

# crisis theory and world order

*heideggerian reflections*

norman k. swazo



CRISIS THEORY  
AND WORLD ORDER

SUNY SERIES IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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AND WORLD ORDER

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*Heideggerian Reflections*

NORMAN K. SWAZO

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# CONTENTS

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|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Preface   | vii |
| Acknowledgments   | ix  |
| Introduction  | 1   |
| PART ONE: THEORETICAL CRITIQUE                                      |     |
| 1 CRISIS THEORY: THE CHALLENGE TO PEACE RESEARCH                    | 17  |
| 2 THE PROBLEM OF WORLD ORDER:<br>OVERCOMING THE LOGIC OF STATECRAFT | 39  |
| 3 THE METAPHYSICAL GROUND OF<br>WORLD ORDER THINKING                | 71  |
| 4 PLANETARY POLITICS AND THE<br>ESSENCE OF TECHNOLOGY               | 119 |
| PART TWO: ESSENTIAL POLITICAL THINKING                              |     |
| 5 A PATHWAY TO ESSENTIAL POLITICAL THINKING                         | 155 |
| 6 THE ESSENCE OF POLITICAL BEING                                    | 179 |
| Conclusion: Projecting-Open [ <i>Entwurf</i> ] with Heidegger       | 227 |
| Notes   | 241 |
| Index   | 281 |

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## PREFACE

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While Professor of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg im Breisbau in 1943, Heidegger lectured on the topic of “Nietzsche’s Word ‘God is Dead,’” in which he had something to say about “preparatory thinking.” Given Heidegger’s pronouncements, I believe that a reflection of the sort attempted here is a matter of “preparing for a simple and inconspicuous step in thought.” Such is preparatory thinking, in which what matters is “to light up that space within which Being itself might again be able to take man, with respect to his essence, into a primal relationship.” The problem for the thinker, of course, as Heidegger himself noted, is to proceed in “an unpretentious way,” all the while conceding that we shall all of us share in this thinking, “clumsy and groping though it be,” with the hope that this sharing “proves to be an unobtrusive sowing—a sowing that cannot be authenticated through the prestige or utility attaching to it—by sowers who may perhaps never see blade and fruit and may never know a harvest. They serve the sowing, and even before that they serve its preparation.”

Heidegger’s metaphor appropriately distinguished between the sowing and the plowing, the latter “making the field capable of cultivation.” In this work I expect that my contribution is first and foremost one of “having a presentiment of, and then finding, that field,” of contributing to its cultivation, and only secondly one of sowing that field. And, insofar as “to each thinker there is assigned but one way, his own, whose traces he must again and again go back and forth that finally he may hold to it as the one that is his own—although it never belongs to him—and may tell what can be experienced on that way,” this book constitutes an invitation to all who would share in a preparatory thinking and to sow the field.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A work such as the present one owes an immeasurable intellectual debt to so many formative influences. Each whose name and work is invoked here is a contributor to a dialogue along a pathway of thought I have been following for over two decades. The text of this work is but a rough outline of this dialogue, leaving much unthought and unspoken as the silent yet omnipresent context. Heidegger, of course, is my principal interlocutor, and thus it is to him that I owe the greatest debt and with whom my philosophical friendship most abides. Yet, there are so many interpreters and commentators on the Heidegger corpus whose works, while unmentioned and uncited, have helped to prepare me. I am no less indebted to these Heidegger scholars.

I acknowledge specifically Bernard P. Dauenhauer, until recently University Professor of Philosophy at the University of Georgia. Dauenhauer, as friend, teacher, and colleague, has always given generously of his time and effort to assist my understanding of Heidegger and the implications of Heidegger's thought for political philosophy in general. I am and remain immeasurably grateful for his fruitful guidance, and trust that this present work honors his place as my most consistent teacher and interlocutor.

My engagement of Heidegger's thought in world order perspective is due in large part to the abiding formative influence of Richard A. Falk, until recently Albert G. Milbank Professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton University. This present work attests to the need for a personal response to the phenomenon of planetary crisis, a response that Professor Falk provoked in me as an undergraduate student that I have been working out slowly since then and that I now entrust to him and the community of world order scholars. Of the latter I mention Saul Mendlovitz, Rajni Kothari, Ali Mazrui, and R. B. J. Walker—one and all colleagues who encouraged and supported my early efforts to address world order issues. I mention also Professor

Hwa Yol Jung of Moravian College, political theorist of the first rank, who has ably spoken of “the crisis of political understanding” and whose analysis has contributed to my frame of thinking.

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*Fairbanks, Alaska*  
*August 2001*

# INTRODUCTION

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In this work I speak principally to political philosophers and world order scholars, the latter being primarily social scientists and specialists in international law. I juxtapose philosophical discourse and world order scholarship by considering one way in which recent European philosophy may have something to add to discussions about the future of the world political order. In this book I juxtapose the philosophical discourse of Martin Heidegger to world order studies in the hope of eliciting further attention to the foundational questions of world order thinking. Thereby, I hope to bring both sets of discourse into an effectively historical dialogue.

Inasmuch as I speak in this book primarily to world order scholars, I have labored considerably to make Heidegger's thought accessible, yet without committing the interpretive failure of oversimplification. In working toward this end, I cannot but present Heidegger's thought according to an understanding of those texts to which I am at present committed. Obviously, Heidegger scholarship will show that other readings of Heidegger are plausible. What follow are Heideggerian meditations, *my* meditations on the contemporary discourse of world order informed by *my* reading of Heidegger. I say "*my* reading of Heidegger" to set up the contrast to Derrida's/Foucault's/LaBarthe's/etc. reading of Heidegger. Such are the more consciously political readers of Heidegger, granted; and, so, one would think it appropriate to bring them into the discussion. However, I am not persuaded either of the need or the desirability to do so in the present context. Having appropriated the Heidegger corpus for the critical task ventured here, I recognize all too well that Heidegger's work requires significant "interpretive struggles." For better or for worse, however, I have decided not to frustrate world order scholars with the pedantic strategy of a philosophical method that examines the interpretive debates internal to Heidegger scholarship. This more demanding task must come after the introductory juxtaposition

of discourses I venture here. Such is my invitation to others insofar as my modest accomplishment here is only to open up an avenue of inquiry.

By *world order thinking* (a concept explained more fully in chapter 2 for the benefit of my philosophical audience unfamiliar with the history of the world order movement) I understand that thinking which has for its thematic concern sociopolitical/socioeconomic affairs, analyzed in terms of possibilities and strategies of transition from the currently prevailing logic of statecraft to a logic that would establish *global* institutional structures and corresponding patterns of behavior. In this sense, *world orderism* would be considered an advance beyond the deficiency of international relations theory and practice, inasmuch as the latter sustains the nation-state system. Peace research (discussed specifically in chapter 1) is, in my view, a species of social science practice which contributes to the more comprehensive world order agenda in the latter's concern for the problem of war and conflict resolution in the twofold context of international relations and civil society.

Understanding world order studies thus, one who studies the philosophy of social science may reasonably come to ask what *legitimizes* world order inquiry conceived as a species of social science. This is a question to be distinguished from that of what *motivates* world order inquiry. The former query puts into question, renders doubtful—one may even say, subverts—the world order comportment in its challenge to the modern international relations approach. Why would one do so? Clearly, one would do so not because one challenges the motivation of world order thinking. World order scholars seek a good, a common good, whether their approach to international society is grounded in legal positivism, natural law tradition, contractarian thought, cosmopolitanism, or ideological agnosticism. They seek to preserve and secure for human posterity a planetary commons and a planetary existence, both of which are now starkly threatened by our sustained commitment to the logic of statecraft, the governing frame of political thought and practice in our day. Given this programmatic quest, it would seem odd deliberately to render such an enterprise doubtful, although obviously one may do so on the basis of a committed defense of the status quo. This is not the point of departure for the theoretical critique of world order thinking I advance in this book.

To engage in critique in the manner employed here is to engage in an act of clarification. It is to disclose the hidden, the tacit, the presupposed, and then to question yet further in the manner of questioning foundations. To ask what legitimizes world order inquiry, even whether it can claim legitimacy in contraposition to the logic of statecraft, is to seek clarification of the prejudices, the presuppositions, that inform such inquiry, i.e., tacit if not explicit

commitments about the nature of human reality, the role of language, the possibilities of human knowledge, the meaning and status of fact and value—what in the jargon of philosophy is comprehended by the terms *ontology* (theory of being) and *epistemology* (theory of knowledge). Such critique would demonstrate that to proceed in a programmatic way in world order inquiry, with attention to the urgency of finding and implementing solutions to global problems, is but one way of conceiving the world order quest. I wish to demonstrate (specifically in chapters 3 and 4) that there is also a philosophical dimension to the problem of world order that must be taken seriously even if the programmatic return on such inquiry seems negligible.

World order scholars have from time to time acknowledged that the task of global transformation must include attention to the problem of transforming philosophical orientations and value preferences. Such is the avowedly normative feature of the world order project. However, a more or less systematic engagement of this dimension of reform is a significant lacuna in world order discourse. Especially problematic in this omission is that specific ontological and epistemological difficulties are at issue, not just value preferences. Indeed, value preferences, value thinking itself as an expression of a thoroughly modern ontological commitment, is part of what is for me fundamentally at issue. This dimension of critique is not immediately discernible to world order scholars, especially to the extent that the methodological commitments of social science research are barriers to recognition of those difficulties. My argument in this book is that unless ontological and epistemological commitments of world order studies and peace research are clarified and put into question, otherwise noble ends may suffer in the long term from inappropriate means. A critique of world order thinking thus may be said to seek discipline in such inquiry, in the positive sense of eliminating suspect metaphysical dogma or doctrine and establishing more securely the bases of an inquiry that may then proceed with its task with warrant in hand. Only a theoretically grounded critique can issue such a warrant, if indeed there may be one.

Fundamentally at issue in such a critique is how and why we today speak of *crisis*, a planetary crisis demonstrated by the objective conditions of planetary life, certainly, but also—and more significant—a crisis of Western philosophy and science. This is the sense of crisis that is really of foundational import even for world order discourse, even though this research community remains largely unengaged by this philosophical *problematique*. Such crisis includes political philosophy and political science in their structural dependence upon philosophy qua first philosophy (*prote philosophia*), i.e., metaphysics. This structural dependence is all too often unacknowledged and

even denied by social science in its effort to declare its liberation from the excesses of speculative discourse. What is essential in the crisis of Western philosophy and science is that it bespeaks much more fundamentally a crisis of 'Western humanity' in its self-understanding. It is this feature of crisis that determines the world order movement in what I, following Heidegger, will call its *essential configuration*. This Heideggerian concept can be understood only in the context of that structural dependence (mentioned above) which shapes Western humanity as it "broadens out" into world history, giving that world history an essentially Western determination.

Western humanity has its history, the content of which cannot but be understood in terms of one or another philosophy of history (e.g., Aristotelian natural teleological process, Christian divine providence and eschatology, Enlightenment conceptions of the inevitable progress of reason, the Hegelian theodicy or self-justification of "God" qua self-unfolding Spirit (*Geist*), the Marxist materialist evolution of the world towards stateless communist society, the Nietzschean eternal recurrence of all things, etc.). All historiography either explicitly or implicitly presupposes such a philosophy of history, precisely inasmuch as the fundamental categories and methods of conceptualization and inquiry of historical discourse are inevitably ontological and epistemological commitments.

In this century the thought of Heidegger about the crisis of Western philosophy, i.e., the "crisis of reason," and, thereby, the crisis of European humanity, has sought to respond in some measure to what has been called the Nietzschean subversion of Platonic idealism, Aristotelian teleology, and Christian eschatology, each of which in its own way and historical domain has served to legitimate Western morality. Questions of morality are inextricably linked to questions about reality inasmuch as ontological and epistemological commitments either tacitly or explicitly inform and determine ethical (and political) discourse in its problems and methods. Heidegger's thought confronts the challenge posed by Nietzsche's subversion of Western morality, not by explicitly engaging in a defense of the Western tradition of ethical discourse, but by locating Nietzsche himself within the Western tradition of metaphysics. (Nietzsche had understood himself to be an anti-metaphysician and his project to be anti-metaphysical.)

It is Heidegger's claim (and the power of his thinking compels our attention) that the history of Western metaphysics has developed on the basis of an "inner logic" that covertly determines the course of Western history. Such a notion is admittedly strange, especially to social scientists whose empirically grounded methodological prejudices preclude such explanatory conceptions. Nevertheless, this fundamental history, says Hei-

degger, achieved its “completion” or “closure” at the turn of the century with Nietzsche’s thought, such that the twentieth century is characterized by a fundamental breach with tradition, i.e., a breach with Platonic idealism, Aristotelian teleology, and Christian eschatology. In this claim Heidegger is not speaking of an end, a cessation, to metaphysical inquiry. Rather, ‘completion’ or ‘closure’ bespeaks what has been called “a concluding process now underway.”

There are both theoretical and practical consequences to such a closure. Philosophy becomes self-reflective, examining the meaning of the history of that tradition in which reason—once held in primacy—is dislocated. Correlatively, political philosophy or moral philosophy, which has sought to provide justification for ethical and political practice, loses its warrant along with the loss of authority hitherto accorded to metaphysics as first philosophy. The crisis of reason is, in short, a crisis of understanding and includes, as Hwa Yol Jung rightly noted some years ago, “the crisis of political understanding.”<sup>1</sup> Or, as Fred Dallmayr put it, we stand “precariously at the crossroads of *polis* and *cosmopolis*” as a result of “the decentering of the dominant position of European nation-states.”<sup>2</sup>

World order scholars have not undertaken the kind of self-examination that would clarify the extent to which world order discourse is involved in this fundamental crisis of understanding. Yet, as I have said, unless they become aware of the more fundamental features of crisis, the community of world order researchers may unwittingly pursue their quest in a way that is philosophically suspect. Heidegger’s thought confronts the entire tradition of Western metaphysics and especially engages in a critique of modernity. This is precisely the kind of context for critique that, in my view, liberates world order thinking from flawed metaphysical presuppositions steeped in metaphysical positions of modernity. For this reason in particular I choose Heidegger’s thought as the basis for a theoretical critique of world order thinking.

One may, of course, for a variety of reasons question my choice of Heidegger for this critical task. Surely, for example, it may be objected that Heidegger’s thought as a whole is morally suspect given his entanglement with National Socialism in the 1930s. In this book I leave this issue aside, although I have engaged it elsewhere and refer my current readers to those discussions if they wish to pursue that question.<sup>3</sup> My point in leaving the issue untreated here is not to dismiss it as irrelevant, for surely “the Heidegger affair” adds to the burden of justifying any serious effort to appropriate and extend Heidegger’s thought in the context of political discourse. However, if my analysis in this book is more compelling than not in the issues discussed,



then this book should show the positive critical power and weight of Heidegger's thought for world order thinking despite his entanglement with National Socialism.

Heidegger's thought, I submit, is not depreciated by his entanglement. Rather, one should see (as Derrida, I think rightly, observed) that Heidegger in 1933–34 was unavoidably “caught up” in a political commitment bound to the metaphysics of modernity, despite his own philosophical critique of modernity and his effort to overcome the categorical commitments of modern metaphysics. It is thus that Heidegger could be unwittingly “committed” to National Socialism in 1933–34, i.e., to nationalism and to statism, insofar as these are metaphysically grounded categorical commitments. Yet, the later Heidegger could see both nationalism and statism, and especially “the total state” of the twentieth century, as inseparable from the metaphysics of modernity. He could see the need for a political system that would come to grips with what he called “the planetary domination of technology” and all that this implies for the technological determination of practically every feature of planetary life. As William Spanos puts it,

. . . Heidegger's ontologically situated destruction of the Western philosophical tradition . . . can be—indeed, has been transcoded—into a profound interrogation of the Eurocentric and hegemonic/imperial implications of the technological superstructure of modern democratic/capitalistic societies. However limited as such by its generalized ontological focus, Heidegger's interrogation has become acutely essential to an oppositional discourse that would counter the prevailing representation of contemporary Western history in the aftermath of the “end” of the Cold War. I mean the representation that grossly mystifies the epochal events of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe as the “fall of socialism” or, conversely, the “triumph of the principles of democracy,” which projects these events sensationally as the “end of history” or, alternatively, as the advent of a “new world order” presided over by the spirit of the “free subject.”<sup>4</sup>

It is in this feature of confrontation with the planetary domination of technology that Heidegger's thought may profitably buttress the world order comportment in its challenge to the logic of statecraft even while serving simultaneously as a basis for theoretical critique. Specifically, the discussion I provide in Part 2 of the book initiates a positive employment of Heidegger's thought in the context of a global political discourse no longer committed to technocratic futurism and the technological order it would impose.

Yet another objection could be raised to my choice of Heidegger. Surely, it may be said, there are equally powerful—and less morally suspect—

thinkers in this century (or earlier) whose thought could be enlisted into the service of a theoretical critique of contemporary world order thinking. I cannot undertake a critical review of analytic or Anglo-American philosophers whose work may be said to provide an alternative basis for theoretical critique, certainly not if the book is to remain within a manageable frame. Moreover, it is not my purpose to engage in a comparative study. However, some brief comment may be helpful in defending my choice of Heidegger. To this end, I mention Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Rawls.

Wittgenstein and Heidegger are alike in their philosophical projects in that they were concerned with foundational questions of the discipline, with meaning and language, yet neither wrote a political philosophy *per se*. Wittgenstein's relevance to political theory lies in the manner in which language analysis assists in conceptual clarification. As Hanna Pitkin puts it, Wittgenstein has to offer "something like a new perspective, a new way of seeing what has always been visible, what has gone unnoticed precisely because of its familiarity."<sup>5</sup> That perspective is one of examining our language—"questioning, examining, and coming to terms with our own assumptions and commitments." Such concern with language, Pitkin notes, is "central to almost every theoretical issue in social and political study," precisely because "language lies at the heart of the problem of membership—in a group, in a culture, in a society, in a polity."<sup>6</sup> Thus, "Wittgenstein allows us to investigate the nature of political discourse, and of the political."<sup>7</sup>

This contribution of Wittgenstein is not merely methodological, i.e., one of manipulating techniques of language analysis. His perspective, as Pitkin aptly reminds us, instructs us that wherever there is conceptual work being done there is philosophy in use, "but in blind, fragmented, distorted forms" which are at once "controlling" and "imposing," preventing rather than promoting our perception of reality.<sup>8</sup> At issue here is nothing less than "implicit metaphysical presuppositions" at work in our discourse. Awareness of these presuppositions leads us to recognize that "shifts of assumptions" are essential to intellectual progress. (To use a Kuhnian notion, what is at issue is the difference between normal science and a shift of paradigm, the latter occurring in a time of crisis in the discipline.) Thus, for Wittgenstein "philosophizing is the attempt to get clear about the most significant and fundamental and inescapable features of the world and ourselves, not by gathering new facts but by reinvestigating the facts we already have. But that necessarily means getting clear about our concepts, their limits, and their implications."<sup>10</sup>

In the domain of political theory, then, the concern for fundamentals is paramount when the historical situation is one of crisis. Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, hoped that the work "might have some small

impact on ‘the darkness of this time’” in which we live, and in this respect Wittgenstein and Heidegger are in accord concerning the task at hand.<sup>11</sup> Both schools of thought that follow these two thinkers see the importance of “breakthroughs from received presumptions to true objectivity, to the true experienced reality,” and all that such presumptions portend for political life: “On the social and political level, we think in terms of ‘social engineering’, manipulatively; we see the problem as one of channeling men by neutral, administrative measures. Feeling that we know the real, objective courses of others’ actions and social condition, we no longer need to listen to their views; feeling that we can determine their needs scientifically, we become impatient with their wants. Both individually and socially, human relations are resolved into technical problems.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, it is this emphasis on “objectivity” and the framework of “the technological” that must be questioned in our concern with the foundations of social science.

The “Wittgensteinian” position on the status of the social sciences is similar to the Heideggerian recognition of foundational crisis. John Danford treats this question in a work published in 1978.<sup>13</sup> Danford’s work is particularly relevant because he is familiar with the question of crisis as it is discussed in the continental philosophical tradition of Edmund Husserl. In his discussion of the issue, Danford claims that “our science of politics, as it is now constituted, is radically defective.” Taking note of the empirical methodology of the social sciences and the distinction of fact and value, Danford observes that while “a social science has normative implications because it can indicate to us the proper course of action to achieve the ends we seek,” nevertheless “We cannot discover, empirically, how man ought to live, because empirical science is concerned with facts and not values.”<sup>14</sup> Yet, the more fundamental problem is that of “the relationship between scientific knowledge, on the one hand, and the actual and concrete world in which human beings live and act, on the other.” Thus, the question at issue is: “what is the foundation of political science’s claim to be in touch with the reality which precedes it and which it seeks to comprehend?”<sup>15</sup>

This question Danford rightly sees to be approachable via a Wittgensteinian critique of Hobbes’s concept of political science. Hobbes, as antagonist to classical political science (Plato, Aristotle) and as advocate of mathematical method in modern political science, had a view of language in relation to scientific method which is challenged by Wittgenstein’s language philosophy. As Danford puts it, “The possibility that Hobbes and Locke were wrong about language forces us to wonder if they were right in their account of the proper method for political science.”<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Wittgenstein’s concern with epistemology is significant given that “Political philosophy is today

subordinate to epistemology,” and so we may ask, as Danford does: “Why has epistemology replaced political philosophy as the queen of philosophy?”<sup>17</sup> Wittgenstein’s investigations are profitable in understanding this issue in that they permit us “to question what has to many of us seemed unquestionable, namely, the idea that the only knowledge one should be willing to stand behind is scientific knowledge in the strict sense.”<sup>18</sup>

Danford’s effort to relate Wittgenstein’s corpus to the problem of foundational crisis in philosophy and the social sciences is important as far as it goes. However, it has its limitations, as he himself notes in conclusion: “We do not have sufficient grounds to reject the side taken in this controversy by Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes.”<sup>19</sup> My appropriation of Heidegger is such that I believe his critique of modernity to be the “sufficient grounds” for rejecting the ontological and epistemological commitments of the moderns, and, therefore, also that political philosophy which is either derivative of or structurally dependent upon those more basic categorical commitments. It is in this sense that, for me, Heidegger rather than Wittgenstein presents the philosophical resources for theoretical critique of world order thinking.

John Rawls is another prominent thinker worthy of some comment in light of my present project. Rawls’ work has received considerable attention because of its bearing upon questions of institutional reform relative to the requirements of a well-ordered and just society, albeit in the American social context. Practically all of that discussion has been concerned with principles of morality within the context of domestic society rather than international society. Where there has been attention to the problems of international distributive justice, the discussion has been such as to sustain, rather than to challenge, the logic of statecraft.<sup>20</sup> Only recently, in the work of Thomas Pogge, have we seen some effort to “globalize” Rawls, i.e., to appropriate and extend his theoretical scheme to the requirements of global justice.<sup>21</sup> Rawls himself, in contrast to Pogge, excludes questioning the nation-state itself as a major social institution subject to critique: “Rawls follows tradition in treating national borders as moral watersheds. Only within a national territory and the population it defines does he view the focus on the least advantaged as appropriate.”<sup>22</sup> Yet, as Pogge rightly points out, Rawls “thereby circumvents a crucial moral question, which his theory ought to *answer*, namely whether the institutionalization of national borders really has this magical force of shielding us from (or reducing the force of) the moral claims of ‘foreigners’. The practical importance of this question is enormous, seeing that the institution of the nation-state is a crucial contributor to the current institutional production of extreme deprivations and inequalities.”<sup>23</sup>

It is this “conservatism” of Rawls that leads me to reject his work as an alternative basis for theoretical critique of world order thinking. Pogge’s work, on the other hand, is commendable in that it takes up the challenge of correcting for that conservatism.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, I hasten to note that Pogge is concerned with the institutional dimension of global reform, and with reform achieved through value thinking. Furthermore, Pogge favors what he calls “international pluralism”—“the idea that knowledgeable and intelligent persons of good will may reasonably favor different forms of (national) social organization.” In this regard, Pogge does not engage in a fundamental critique of the logic of statecraft—even accounting for his desire to transcend the *modus vivendi* framework of the nation-state system. Thus, Pogge’s work (which, on its own terms, I do not wish to depreciate in the least) does not quite perform the kind of critical task I seek to accomplish here via an appropriation of Heidegger’s thought.

At least for now, I am not persuaded that there is either an equally powerful or morally innocent alternative to Heidegger, whether of the continental or analytic persuasion. The crisis of Western humanity seems irresolvable within the framework of the speculative rationalism or naïve empiricism of modern philosophy. The merely empiricist methodology of the social sciences likewise lacks the resources for critical self-examination, precisely because such methodology is blind to its own metaphysical commitment. In European philosophy, Heidegger is, perhaps, the most important thinker of the twentieth century, notwithstanding recent French thought. All too many who know of Heidegger without having seriously engaged his philosophical corpus fail to appreciate the full import of that thought. Yet, it is important to see, as Charles Scott puts it, how and why the question of ethics—thereby also the question of politics—functions in Heidegger’s thought “with exceptional force”: “In it we meet one of the most persistent attempts in Western thought to confront the determination of patterns of thought by which we have established and maintained our ideals for living.”<sup>25</sup>

Heidegger questions concerning the meaning of being in general and also of the distinctly human way to be. Despite its appearance to the contrary, such questioning is not merely speculative or esoteric. It stands inextricably concerned with the status of ethico-political conduct in a situation of foundational crisis. It is precisely because of his concern for the pattern, for the frame, of our thinking—including that pattern determining our modern ethical and political thinking—that Heidegger’s thought can be employed in the service of fundamental critique and reorientation. Precisely because Heidegger’s questioning brings the Western pattern of “ethical thought and judgment” into question, his thought offers a basis for critique in a way that recent

analytic philosophy does not. "The tension in Heidegger's thought between the search for a normative basis for thought and the discovery of a 'basis' that puts that search in question arises directly out of the fear to which our tradition responds by supporting its ideals and highest hopes with a combination of axioms, authorizing disclosure and careful judgment, be that disclosure God's, reason's, nature's, or humanity's."<sup>26</sup> It is in Heidegger's thought that one is forced to ask: "Do our axiomatic values at their best constitute a blindness to who we are and what we do? Does the disclosure of our being and its appropriation, along with the pain and disruption that constitute it and follow it, make possible a profound and thoroughgoing uncertainty that itself reveals the limits of ethics?"<sup>27</sup> Unlike any other philosophical corpus, Heidegger's thought confronts us squarely with the question of what we must do at the closure of moral/political philosophy. In this respect, R.B.J. Walker points out that the challenge being posed by world order studies is "the need to reopen . . . questions about who 'we' are, about what it is that constitutes a political community, and about how such communities can be established and sustained in space and time."<sup>28</sup>

If the argument I present in this book is compelling, we should come to see how it is that world order discourse and peace research indeed sustain a normative framework that keeps us blind to who we are and what we do. Only theoretical critique begins to show how this ontological-ethical blindness is constituted, in what essential-historical context it is instituted, and by what manner of categorical transformation such blindness may be overcome. We must come to see that world order thinking, like all social science research, works within a *pattern* of ontological and epistemological commitment. This is true of world order thinking taken as a whole and understood as a general rubric of discourse, notwithstanding the diversity of views in the internal debate that concerns either preferences about global institutional structures, strategies of transition, or the pace of reform and transformation.

The strategy of critique I employ here focuses on the beginning of the contemporary world order movement, accounting meanwhile for a continuity of comportment in the developing debate without engaging the diversity of views specifically. There is a principle of analysis manifest here: Beginnings, for all their theoretical and practical shortcomings, are disclosive of an essential configuration. By this I mean that there is an essential pattern or structure of thought that governs and determines the movement as it departs from its beginning. So it is with the world order movement. Insofar as one acknowledges the existence of such an essential configuration, one then needs to disclose what is problematic in the relation of an avowedly normative discourse to an otherwise hidden ontological and epistemological commitment.

Such philosophical work is a focus clearly different from what political theorists may expect in their concern with specific world order issues (“a world capitalist economy, forms of militarization, global inequality, economic degradations,” etc.). But, then, if I may employ a Heideggerian response here, at issue is not whether we can do something with such philosophical understanding, but rather what such an understanding will do to us. A successful disclosure of the essential configuration governing contemporary world order discourse can be expected to open up the way to an alternative fundamental comportment and conception concerning the world order quest. Such is the indispensable contribution of a Heideggerian basis for theoretical critique.

The significance of my choice of Heidegger may be posed in yet another way, i.e., in a way that accounts for the unique power of European existential philosophy to speak to the problem of crisis in contrast to an American analytic philosophy that does not, indeed cannot. As William Barrett puts it, “The philosopher [and one must think here, the Anglo-American analytic philosopher] cannot seriously put to himself questions that his civilization has not lived.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, “It is Europe that has been in crisis, and it is European thinkers who have brought the existential problems to a focal expression, who have in fact dared to raise the ultimate questions. . . . Its significance is for the world and for this epoch of the world.”<sup>30</sup> Heidegger certainly falls centrally within this philosophy of existential concern in a way no Anglo-American analytic philosopher can.

In line with the above thought, I have noted that world order scholars are genuinely concerned about the manifold dimensions of planetary crisis—war, both conventional war and the post-Cold War threat of thermonuclear war; social and economic injustice, especially between the industrialized North and the developing South of the globe; conditions of extreme poverty, especially in Africa, the subcontinent of Asia, and Latin America; and escalating ecological decay across the face of the planet. I submit that this “pragmatic” concern is really a manifestation of an *existential anxiety* in the face of a prospect of death through global catastrophe issuing from one or a combination of these global problems. Such anxiety in the face of death is fully consonant with Heidegger’s concern for the human way to be during the global reign of technology, that way in which modernity in its extreme configuration determines human life for better and for worse.

With this in mind, it is not sufficient merely to contrapose the logic of world order to the logic of statecraft in the manner of straightforward normative disputation. It is necessary, rather, that this existential anxiety be experienced in an essential way; i.e., such that all ethical and political logic

and thinking come into question, and such that we come to see that even the logic of world order can have hidden prejudices that must be put into question. This “putting into question” is not a nihilistic move, such that we would come away from this questioning justifying anything or nothing at all. Rather, the fragility of our inherited and then transmitted justifications within the Western valuation comes into clear relief against the background of the human way to be that Heidegger seeks to clarify. We must remember, after all, as Charles Scott observes, that

. . . anything *has* been justified in our history by appeal to universal values and meanings, including the most severe repressions, torture, violent cruelty, war, and the morbid enslaving and destructive segregation of vast groups of people. The proliferation of ‘universal’ norms whereby we justify certain values and contend against other values mirrors our fear of what the world would be like if we lacked an adequate basis for justifying our values and realizing the best possibilities of ourselves. . . .

The tension in Heidegger’s thought . . . puts in question the combination of axioms, authorizing disclosure and judgment, as well as the belief that with a proper normative basis for our values we can hope to overcome the destructive proliferation of violently opposing ways of life.<sup>31</sup>

Having said that world order scholars essentially manifest an existential anxiety in the face of threatened planetary catastrophe, I must say that with this book I, too, disclose my own existential anxiety as I, like them, am situated in a crisis of understanding. Insofar as I philosophize, my mind is European. This is the personal dimension of this project that cannot be eliminated. As such, I concede that this work has its own hermeneutic prejudices and critical deficiencies. It is my hope that both will be laid bare in the prospective dialogue I seek to engender through publication.

To the extent that the book is self-disclosing of my own existential anxiety, it challenges both the logic of statecraft and the logic of normative and technocratic futurism with a view to the resonant demands of authentic selfhood. This challenge looks beyond the structural/institutional possibilities of transformation to the possibilities of popular empowerment that cannot but begin with transformation of philosophical orientations.<sup>32</sup> For me, as for Heidegger, “The struggle for proper selfhood puts the individual at odds with its normal world in which it has its possible roles and identities set for it. To be a proper, self-authenticating self, an individual must take its fundamental cues for living from its being, not from the standards of communal normalcy. . . . The first interruption takes place as an individual finds cultural and social awareness to be without ontological foundation, to be, rather, concerned reactions that



have led our Western ethos away from its own being.”<sup>33</sup> Such fundamental understanding, it seems to me, is what is essential if world order discourse is genuinely and historically-effectively to assist us in “realizing the best possibilities of ourselves.” That, after all, is really what all world order theorizing, all political theorizing, must seek to accomplish if it is to be truly historically effective in its quest to create a just world order.

PART ONE

THEORETICAL CRITIQUE

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## CHAPTER ONE

# CRISIS THEORY: THE CHALLENGE TO PEACE RESEARCH

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## BOULDING'S SCIENTISM

In framing a question concerning the meaning of the twentieth century, one must inevitably acknowledge a hermeneutic prejudice with respect to both content and boundary, declaring “our time” to be a time possessed of its own most proper significance. Thus, in the domain of sociopolitical inquiry as it bears upon the study of peace, we have a representative work in Kenneth Boulding’s widely read *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century* (1964). In this work Boulding discloses, as the meaning of the century, the fact of “a great transition” from civilization to “postcivilization.” Today, this distinction may well be termed the modern-postmodern transition as we re-examine the structural possibilities of civil society. Boulding recommends, as the appropriate comportment and strategy, “critical acceptance”; and, rather than understanding the transition as itself an ideological position, he sees the great transition from the perspective of one having “no desire to plant a standard other than truth itself.” Thus, given the evident relationship in our time between the assertion of ideology and conflict, and, thus, the possible degeneration of ideological conflict into war, Boulding (in a spirit of fidelity

to truth) concludes: "Therefore, an understanding of ideologies, of man's need for them, and of the circumstances under which they can be modified, is a crucial component in the achievement of the great transition."<sup>1</sup>

The practical issue here, of course, is that of the very character of war, both waged and yet threatening, in this century—as Boulding puts it, "a revolution in the art of war which makes the whole existing political structure of the world dangerously obsolete."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, remarks Boulding, "A strong case can be made for the proposition that war is essentially a phenomenon of the age of civilization and that it is inappropriate both to precivilized and post-civilized societies."<sup>3</sup> If the meaning of the twentieth century is that "civilization is passing away," and war, in its genesis and prosecution, is inextricably linked with civilization, then the passing of civilization heralds the passing of war. There is, however, nothing inevitable in this process of human evolution—the transition itself is, somehow, increasingly improbable and certainly not a fate that compels. So the problem remains for us to know whether the practical issue of war at the point of transition is moved by principle or consequence or both—whether war is to be rejected in principle (then the task is to articulate that principle or those principles), or whether, given the currently ominous technological face of war (where "the limit of destructiveness," i.e., total destruction, is more than merely conceivable), therefore war is unacceptable.

It is noteworthy that, for Boulding, the passing of war does not entail the elimination of conflict. Rather, "post-civilization" calls for the management of conflict in international relations in such a way as to overcome the prevailing calculus of the well-known prisoner's dilemma with its mutually diminishing desiderata of welfare and security. It is said that through processes of integration of social relationships and mediation of dispute (third party intervention), the degeneration of conflict into war may be effectively preempted. Further, to the extent that social science may itself contribute to the task at hand, observes Boulding, "calculation, even bad calculation, is the enemy of the irrational." Thus, "If ideological struggles can be transformed even partially into conflicts of scientific theory, we have a much better chance for their resolution."<sup>4</sup>

In short, peace research is, in this view, essentially a matter of understanding ideologies, their genesis and, especially, "the circumstances under which they can be modified." The guiding concept here is that of peace qua negative peace. For Boulding, "negative peace is much more important [than the idea of positive peace], that is, just the prevention of war."<sup>5</sup> Thus, it is in no way surprising to see contemporary peace "research" developing the intricate socioscientific calculi of conflict resolution, decision theory, and just war

theory—all of which work (at least implicitly) with the negative peace orientation; but also with the implicit (contradictory?) understanding that the ground of the *jus ad bellum* is intact, hence the need for just war theory to articulate the criteria for the *jus ad bellum* and the *jus in bello*.<sup>6</sup> Yet, one is struck by the perception that there seems to be something fundamentally out of joint here. If I might give a summary statement of the problem as I see it, it may be articulated thus: *Peace research lacks a genuinely reflective comportment and, thus, lags behind the more fundamental movement of thought and being that determines our time*. It is this fundamental problem that I seek to illuminate here, without intending mere polemic. The hermeneutic prejudice involved in this thesis is Heideggerian, the content of which shall become clear in due course.

#### BOULDING ON IDEOLOGY

Peace research, it has been said, is essentially a matter of understanding ideologies, with special attention to the circumstances under which they can be modified in the interest of preventing war. Discourse on ideology is today abundant. Here I shall take Boulding's description of ideology as the focus of my remarks, precisely because Boulding has been such an influential figure in peace studies and because this understanding of ideology remains a guiding orientation in his persistent advocacy of the negative peace agenda.

By 'ideology' Boulding has in mind "an image of the world [that has] power over a man's mind and that leads him to build his personal identity around it."<sup>7</sup> Central to this "world-image" is the creation of "a drama"—"an interpretation of history sufficiently dramatic and convincing so that the individual feels that he can identify with it and which in turn can give the individual a role in the drama it portrays." Such an interpretation of history, however, is derived from "some view of the nature of reality and the sources of knowledge." Included in this world-image is "a value-system capable of developing principles of moral action and a standard for the criticism of behavior."<sup>8</sup>

From this description it becomes immediately clear that every ideology is inextricably linked to a metaphysics and an epistemology, indeed that every ideology has its metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions. In this sense, every ideology is explicitly a philosophical anthropology situated within a general ontological commitment that apparently has its grounding content and more or less delimited temporal sway. Ideologies, thus, are themselves essentially historical phenomena; and it is because they are essentially historical that they are subject to modification in the course of their encounters with rivals.