

Heidegger and Postmodernity: the Story of a Delusion?

Initiative: Freigeist-Fellowships

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Laufzeit: 5 Jahre

The topic of the research proposal is Heidegger's critique of National Socialism as a climax of modernity, a critique he claimed to have developed after 1934. It also covers its impact on French postmodern thought, using as example Jacques Derrida, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. The first part examines whether this purported critique of Nazism is best understood as a retro-active falsification by Heidegger to whitewash himself after 1945. In the second part, it will be investigated how the astounding success of this alleged critique of modernity in France can be explained as an analysis of totalitarianism, and how it relates to the philosophy of the Derrida school. At its core, the project thus addresses the question how Heidegger's account of totalitarianism as an expression of modernity has shaped the postmodern account of 'the political'. The research project will use an approach that is innovative and one might say overdue in the history of philosophy: Heidegger's manuscripts from 1936-1945 will be systematically compared with his published texts. In addition, careful attention to historical context will complement both philosophical interpretation and philological analysis. Rigorous emphasis on facts and philological precision will for the first time establish a firm basis to assess the ongoing controversies over Heidegger and his political positions as well as his reception in the thought of the Derrida school.

Projektbeteiligte

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