About the panel discussion

We welcome faculty, staff and students to attend this forum. This year UWRF celebrates everything German; and surely German contribution to the realm of ideas is significant and vital, to say the least.

The primary focus of this discussion forum is the linkage of the 19th and 20th Century German intellectuals in question, with the Nazi movement. All have been affiliated with, have passionately rejected or have been adapted by the Nazis.

This forum explores interesting and thought provoking issues raised by modern, important, German philosophers and artists. The point of the forum is to engage the audience in a lively discussion rather than the three contributors merely making their presentations. Hence, after a short, condensed, presentation from each of the three participants, much time will be left for the audience to question or challenge the speakers, or comment on the presentations. The speakers may suggest topics, based on their brief talk, for the audience to discuss further.

Notes from discussion contributors

Dr. Imtiaz Moosa
"I will discuss some of the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900). He remains very influential despite his highly provocative and radical ideas. Hitler declared that Nietzsche's philosophy is one of the bases upon which Nazi ideology rests. And Nietzsche's views are indeed disturbing, and fundamentally at odds both with our humanitarian code and with present day liberalism, by his rejection of, not only Christian God, but even Christian morality (for example, he juxtaposes will to power over Christian charity), and by his support of eugenics and elitism. I argue, distasteful and radical as his philosophy may be, it does not lend support to racial and genocidal policies of Nazis, nor to their state idolatry."

Dr. Matthew Meyer
"Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is one of the most influential and controversial philosophers of the 20th Century. Born in Messkirch, Germany he studied at the University of Freiburg. He taught at both the University of Marburg, and later at Freiburg. Though his official home was in Freiburg, he did most of his writing and thinking at his cabin in the Black Forest, Todtnauberg. He was influential in the way he adapted phenomenology—or the study of our immediate experience—to the structures of human experience. He was controversial because of his involvement in German politics, more specifically the Nazi party, in 1933-34. While it is said that he never publicly apologized for his involvement, the degree to which he was involved, to which he was an anti-Semite, and the degree to which his philosophy can be linked to Nazi ideology are still open for debate. This talk will give a brief overview of the key concepts he contributed to philosophy, followed by a brief description of his political involvement. It is no way meant to be an apology for Heidegger's politics, but will instead suggest that Heidegger's philosophy can be separated from his politics, and should be, for the benefit of future thinkers."

Dr. Erin Trapp
"The Austrian poet and novelist Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1973), whose father was a Nazi party member, was part of a group of writers (Die Gruppe 47) who attempted, in the postwar period, to conceptualize a "coming to terms with the past" (Vergangenheitsbewältigung) that would deal with questions of German guilt and Nazi rule during the Holocaust. Bachmann's intervention was unique because she situated fascism not within a specific context of war or as limited to Nazism, but within
everyday life, and in particular within the imperialism and patriarchy that structured everyday European life. As she wrote, "Fascism does not begin when the first bombs are dropped...it begins in human relationships. Fascism is the first thing in the relationship between a man and a woman." Her work has been criticized as apolitical for its treatment of more personal or psychological themes, but her writing, which seeks to understand European fascism as an extension of the imperialist and colonial projects of European modernity, does not bear out this judgment. In this presentation, I'll discuss several of her postwar poems from the collection *Borrowed Time* ("Every Day," "Early Noon," "Psalm") that present the postwar as a continuation of wartime fascism, and I'll look at her conceptualization, in these poems, of how the "unsayable" and of "silence" contribute to a means of working through the past, even as they are often understood as forms of expression that are complicit with, not resistant to, Nazism and fascist ideology more generally."

**Organized by:**
**Dr. Imtiaz Moosa**
Professor of Philosophy

**Sponsored by UWRF:**
History and Philosophy Dept.
College of Arts and Sciences