism. Although she tried to downplay this aspect of the affair in later years, we have the testimony of her fellow Heidegger classmate, Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer, who later became one of postwar West Germany’s most influential academics, reports that the university community of the 1920’s was electrified by Heidegger’s savage, nihilistic use of the Aristotelean dialectic to bring about (in the 1922 words of Heidegger himself) “the destruction of what is transmitted in our intellectual history.” Both Arendt and Gadamer attended what the students called “the Aristotle breakfasts,” 7 A.M. picnics with Heidegger. Heidegger’s version of the Aristotelean method was key to Arendt’s choice

of the subject for her Ph.D. thesis, which was, ironically, “St. Augustine’s Concept of Love.” None of this, unfortunately, is reported by author Ettinger.

Heidegger’s own history is a fascinating case study of the evil caused by the love of Aristotle. Ettinger does highlight Archbishop Groeber’s postwar discussions with Heidegger, but she neglects to mention that, when he was a parish priest, Groeber gave the 17-year-old *gymnasium* student Heidegger a copy of Franz Brentano’s 1862 book *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*. As his autobiographical writings make clear, this book confirmed Heidegger as an Aristotelean, and inspired him to a life of academic philosophy. Brentano, a failed priest who was sponsored by sections of the British aristocracy, was the primary figure in an Aristotle revival inside the Catholic Church during the last third of the Nineteenth century. (Brentano was also pivotal in popularizing Aristotle outside the Catholic Church. He personally trained Edmund Husserl, who became Heidegger’s teacher; and was the philosophy instructor and mentor of Sigmund Freud.)

The fact that Aristoteleanism was still considered a legitimate methodology in Catholicism—despite several efforts, including those led by Pope Leo XIII—allowed people like Heidegger to consider themselves Christians, when they were really turning into quite the opposite. Heidegger’s embrace of Nazism, for instance, was entirely on “spiritual” grounds: Hitler was needed, he said, to return Germany to its “essential nature,” as defined by Aristotle. During the Nazi period, Heidegger abjured his Catholicism to please his new political masters. Nonetheless, as an Aristotelean, he retained great popularity with students from the Jesuit and Franciscan orders, both of which had houses at the University of Freiburg. One of his wartime Jesuit students, Father Karl Rahner, used Heidegger’s epistemology as the basis for his own “Transcendental Thomism,” which in turn became the theoretical foundation of Liberation Theology.

Heidegger himself exploited the fact of his wartime popularity with certain Catholic clerics to claim that he was

really an anti-Nazi; in some interviews before his death, he even went so far as to make the grotesque implication that he was connected to the courageous White Rose group of Catholic resisters to Nazism. In 1954, when radical envi-

ronmentalism was just beginning to emerge, Heidegger published a major paper, claiming that technology, with its alleged alienating effect on spirituality, was the *real* cause of fascism. To the last, Heidegger maintained the standpoint

which Aristotle pioneered in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: if changes in public opinion have made an idea plausible, then that idea can appear ethically correct—no matter how immoral it is.

—Michael J. Minnicino

The Goldhagen Fraud Cannot Succeed

Daniel Goldhagen's ethnic vilification, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, alleges that the Nazi mass murder of Jews occurred because of an ancient anti-Semitism, intrinsic and peculiar to the German people.

Released in March 1996, this book was received with outrage by those who despise such a spur to hatred. World-renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin told a German TV interviewer April 19, that the book was "a disgrace," and that its author "should be totally ashamed." Moshe Zimmermann, German history professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, wrote in the April 29 *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, "A mythological, or even quasi-racist definition of the concept of 'the Germans,' which in Goldhagen's case lurks in the background of his work, is scientifically and morally unacceptable." The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported April 30 that former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, speaking in Washington earlier that month, had rejected Goldhagen's thesis of "collective guilt."

Goldhagen mimics the tedious methods of the anti-Semites. He has shopped through what other writers, in particular vague sociologists, have said against the ethnic group he targets; this he repackages as the thousand-year story of evil Germany. He is so perversely thorough, as to denounce as "anti-Semites" those Germans who resisted Hitler, and those who in previous centuries had worked for the emancipation of the Jews.

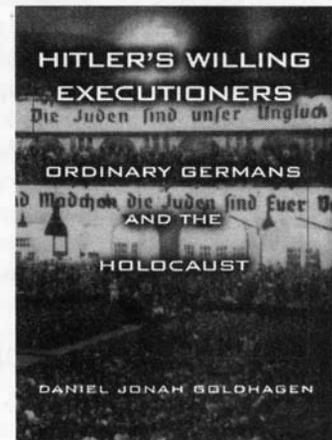
Goldhagen's final chapters catalogue with gruesome details the Nazi shootings of terrorized Jewish civilians. The reader is supposed to be so bloodily numb by the end of the book, that he will succumb to the outrageous, racist *explanation* of these crimes, which was presented in the first chapters.

Although the book has been criticized, it has not yet been widely subjected to analysis as a political provocation, with reference to the identity and intentions of those behind it. We are simply presented with author Goldhagen, a young Harvard University teacher, whose publisher is the old-line Alfred A. Knopf company.

This reviewer, however—being aware of the *British* geopolitical campaign against Germany as a new "Fourth Reich," aimed at preventing Germany, in alliance with the United States under President Clinton's leadership, from contributing to the economic development of Eurasia,—visited Harvard, interviewed Goldhagen, probed his sponsors' backgrounds, and studied the history of the Knopf firm.

The real origins of the book cannot long be kept from the wider public in America, or in Germany, where a translation will be distributed this fall. And once exposed as British gangsterism, this fraud will become a mere embarrassment to its sponsors.

Daniel Goldhagen is employed by the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard. Goldhagen's salary is paid by a certain Guido Goldman, who heads the German studies program at the de Gunzburg Center. This Goldman has great access to German and American officialdom, owing to the splendid, humanist reputation of his father, Jewish leader Nahum Goldman (1895-1982). The elder Goldman led a 1930's political battle against the Hitler regime (employing this reviewer's father as a strategist), and worked for postwar German-Jewish reconciliation and for Arab-Israeli peace. But unlike his father, Guido is a playboy jet setter, a protégé and intimate companion of Henry Kissinger. Goldman is officially a leading Ameri-



**Hitler's Willing Executioners:
Ordinary Germans and
the Holocaust**
by Daniel J. Goldhagen
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1996
622 pages, hardbound, \$30.00

can agent for British military intelligence's International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The center employing Goldhagen was built with money from Baroness Aileen "Minda" Bronfman de Gunzburg, daughter of mobster Sam Bronfman, the founder of Seagram's Liquor and a 50/50 partner with the British whiskey trust. Minda's brother Edgar Bronfman took the World Jewish Congress leadership from Nahum Goldman, and perverted it to British geopolitics.

Beginning in 1967, Henry Kissinger and Guido Goldman together organized the "German studies" program which employs Goldhagen. This project arose following the murder of President John F. Kennedy. British intelligence leader David Ormsby-Gore (Lord Harlech), and his closest U.S. allies headed by Averell Harriman, created a reactionary British geopolitical center at Harvard, usurping the slain President's name for a "John F. Kennedy School of Government." Kissinger, Goldman, and others who went on to manage the "German