

Self-Appointed Legislators to Mankind: Intellectuals and Tyranny

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You wondered ... whether the worst enemies of civilization might not prove to be its petted intellectuals, who attacked it at its weakest moments.

Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

Bernard-Henri Lévy. *Le siècle de Sartre: Enquête philosophique.*

Bernard Grasset 2000. 668. \$36.95 paper

Mark Lilla. *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics.*

New York Review Books 2001. 216. \$39.95

Richard Wolin. *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse.* Princeton University Press 2001. 276 \$46.50

Here is Heidegger on the university:

What is taking place in this extending and consolidating of the institutional character of the sciences? Nothing less than the making secure of the pre-character of methodology over whatever is (nature and history), which at any given time becomes objective in research. On the foundation of their character as ongoing activity, the sciences are creating for themselves the solidarity and unity appropriate to them. Therefore historiographical or archaeological research that is carried forward in an institutionalized way is essentially closer to research in physics that is similarly organized than it is to a discipline belonging to its own faculty in the humanistic sciences that still remains mired in mere erudition. Hence the decisive development of the modern character of science as ongoing activity also forms men of a different stamp. The scholar disappears. He is succeeded by the research man who is engaged in research projects. These, rather than the cultivation of erudition, lead to his work atmosphere of incivility. The research man no longer needs a library at home. Moreover, he is constantly on the move. He negotiates at meetings and collects information at congresses. (*The Question Concerning Technology*, 25)

If Heidegger's 'research man' seems familiar (we need add to his résumé only grantsmanship), it is because he is the archetypally successful professor of the modern university, and more than any twentieth-century philosopher it is Heidegger who has taught us to be wary of the modern.