

Postmetaphysics and the Global Order:

Radical Conservative Critiques of Globalization in Right Heideggerianism

[Draft]

JUSSI BACKMAN (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

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Abstract

The paper will study two critical perspectives on globalization that, it argues, can be regarded as paradigmatic instances of a “Right Heideggerian” approach that also qualifies as “radical conservatism”: that of Martin Heidegger himself and that of the Russian theorist Alexander Dugin, who in recent years has declared himself a Heideggerian thinker and sees Heidegger as the quintessential philosopher of radical conservatism. Both thinkers see the late modern process of globalization, in the sense of the increasingly comprehensive economic, social, as well as cultural integration of different communities into a universal “world order,” as an increasingly comprehensive Westernization of the planet and, simultaneously, as a culmination of the universalistic ambitions of the Western tradition of metaphysics.

Alexander Gelyevich Dugin (b. 1962) is best known as a political theorist associated with Russia’s far right. Since the early 1990s, he 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 émigrés such as the structural linguist, Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890–1938), and revived in the later part of the Soviet period by the ethnologist Lev Gumilyov (1912–1992). In general, Eurasianism insists on the non-European and “Asian” elements of Russia’s national identity, distinctly marked by

the long period of Mongol overlordship from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. 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 “Atlantic” sphere dominated by the United States and NATO.¹ Dugin’s political ideas have in recent years gained international prominence and notoriety, particularly in the context of the 2014 Ukrainian crisis when they were perceived to have some affinities with the Kremlin’s actual policies. German and English translations of his most important works have begun to appear and political scientists have taken an increasing interest in his writings and activities.²

What is not very widely acknowledged is that Dugin also, and perhaps primarily, identifies as a philosopher, and that in recent years, the main influence and guiding star of his philosophy has become Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). In what follows, we will take a look at some of the central Heideggerian facets of Dugin’s “mature” political thought of the past decade and consider in what sense Heidegger can be seen, as Dugin does, as *the* quintessential philosopher of radical conservatism and the conservative revolutionary tradition within which Dugin situates his “fourth political theory.” In this regard, Heidegger’s notion of the contemporary completion and end of Western metaphysical modernity and of a forthcoming “other beginning” of Western thought is central; we will see that Dugin draws from this notion “Right Heideggerian” conclusions quite distant from the “mainstream” tradition of French and Italian Heideggerianism but ones that find resonance in Heidegger’s own work. Particular attention will be paid to the influence of Heidegger’s and also Carl Schmitt’s accounts of the geopolitical situation of the 1930s on Dugin’s vision of a post–Cold War turn from an increasingly globalized and unipolar world to a multipolarity of “civilizations” distinguished by cultural traditions.

Dugin, Heidegger, and the Conservative Revolution

The emerging opposition between the Eurasian and the Atlantic geopolitical spheres, as envisioned by Dugin, retains the important ideological dimension it had during the Cold War. But with communism gone, Eurasia now needs to come up with a new ideology, suited to its

¹ For Dugin’s views on Neo-Eurasianism and its aims, see Dugin 2014a; 2014c, 163–87. For a comprehensive critical discussion of Russian Eurasianism and Neo-Eurasianism, see Laruelle 2008.

² For a recent extensive anthology concentrating specifically on Dugin’s political ideas and networks, see Laruelle 2015b.

particular traditions, to counter and rival the dominant Atlantic ideology, that is, political and economic liberalism. This is Dugin's key pursuit in his work *The Fourth Political Theory* (2009, trans. 2012), which sketches 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 demise of the two others. 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 ethnic particularism in fascism—while rejecting their respective individualism, materialism, and racism and, in general, their universal, unipolar, and monotonic historical teleologies (Dugin 2012, 43–54; 2014a, 101–14). The result is a *mélange* of spiritualist, communitarian, and particularist 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-teleological, progressive, and utopian conception of time underlying them (Dugin 2012, 55–66; 2014a, 129–65). In this sense, it draws its "dark inspiration" from the "postmodern" challenges to the program of the Enlightenment and to the autonomous and rational individual subject presupposed by this program and rejoices in their alleged deterioration. At the same time, however, Dugin (2012, 12, 23) 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 in the sense of ultramodernity is characterized by Dugin with an expression borrowed from Julius Evola (2003): "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, 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, 286)

While classical Enlightenment modernity actively combatted “premodernity” in the sense of tradition and superstition, postmodernity has grown completely indifferent to it. The strategy of Dugin’s postliberal conservatism is to exploit this indifference by reappropriating premodernity in a transformed sense. Dugin (2012, 83–94; 2014c, 145–53) carefully distinguishes this conservatism of the fourth ideology from the fundamental conservatism or traditionalism of thinkers such as René Guénon and Julius Evola, which advocates a simple reactionary return to premodern values, as well as from liberal or “status quo” conservatives such as Jürgen Habermas, who are in agreement with classical Enlightenment modernity but opposed to its unfolding into extreme, postmodern manifestations. The particular strand of conservatism within which Dugin (2012, 94–98; 2014c, 153–59) situates his own work and which he seeks to develop theoretically is the German interwar “conservative revolutionary” movement, which broadly encompasses thinkers such as Oswald Spengler, Carl Schmitt, Thomas Mann, Ernst Niekisch, Friedrich and Ernst Jünger, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Ernst von Salomon, and Ludwig Klages. While the conservative revolutionaries emerged from the very same post–World War I atmosphere that gave birth to Nazism and fascism, the important difference is that while the latter ultimately revealed themselves as ultramodern, even futuristic, movements, the conservative revolutionaries were fundamentally against modernity in its central manifestations—individualism, rationalism, utilitarianism, materialism, and subjectivism. In spite of this opposition, however, Dugin emphasizes that they were not mere nostalgic reactionaries: they did not see modernity as an unfortunate accident but as a necessary development that cannot be cancelled but must rather be taken to its extreme lengths in the hope of overcoming it. The conservative “revolution” is to be understood in terms of a cyclic, rather than linear, conception of time, in the literal sense of a rolling back (Latin *revolvere*) to a lost point of departure or origin that is recaptured, albeit in a new temporal sense. As Moeller van den Bruck puts it in his *Das dritte Reich* (1923):

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, 189, 206; 1934, 203, 219–20; translation modified)

In his book *Martin Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning* (2010, trans. 2014), Dugin presents his arguments for regarding Heidegger as *the* quintessential thinker of radical conservatism. He argues that in terms of systemic connections and contacts, intellectual influences and political sympathies, Heidegger must be regarded as an “integral part” of the German conservative revolutionary movement (Dugin 2014b, 23–26, 171–73). Heidegger, as read by Dugin, is concerned precisely with an intellectual and spiritual “revolution” in the radical conservative sense: he teaches an impending culmination and end of Western modernity and the possibility of a new beginning, of a new Western foundation that would not be a simple 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. As the title of Dugin’s book on Heidegger indicates, it is 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 a, if not *the*, philosopher of the conservative revolution.

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, 172; translation modified)

The specific conservative-revolutionary dynamic of Heidegger’s thought of a new beginning—the retrieval of a fundamental meaningfulness lost in modernity, “being” (*Sein* or *Seyn*), but in a manner that is neither reactionary nor nostalgic but oriented towards a future *after* modernity—that makes him, in Dugin’s eyes, the founding figure of the philosophical twenty-first century.

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 *the other 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 *the other beginning*, in favor of *Ereignis*, in favor of *Geviert*. (Dugin 2014b, 277–78; tr. mod.)

What does this Heideggerian other beginning consist in exactly? What do the key Heideggerian terms that Dugin associates with it, *Ereignis* and *Geviert*, stand for? These points require brief clarification.

Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Other Beginning of the West

In the “fundamental ontology” of his early incomplete *magnum opus*, *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger sought to pose anew a foundational philosophical question that had, in a sense, become obsolete in unfolding of the modern philosophical tradition: the basic ontological question of Aristotelian metaphysics concerning being *qua* being, being 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 *sense* of being (*Sinn von Sein*; Heidegger 2001b, 6–7; 2010, 5–6). For Heidegger, this is not primarily a question of the meaning or definition of the verb “to be” but rather the phenomenological and hermeneutic question of what makes possible the presence or accessibility of meaningful beings and a meaningful reality (cf. Heidegger 2001b, 151–52, 324–25; 2010, 146–47, 309–10) to the human being as *Dasein*, no longer understood simply as the active and autonomous subject of thought or action in the post-Cartesian sense, but ontologically determined by its function as the “recipient” or locus, as the historically situated and dynamic “there” (*Da*) of meaningful being-there (Heidegger 1996, 325; 1998e, 248). In Dugin’s eyes, it is precisely Heidegger’s deconstruction of the post-Cartesian concept of subjectivity and his introduction of a radically non-self-sufficient, dynamic, and temporal understanding of human being that makes Heideggerian *Dasein* the model of political agency *par excellence* for the fourth political theory and a substitute for the primary agents of the modern ideologies (the individual in liberalism, class in Marxism, the state or race in fascism; Dugin 2012, 32–54).³

In the missing third division of the first part of *Being and Time*, the sense of being was to be identified with the temporal contextuality of being—the situatedness of meaningful beings in a dynamic and referential, temporally structured meaning-context with which *Dasein*’s temporally structured, dynamic, and context-sensitive understanding of being correlates

³ On Heidegger’s analysis of the modern concept of subjectivity, see, e.g., Heidegger 1991d, 96–147, 1998d, 141–99, 429–36, 450–54; 2002a, 57–85; 2003a, 26–32, 46–49; 2003b, 75–113.

(Heidegger 2001b, 17–19; 2010, 17–18; cf. 1988, 1n1, 227–330; 1997, 1n1, 322–469). In this way, the norm or ideal of the beingness of beings implicitly established in ancient metaphysics—according to Heidegger, *constant presence*, permanent and absolute accessibility to thinking, as the criterion of the degree to which something *is* (Heidegger 1998a, 154; 2000b, 216)—would not have been “restored” but, on the contrary, transformed into a hermeneutic model of the irreducible temporal and historical situatedness and context-sensitivity of all meaningful 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 intended and forced him to reconsider the points of departure of his ontological project (cf. Heidegger 1996, 327–28; 1998e, 249–50).⁴

In his seminal work of the early 1930s, which coincides chronologically with the rise of both the Nazis and the conservative revolutionaries and with Heidegger’s own infamous Nazi episode of 1933–34, this reconsideration leads Heidegger to develop a new “being-historical” narrative of the history of Western metaphysics. In this narrative, the “first beginning”—*Anfang*, not in the sense of a mere chronological commencement but in the sense of an initial topic or principle—of the Western metaphysics of constant presence largely coincides with the Presocratic Parmenides, who seeks to reduce all differences, oppositions, and negativity to the pure undifferentiated positivity of the equal intelligible accessibility of all things to thinking (see, e.g., Heidegger 1992a, 9–10; 1992b, 7–8; 2002a, 280; 2003b, 371). Through its Platonic, Aristotelian, scholastic, Cartesian, Kantian, and Hegelian transformations, in which the emphasis gradually shifts from being to thinking or, more precisely, to the subjectivity of the thinking and willing ego, the Western metaphysics of presence finally attains its culmination and completion in Nietzsche’s metaphysics. For Nietzsche, as Heidegger reads him, being/reality has become mere inherently meaningless and disposable raw material that is ceaselessly reconfigured by subjectivity as the will to power. In its self-referential and aimless movement of self-preservation and self-enhancement (the “eternal recurrence of the same”), life as will to power imposes temporary and instrumental meanings or “values” upon the world. Nietzsche is not yet a genuinely *postmodern* but rather an *ultramodern* thinker who

⁴ For an extensive discussion of Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology, see Backman 2015, 69–120.

reveals the metaphysical basis of the modern technical domination and utter instrumentalization and subjectivization of reality.⁵

In the Nietzschean, ultramodern and nihilistic technical world of fundamental meaninglessness, in which meanings and values have become mere temporary subjective constructions, mere instruments of domination and control, the Western metaphysics of presence reaches its ultimate point of culmination. Philosophy in its classical, theoretical and contemplative form now becomes superfluous, since its metaphysical presuppositions have become completely unfolded, and it can now increasingly be replaced by the positive sciences and social ideologies as means of actively controlling and configuring nature and society (see Heidegger 2000d, 61–65; 2002b, 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 “first beginning” of Western thinking that would result in its transformation into the “other beginning” (Heidegger 1989, 171, 185; 1991c, 182; 1998d, 21; 2012b, 135, 145–46). In the later and mature phase of his thought, Heidegger understands his own philosophical project precisely as a preparation for such another beginning. It was never systematized by him into a formal philosophical “program”; his posthumously published monographs of the 1930s and 1940s, particularly *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936–38, published 1989), merely intimate and anticipate the other beginning from different angles, constantly contrasting it with the first, Greek beginning.

In very general and abstract terms, in the Heideggerian other beginning, philosophy opens up to the transcendence, inaccessibility, and nonpresence inherent in and presupposed by all human access to meaningfulness but disregarded by the metaphysical tradition, which was focused precisely on pure intelligible accessibility as such and, ultimately, total controllability and manipulability. What interests thinking 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 implicitly orient and structure each singular situation or instant of meaningful presence. This contextualizing background-structure is most famously captured by the later Heidegger in the enigmatic and evocative figure of the *Geviert*, the fourfold model consisting of the sky and the

⁵ On Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche as the end of metaphysics, see, e.g., Heidegger 1991a, 3–6; 1992b, 198–208; 1991c, 3–9, 150–251; 1991d, 147–96; 1998c, 1–4, 415–23, 425–32, 585–94; 1998d, 1–22, 177–229, 231–361.

earth, divinities and mortals—four background dimensions of meaningfulness converging in concrete things as singular configurations of meaningful presence (see, in particular, Heidegger 1994, 5–23; 2000c, 157–75; 2001a, 161–84; 2012a, 5–22). Approached in terms of the fourfold, a meaningful thing is humanly meaningful by pointing 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 (the sky) in which sensuous materiality (the earth) can become meaningfully articulated and contextualized.⁶ In contrast to Aristotelian metaphysics, the other beginning no longer approaches being in terms of already constituted and accessible beings or entities determined by a stable ideal form. Rather, it views being as an ongoing, dynamic event of meaning-constitution that constantly situates and (re)contextualizes meaningful presence—as *Ereignis*, as 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. *Ereignis* now becomes the watchword of the later Heidegger’s event ontology.

Right Heideggerianism as Radical Conservatism

In his Heidegger book, Dugin (2014b, 25–28) points to the fact that in spite of his affinities with radical conservatism and his National Socialist episode, Heidegger’s main influence both before and after the Second World War was within left-leaning intellectual circles. His most prominent German students included New Left icons such as Herbert Marcuse, and outside Germany, Heidegger’s legacy was initially appropriated mainly by French leftists such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Another wave of “Left Heideggerianism” in the wide sense came to the fore in the 1960s with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and a third in the 1980s with Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy in France and Gianni Vattimo and Giorgio Agamben in Italy. It has been a symptomatic tendency of the “Left Heideggerian” orientation to conflate the philosophical projects of Nietzsche and Heidegger, to downplay the importance of Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche as a metaphysical thinker of completed modernity and of the Heideggerian vision of a postmetaphysical “other beginning” of thinking, while emphasizing Heidegger’s hermeneutics of finitude and situatedness. Vattimo (1997, 13) explicitly identifies “Left Heideggerianism” with his own

⁶ On this reading of the fourfold, see Backman 2015, 135–54, 190–202. For Dugin’s reading, see Dugin 2014b, 189–279. For a recent book-length study on the topic, see Mitchell 2015.

Nietzsche-inspired “weak thought” (*pensiero debole*) that desists from pursuing absolute or even universal perspectives and resigns itself to the irreducibly interpretive, historically transforming, and context-dependent nature of thinking. “Right Heideggerianism” is defined by Vattimo as a conservative, negative-theological approach that awaits a “return of being” in the sense of the rediscovery of some substantial and perennial lost origin or transcendental signified.

It is, in effect, only with Dugin that a genuinely “Right Heideggerian,” radical conservative orientation with explicit ideological implications has surfaced. Dugin’s announced project is to “develop the implicit political philosophy of Heidegger into an explicit one” (Dugin 2014a, 114). From the vantage point of Dugin’s idea of a conservative revolution, it is precisely the “other beginning” that comes into view the most salient aspect of Heidegger’s intellectual legacy. In fact, it must be said to Dugin’s credit that his reading of Heidegger is more comprehensive and in many ways more true to Heidegger’s own “intentions” and visions, than many of the Left Heideggerian interpretations.

Indeed, with the recent publication of Heidegger’s “thought diaries” from the years 1931–48, the so-called *Black Notebooks*, which have aroused considerable attention because of several antisemitically charged comments, it has become clear that Heidegger himself was the first “Right Heideggerian.”⁷ Initial reactions to the notebooks have tended to see their antisemitic aspects as proof of Heidegger’s prolonged commitment to Nazi ideology. However, the notebooks in fact make it clearer than ever that this commitment was short-lived and highly ambiguous at best. Rather, they lend support to Dugin’s understanding of Heidegger’s commitment to a radical conservatism with which the latter, for a brief period and along with many other German intellectuals, confused Nazism. The notebooks show how Heidegger’s interpretation of contemporary phenomena such as fascism, communism, and liberalism, as well as his propagandistic and stereotypical notion of “world Judaism” as an avatar of modern calculation and technical manipulation, is increasingly 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

⁷ For a study of the kind of antisemitism found in the *Black Notebooks*, see Trawny 2014; 2015.

relies solely upon itself" (Heidegger 2014a, 408). This is especially true of Nazi racial ideology: racialism, Heidegger (2014b, 48) notes, is a logical conclusion of modern subjectivism in the form of a biologism or biopower that no longer makes a distinction between the human being and biological animality. Nazism is simply modernity let loose, and in this capacity, it is metaphysically identical in essence with (Italian) fascism and Soviet Bolshevism (Heidegger 2014b, 109, 262). In a curious remark written after the war, Heidegger (2015a, 130) notes that had National Socialism and fascism been "successful," they would have prepared Europe for "communism"—to be understood in the wide, metaphysical sense of a complete and boundless manipulation and mobilization of the "human resources" of a fully homogenized and biologized humanity.⁸

From Planetarism to the Multipolarity of Civilizations

It is precisely concern for the homogenization of the human world, for the levelling 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" views and clearly connects them to the themes and concerns of the conservative revolutionaries. They have a notable affinity with Carl Schmitt's contemporary notion of the *Großraum*, of the geopolitical articulation of the world into "large spaces" as an alternative to the universalistic and unipolar global world order initially represented by the League of Nations.⁹ In November 1933, Heidegger (2000a, 188–89), as Rector of the University of Freiburg, 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. 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 primarily as a representative of Europe and of European philosophy, in particular, basing this claim on the fact that the last great philosophers in his narrative of the history of

⁸ For Heidegger's elaboration of his "metaphysical" concept of communism, see Heidegger 1998b, 179–214, 223–24; 2015b, 151–80, 188.

⁹ Schmitt initially introduced the notion of *Großraum* in his 1938 lecture on "The *Großraum* Order of International Law"; Schmitt 1995, 269–371; 2011, 75–124.

Western metaphysics—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, 28–29; 2000b, 40–41)

In the radical conservative geopolitical vision of Schmitt and Heidegger, the great initial promise of National Socialism was to create a European *Großraum*, led by Germany, 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 particularistic political idea, based, in the words of Schmitt (1995, 306; 2011, 111), on the “respect of every nation as a reality of life determined through species and origin, blood and soil”—although for Heidegger, who despised racialism and biologism, the nonuniversal European identity was to be determined rather by its particular cultural and spiritual tradition crystallizing in European philosophy. This illusion of the Nazi empire as in principle territorially limited or as nationally or culturally particularistic was, of course, shattered at the latest by the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, and by the concomitant announcement of a coming, supranational “New Order” (*Neuordnung*) of Europe, organized on racial principles.¹⁰ Nazism had thereby definitively disappointed the radical conservatives by revealing the planetary scope and the homogenizing, biologistic, and technical nature of its ambitions. In 1941 or 1942, Heidegger writes:

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 determination to complete the essence of modernity, an essence which in the meanwhile dominates the Western hemisphere (America) in the

¹⁰ The New Order of Europe was initially announced by Hitler in his speech of January 30, 1941.

same unequivocal manner as the East of Russian Bolshevism. Europe is the completion of both. (Heidegger 2009, 95; 2013, 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, 51; 2012a, 48) already in 1949 as the “battle for the domination 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 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, 271; 2006, 296), rather than genuine conflicts between truly distinct political communities.

Dugin (1989, 101–20) 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 large 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 Francis Fukuyama’s (1989) thesis on the liberal-democratic “end of history,” on the one hand, and Samuel Huntington’s (1993) prediction of the replacement of the Cold War by a cultural “clash of civilizations,” on the other. Huntington’s vision, Dugin argues, has in hindsight proved closer to the truth than Fukuyama’s, and his articulation of the world into seven or eight major “civilizations” or religious and cultural regions has the merit of providing a way of rehabilitating Schmittian “large spaces.” 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 the multipolarity of civilizations as such and the 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, 116, 120)

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

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, 95; 2013, 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 in between the European and Asian spaces. Heidegger (1998b, 119–20; 2015b, 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 defeat or even physical extermination of one by the other, but in the sense of the subjugation of both to the homogenizing biological-technical matrix of modernity. 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"—that is, in an encounter with Russia in its historical particularity and an engagement in a fruitful exchange between the West and its trans-European, Eurasian other. Remarks such as this give Dugin (2014b, 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."

Conclusion

We see that the substance of Dugin's "fourth political theory" cannot be characterized as particularly original: to a large extent, it consists simply in a circulation and recombination of philosophical and political ideas that have been around for almost a century. Moreover, the theory remains a draft with much important detail and articulation missing, hopelessly vague on key issues such as the precise nature and dynamic of "civilizations" and "traditions" and the different possible kinds of interaction between them. Its core remains conspicuously nonpragmatic, even esoteric—the section on "Fourth Political Practice" in *The Fourth Political Theory*, for example, comprises less than 10 pages (Dugin 2012, 177–83). Dugin's long history of "bedfellowing" with very heterogeneous European far-right and fascist movements and groups makes it very questionable to what extent his strict theoretical distinction between his fourth ideology and all forms of racism, xenophobia, and other, more traditional far-right phenomena, is tenable or valid on the level of concrete political practices.¹¹

However, Dugin has undeniably been able to breathe new life into an old idea, Eurasianism, that to some extent clearly influences Russian geopolitical thinking even among the political and military leadership. In a broader and more international framework, Dugin's perhaps most interesting achievement has been to rediscover and reassert a form of distinctly antimodern conservatism that is most often not even recognized as an available ideological option: the revolutionary or radical conservatism of the Weimar era that was irreparably eclipsed by fascism and National Socialism and, in many ways unjustly, confused with them. From a purely theoretical viewpoint, Dugin's discovery of a relatively coherent philosophical foundation for this ideology in Heidegger's postmetaphysical thinking has been innovative, even unique, in the contemporary context of political theory. Dugin's Heideggerian and Schmittian geopolitical vision of the world as a multipolarity of civilizations will undoubtedly have a major role to play in the theoretical and ideological discourses of twenty-first-century radical conservative intellectuals, even though it remains highly questionable what kind of concrete applications it could have on the level of political movements, let alone international policy-making.

¹¹ On this "bedfellowing," see Camus 2015; İmanbeyli 2015; Korkut and Akçali 2015; Laruelle 2015a; 2015b, viii; Lebourg 2015; Savino 2015; Shekhovtsov 2015; Tipaldou 2015.

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