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**A Revolutionary Sense of
Entscheidung:
Clearing Up Some Misunderstandings
about Heidegger's Notion of Decision**

25 October 2024, Friday
3:30 - 5:30 PM IST

An Online talk by
Dr. Arun Iyer

<https://meet.google.com/rkn-zapz-ubj>

Abstract

This paper will show how Heidegger's writings in the 1930's exhibit an anthropological sense of decision (Entscheidung without a hyphen) that co-exists alongside the non-anthropological sense, which Heidegger in many cases hyphenates as Ent-scheidung. However, what is crucial is that the anthropological sense of decision is neither founded on a psycho-physical nor a transcendental account of the human being, which have been the conventional modes of expression that anthropology has found in the history of western thought. Indeed, Heidegger finds both the objectivist stance of psychology as well as the subjectivist stance of transcendental philosophy equally problematic and deeply so. For, they remain entangled in what Heidegger calls anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism, Heidegger argues, is the thinking of the human being that accepts the humanization of the human being unquestioningly and can only think within the horizon of this humanization. So, anthropology has always been a form of anthropomorphism. The anthropological-anthropomorphic and the non-anthropological are the two senses of decision that have been readily identified in Heidegger's thinking. What has not been identified is this third anthropological and yet non-anthropomorphic, revolutionary sense of decision which is based on an anthropological, yet non-anthropomorphic account of the human being. It will thus be the task of this paper to isolate this anthropological, yet non-anthropomorphic sense of decision in Heidegger and make explicit its relationship to the explicitly non-anthropological sense of decision that finds expression in his texts. I would like to further establish, through a close reading of some texts written in the same period 1936-41, that these two senses of decision taken together preclude both a messianism of the kind that would involve a passive waiting, as well as a willful decisionism in any obvious sense. I will conclude by illustrating how Heidegger's account of decision entails a rather original understanding of the relationship between freedom and necessity, which is able to support an original account of revolutionary praxis.

Brief-bio

Dr. Arun Iyer is the author of *Towards an Epistemology of Ruptures: The Case of Heidegger and Foucault* (Bloomsbury Press, 2014). His articles have been published in prestigious journals such as *Research in Phenomenology* and the *International Yearbook for Hermeneutics*. He is currently translating and editing with Pol Vandavelde, a three-volume work comprising of all the major untranslated essays of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the first two volumes of which have already been published under the titles *Hermeneutics between History and Philosophy: The Selected Writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Bloomsbury Press, 2016) and *Ethics, Aesthetics and the Historical Dimension of Language: The Selected Writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Bloomsbury Press, 2022). His most recent work is a translation of Volume 67 of Martin Heidegger's complete works under the title *Metaphysics and Nihilism* (Polity Press, 2023). He is the co-editor of the *Journal for the British Society for Phenomenology*. Prof. Iyer broadly works on the history of western philosophy, but his primary interests are in phenomenology, hermeneutics, especially the work of Heidegger and Gadamer and Michel Foucault. He is interested in Western Classical music, especially the work of Schubert, Shostakovich and Prokofiev, art house cinema and Surrealist painting. He is currently living in Mumbai with his partner Kadambari.