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Source: *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Apr., 2000), pp. 140-166

Published by: [Sage Publications, Inc.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192232>

Accessed: 06/02/2011 13:50

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MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S ARISTOTELIAN NATIONAL SOCIALISM

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SINCE THE PUBLICATION of Farias's *Heidegger et le Nazisme*, the question of Heidegger's commitment to National Socialism has assumed a central position in the debate about the significance and meaning of his thought.¹ We now know that Heidegger's Nazism began earlier and lasted longer than he and his supporters had previously led us to believe and that Heidegger himself had no doubts that his earlier thought was compatible with at least some idealized version of Nazism.² There are also clear indications that Heidegger never abandoned his support for the ideals of National Socialism. The reference to "the inner truth and greatness" of the National Socialist movement in the 1953 publication of *An Introduction to Metaphysics* is one clear example of this, and Heidegger's mendacious attempt to conceal the meaning of this phrase with his later addition of an "explanatory" parenthesis only confirms suspicions about his real intentions.³ Moreover, even in his 1966 *Spiegel* interview, he still claimed that the Nazis had failed only because the leaders of the party were too limited in their thinking (i.e., because they were not radical enough).⁴ Coupled with his unremitting criticism of other contemporary political possibilities, there is little doubt that Heidegger continued to regard the Nazi movement as the most promising political development of his time.

It is the purpose of this article to explain Heidegger's attraction to National Socialism through an analysis of his encounter with the thought of Aristotle. I will show that from 1919 to 1933, Heidegger developed a vision of praxis and politics on an Aristotelian foundation that he believed would reverse the domination of theory and technology in modern life and put in its place the rule of practical wisdom or *phronêsis* that was rooted in a historical understanding of the world and that put human beings and human action ahead of values, ideological imperatives, and the process of production. I will show

further that Heidegger believed the Nazi movement was bringing such a politics into being and that even when he recognized this was not the case, he continued to believe such a politics was both necessary and desirable, modifying only his conception of the means by which such an end could be attained. I will then indicate in conclusion how and why Heidegger's vision of *phronêsis* is fundamentally flawed.

HEIDEGGER'S VISION OF THE CRISIS OF THE WEST

Heidegger was attracted to Nazism because he believed it offered a solution to the crisis of Western civilization. He saw this crisis as result of the forgetfulness or withdrawal of the question of Being. In Heidegger's view, existence at its core is mysterious. Being as such in the most fundamental sense *is* always only *as* a question. We become human to the extent that we are struck by this question and thereby come to think and dwell in language. Our encounter with the question of Being, however, produces anxiety and pain, for it involves an encounter with not being, with nothingness and death. Being itself thus repels us from the question toward answers, toward an interpretation of Being *as* something, as some being. In our flight from the pain of Being, we fall into a realm of beings, into what Heidegger in *Being and Time* called everydayness.

Such fallenness takes two different forms. In the first instance, it is a fallenness into the everyday world of our concerns, the daily business of life, what Heidegger in *Being and Time* calls the ready-to-hand. The other and deeper form of fallenness is a fallenness into theory, into presence-at-hand. Heidegger believed that such a falling away from Being had characterized the West since Plato. Being itself thereby came to be experienced not as a question but only in and through beings, as the Being of beings. Western thought is nothing other than a continuing elaboration of this answer and thus an ever more distant flight from Being itself as a question.

The steps in this process are relatively straightforward. The West began with the pre-Socratic experience of the question of Being. Plato, by contrast, interpreted Being as eternal presence, accessible only by means of a long and difficult dialectical ascent. Being was projected even further into the unattainable transcendence of eternity by Christianity. Human beings could no longer experience Being immediately or even reach it through a dialectical ascent. Being was attainable only through grace. The final withdrawal of Being that characterizes the Western metaphysics produces the death of God that lies at the heart of modernity, a withdrawal of Being that leaves man him-

self as the foundation on which to establish the world. Man in this sense becomes the ground or *subiectum* that makes possible the transformation of nature into a universal object. The modern world for Heidegger is thus the ever more encompassing attempt to objectify nature, to convert it into an object that can be mastered and controlled. This process Heidegger calls technology. It culminates in a will to convert everything, including humanity itself, into a raw material that can be exploited and used up in the production of the means of production (i.e., in the service of technology).⁵

Heidegger argued that the most dangerous forms of this technological impulse were Americanism and Marxism.⁶ Europe, he felt, was being crushed between these two forces that aimed at the universal organization of everyday man for the unlimited exploitation of the earth and all other human beings. In Heidegger's view, neither provides man with the means to come to terms with technology because both are under the illusion that technology is merely a tool. This notion makes it impossible for human beings to recognize or ameliorate their own degradation. The salvation of the West thus depends on raising anew the question of Being as the question of technology. This was the task that Heidegger set for himself and that he believed, at least for a time, was also vouchsafed to National Socialism.

What, then, did Heidegger see in National Socialism that seemed to afford an answer to this problem? He told Karl Löwith in 1936 that his partisanship for National Socialism lay in the essence of his philosophy, asserting that "historicity" was the basis for his political 'engagement.'⁷ In a letter to Marcuse after World War II, he suggested that he "expected from National Socialism a spiritual renewal of life in its entirety, a reconciliation of social antagonism and a deliverance of Western *Dasein* from the dangers of communism."⁸ Heidegger clearly felt that resolute action was needed to deal with the social and spiritual crisis and was attracted to the Nazis because of their determination for action. This fact has led critics such as Karl Löwith and Richard Wolin to argue that Heidegger's political thought was decisionistic and thus indifferent to the content of the Nazis' political program.⁹ While this factor certainly plays an important role in explaining Heidegger's attraction to radicalism, it cannot account for his attraction to National Socialism rather than Bolshevism or anarchism.

A second and more important attraction of Nazism was the centrality of the idea of *Heimat* and *Gemeinschaft*. As Catherine Zuckert has shown, Heidegger believed that German communal life could only be reconstituted on the basis of a new aesthetic religion. Heidegger saw in the early Nazi movement the seeds of such a community, reflected in the notion of *Blut und Boden*. While Heidegger uses this phrase at least once, he more typically uses only the term *Boden*, which reflects his clear and longstanding rejection of

racist or biological National Socialism. The national focus of his Nazism was thus centered on the idea of the German tradition, focused and filtered through the transformative lens of Hölderlin's poetry.¹⁰ While there is much to be said for this explanation, it still does not explain Heidegger's attraction to Nazism rather than any of the other nationalistic movements.

I want to suggest that what distinguished Nazism and particularly attracted Heidegger was its rejection of theory in favor of leadership. As we will see in what follows, Heidegger saw in the Nazi idea of leadership an idea of knowledge and action that was akin to what Aristotle called *phronêsis* or practical wisdom. Moreover, it was precisely this form of knowing that his earlier work on Aristotle had led him to believe would alone make possible the humanization of technology. To understand Heidegger's attraction to Nazism, we thus must examine the interpretation of Aristotle he developed during the early 1920s.

*THEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND PHENOMENOLOGY:
THE BACKGROUND OF HEIDEGGER'S
RECEPTION OF ARISTOTLE*

Heidegger's reception of Aristotle was shaped by his earlier encounters with medieval theology, Dilthey's historicism, and Husserl's phenomenological investigations. Heidegger grew up in a deeply religious lower-middle-class Catholic family. His education was supported by the Church with the understanding that he would become a defender of Catholic orthodoxy, and in the period before World War I, Heidegger was seen as a promising young Catholic academic. His brief experience at the front and a crisis of faith in 1918, however, propelled him away from the system of Catholicism. He came to believe that the conceptual framework of scholastic theology jeopardized the immediacy and intensity of life that were essential to true philosophy and religion.¹¹

Heidegger had never been a simple neo-scholastic. The young Heidegger, for example, had never accepted the imposition of Thomism as official Church dogma.¹² His choice of the protonominalist Duns Scotus for his *Habilitation* reflected his desire to cut through conceptualism to the concrete reality of ordinary experience. His crisis of faith thus did not lead him to atheism but toward a more immediate conception of religiosity that grew out of his reading of Schleiermacher, Scotus, Eckhardt, and Luther.¹³ He had already pointed out in his *Habilitation* that in comparison to medieval man, modern man faced the danger of a growing uncertainty and complete disori-

entation because he lacked an immediate tie to an ultimate ground.¹⁴ Because scholastic theology destroyed the immediacy of such feeling, religion as the contemplation of the universe thus had to give way to a quasi-mystical meditation on the infinite.¹⁵

While Heidegger was moved by theological questions from the beginning, he soon developed a more secular voice. He began to look for the intensity he believed medieval man had found in religious experience in the concrete experience of contemporary life. Drawing on Eckhardt and Luther, he sought a relationship to his own life that was akin to the relationship the mystic had to God.¹⁶ In this effort, he drew heavily on Dilthey and Husserl. Dilthey believed that the ultimately real was to be found not in transcendence but in concrete historical experience. Husserl too was convinced that philosophy had to come to terms with concrete experience, but he thought that the real was to be discovered in the process of consciousness, the fundamental intentionality of all experience. The aim of phenomenology thus was to break through to a true reality, to "the things themselves." In his phenomenology, Husserl thus sought to set aside theory and mere perception in pursuit of the underlying intentional reality of life itself.¹⁷

What was particularly attractive to Heidegger in both Dilthey and Husserl was the possibility they held out for coming to terms with the immediate experience. Heidegger attempted to conceptualize this "life" in which one found oneself and which one "had" under a series of names from "primal something" to "life in and for itself," "factic life," the "historical I," the "situated I," "factual life experience," "facticity," "*Dasein*," and "Being."¹⁸ Until 1922, this undertaking had an explicitly religious significance, but at that time Heidegger decided that there could be no theological philosophy and thereafter considered himself a philosophical (although not a personal) atheist.¹⁹ Heidegger's philosophical atheism, however, was not the result of his determination that philosophy was at odds with religion. Far from it. Philosophy had to separate itself from religion to break through to an immediate experience of primal life because it was only on the basis of such an experience that the realm for true religiosity, the realm of the holy, could be opened up again.²⁰

In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger believed that this primal something could not be understood through consciousness, but only through an understanding of the I in its historical and social context.²¹ Here Dilthey's thought was of cardinal importance. The concern with the historical, however, meant a concern with praxis. Heidegger hoped to find the concrete immediacy he found missing in current philosophy and theology in praxis. On this point, however, neither Dilthey nor Husserl were of much help.²² In pursuit of a solution to this problem, Heidegger turned to Aristotle.

*HEIDEGGER'S ARISTOTLE: HUMAN BEING
AS THE PLACE OF TRUTH*

Aristotle played a decisive role in the development of Heidegger's thought. Heidegger first became interested in Aristotle when his Gymnasium teacher gave him a copy of Franz Brentano's *On the Manifold Meaning of Being in Aristotle* (1862). Heidegger himself indicates that the question of Being that this book first raised remained central to his thinking for the rest of his life. Between 1915 and 1930, he taught or lectured on Aristotle fifteen times.²³ In the mid-1920s, he began preparing a comprehensive book on Aristotle as the culmination of his previous work, and as Theodore Kisiel and others have shown, in the process of revision, this book became *Being and Time*.

What distinguishes his interpretation of Aristotle in the 1920s is his approach to the question of Being through an examination of Aristotle's account of human Being, or *Dasein*. *Dasein* for Heidegger is the place, the there (*Da-*) at which Being (*Sein*) comes to be, the place at which Being is opened up or uncovered. The Greek word for 'uncovering' is *alêtheia*, which we translate as 'truth.' The principal activity that constitutes us as human Being is thus *alêtheuein*, 'uncovering.'²⁴ This is the topic of book VI of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. Uncovering beings in their Being means revealing them as something in and through language or *logos*. As the place of the uncovering of beings, man is thus the *zôon logon echon*, 'life having speech,' or, as we typically translate it, the 'rational animal.'

According to Heidegger, the Greeks believed that before the natural world was opened up, it was merely the realm of natural needs.²⁵ Human beings and the world both *are*, but they are not yet *there*. It is in and through *logos* that the world is opened up, that human beings and the world are there in their Being, that they are *Da-sein*. Thus, Being from the beginning for the Greeks is *Da-sein*, and the real question is about the character of the *Da-*, the there.²⁶ Animals orient themselves through perception (*aisthêsis*) and thus seem to have a kind of practical wisdom (*phronêsis*), but it is a wisdom that has no part in intellectual intuition (*nous*) and is therefore not authentic.²⁷ It does not participate in *nous* because while *nous* transcends speech, it is only accessible through speech. Animals make sounds (*phonê*) that coordinate action, but they do not speak or have a notion of the whole. Animals such as bees may even in some sense be political, but if this is the case, then man is more political because he has *logos*.²⁸ Man's Being-in-the-world is fundamentally determined by *logos*.²⁹

Speaking as uncovering or revealing, according to Heidegger, always means for Aristotle speaking and revealing the world to other human beings.³⁰ As the rational animal, man is thus the political animal. According

to Heidegger, the Being of those having *logos*, for Aristotle, is a Being-with-one-another, a communion or fellowship (*koinônia*).³¹ For Aristotle, Being-with-one-another is thus equiprimordial with Being-speaking in *Dasein*.³² In and through *logos*, we make the world our own as a there that we have (*Da-Habe*).³³ Heidegger thus argues that for Aristotle, the beginning is not the Cartesian "I am" but "I am one (*das Man*)" of many, a member of the polis.³⁴ To say that the world is opened up in and through language is to say that it is revealed in its fundamentally temporal character as a from-which and a toward-which. Human Being is thus a stretching from birth to death and is fundamentally characterized not by its ultimate goal but by the way it moves toward or with respect to that goal. The end of life is thus not a what but a how, the 'well' (*eu-*) of living well (*euzôia*) or being happy or well spirited (*eudaimonia*).³⁵ In and through *logos*, human beings are gathered into a community in which they can have the good (*agathon*) together.³⁶ Because man's Being is Being-with-one-another, the good is not related simply to the individual and is thus not primarily intended for solitary philosophers. Indeed, *Dasein* includes the Being of one's parents, children, wife, friends, and fellow citizens.³⁷ The community's establishment and pursuit of the good life are thus primarily practical and only derivatively theoretical activities.³⁸ They depend decisively on conversation and discussion and thus, Heidegger argues, on rhetoric.³⁹

The very mention of rhetoric, of course, reminds us that while the world is opened up in response to natural needs in and through *logos*, it is also covered over immediately by speech. All revealing is also concealing. Indeed, as Heidegger following Aristotle argues, concealment (*lethe*) is more primordial than revealing (*a-lêtheia*). We are always falling back into concealment and thus constantly need to struggle against concealment.⁴⁰ The preservation of our humanity as the place or there of Being thus depends on our capacity for what Aristotle calls *alêtheuein*, 'revealing,' or 'uncovering.'⁴¹

According to Aristotle, there are five modes of revealing in and through which we open up the world: *technê*, 'knowing one's way about' (*Sich-Auskennen*); *epistêmê*, 'science' (*Wissenschaft*); *phronêsis*, 'practical wisdom' or 'circumspective insight' (*Umsicht-Einsicht*); *sophia*, 'wisdom' or 'understanding' (*Verstehen*); and *nous*, 'intellectual intuition' or 'perceptual thinking' (*vernehmendes Vermeinen*).⁴² *Sophia* and *epistêmê* are theoretical modes of revealing concerned with those things that do not change, with ever-being (*aei on*). *Technê* and *phronêsis* are concerned with those things that can be other than what they are and are thus practical forms of revealing.⁴³ *Nous* is present in all four because all are forms of *noein*, 'seeing with the mind,' as forms of *dianoein*, 'thinking.'⁴⁴

The question for Aristotle that becomes central for Heidegger's understanding of *Dasein* is which of these modes of revealing is superior. In the theoretical realm, *sophia* is superior to *epistêmê* because *epistêmê* is really only a higher form of *technê* that seeks to determine exactly the principle (*archê*) that guides the production of the technician or artist. Without *nous*, however, it cannot attain this *archê*.⁴⁵ In the realm of praxis, *phronêsis* is superior to *technê* because *technê* aims at and is thus always for the sake of something beyond itself, while *phronêsis* aims only at *Dasein*.⁴⁶ The real question then for Aristotle in Heidegger's view is whether *phronêsis* or *sophia* more fully reveals Being. Heidegger recognizes that for Aristotle, *sophia* is higher than *phronêsis*, but he himself is convinced of the reverse and strives to make the strongest case possible on an Aristotelian foundation for the superiority of *phronêsis*.⁴⁷ Moreover, he attempts to show that it was the one-sided Platonic interpretation of Being as presence that led Aristotle to nominally devalue *phronêsis*, even though he recognized that it was central to ethical and political life.

For Aristotle, according to Heidegger, *phronêsis* is characteristic not merely of human beings but of all living things. It is the organism's innate orientation toward preserving, or ability to preserve, itself.⁴⁸ *Phronêsis* differs in animals and men, however, because for animals it depends merely on instinct and perception, while in men it is bound up with *logos* and thus with *nous*. As an orientation toward the good life (*euzôia*) and happiness (*eudaimonia*), it determines the how of our doing well (*eupraxia*).⁴⁹ It achieves this as circumspection (*Umsicht*) and care (*Sorge*) or care-full circumspection (*Sorgenum-sicht*).⁵⁰ As such, it is always practical and never theoretical.⁵¹ As Heidegger puts it,

Phronêsis brings the that-with-respect-to-which of the dealings of human life (and dealings with human life itself) and the "How" of these dealings in their own Being into truthful safe-keeping. These dealings are praxis: the conducting of one's own self in the how of dealings which are not productive, but are rather simply actional. *Phronêsis* is the illumination-of-dealings which cotemporalizes life in its Being.⁵²

The revelation of action that characterizes *phronêsis* is constantly confronted by the intrinsic tendency to concealment and forgetting that characterizes *Dasein*.⁵³ What is seen in and through *phronêsis* cannot be forgotten because what one sees in this moment of vision is not a particular goal or end but a way or how of Being that guides action.⁵⁴ The difficulty that stands in the way of such phronetic insight is that thinking is dominated by everydayness. Phronetic insight thus is only possible on the basis of *proairesis*, 'precommitment' or 'resolve' (*Entschlossenheit*), that holds one open for that which shatters the everyday appearance of things.⁵⁵

Sophia is the perfection of *technê*.⁵⁶ *Technê*, like *phronêsis*, is a form of human doing. It is a knowing one's way about that aims at production, thus a form of knowing that is dependent on its end or *telos*. *Sophia* grasps the end in its utmost generality, without reference to particulars.⁵⁷ It is a way of revealing that opens up the basic principles that govern *technê*, but its goal is a kind of quiescence that is fundamentally divorced from care or concern. It thus leads to no action.⁵⁸ *Sophia* in one sense is a phronetic activity, but it is a peculiar *phronêsis* that aims at a good but at a good that is not a *prakton*.⁵⁹ Instead, *sophia* longs for a pure *noein*. However, such a mode of Being is not possible for humans. It is therefore in man always only as *dianoein* that is *noein* on the ground of *logos* in which something is addressed as something.⁶⁰ *Sophia* is a continual Being-by-the-eternal, and its object is thus not *Dasein* or nonhuman beings in the world but the *theion*, ever-being (*aei on*).⁶¹ *Sophia* is thus concerned with divine, not human, things.⁶² Because such a theorizing transcends the way in which human Being is its time (*zeitigt*), humans cannot really endure this state and therefore need recreation from it.⁶³

Both *sophia* and *phronêsis* aim at the good, but the goods at which they aim are not identical. *Sophia* and *theôrein* generally aim at the good per se, while *phronêsis* aims at the good for man.⁶⁴ For Aristotle in contrast to Plato, there is no good that hovers above being. The highest good is a pure *noein* that has itself as its object, but this is unavailable to human beings because the ultimate *archê* cannot be addressed as something, through *logos*.⁶⁵ It is available only to pure *nous*. The human good, by contrast, is always based on this here and now and is tied to the moment.⁶⁶ *Phronêsis* reveals not the *archai*, the first principles, but the *eschata*, the particulars.⁶⁷ In considering the possibilities of action, *Dasein* finally runs into the given facts, the circumstances of its particular time and place. In *phronêsis*, these facts are grasped purely, as they show themselves. All deliberation thus ends in an *aisthêsis*, and this perception within *phronêsis* is *nous*.⁶⁸ *Phronêsis* therefore is a pure knowing that no longer falls into the realm of *logos*. Our ultimate decision about action is thus based not on *logos* or reason but on phronetic intuition. While *phronêsis* has the same structure as *sophia* in being beyond *logos*, it is on the opposite side—*nous* in most extreme concreteness versus *nous* in its greatest generality.⁶⁹

Heidegger recognizes that Aristotle thinks that *sophia* is higher than *phronêsis*, but he tries to show that this conclusion is at odds with Aristotle's deeper insights. Heidegger develops three arguments to drive home this important point. First, the fundamental experience of *Dasein* for Aristotle is not theoretical but lies in the interaction of life with the world.⁷⁰ Therefore, the theoretical life cannot be the authentic possibility of Being for man.⁷¹ It is a possible life only for a being that transcends the world (i.e., for the *demiurgos*). Plato attempts to bridge this divide between Being and beings with dia-

lectic. In Heidegger's view, however, there is no such dialectical path because there is an unbridgeable ontological difference between Being and beings.⁷² In a similar fashion, Aristotle tries to pass beyond *logos* to a *noein* that is free from *legein* through *sophia*, but the idea of the *archê* that is central to *sophia* can only be achieved finally through *logos*.⁷³ This is the result of the fact that Being itself is interpreted as presence, and *logos* is the means by which we make things present to ourselves.⁷⁴ Aristotle's account of human Being undermines the possibility of *sophia*. Living an active human life thus depends on recognizing the difference between Being and beings, what Heidegger was later to call the ontological difference. Second, *sophia* cannot be superior to *phronêsis* in Heidegger's view because it is incommunicable and thus incompatible with *Dasein*'s fundamental Being-with-others. Aristotle's conclusion that *sophia* is superior thus contradicts his deeper insight into the political character of *Dasein*.⁷⁵ Third, Heidegger argues that Aristotle bases his argument for the superiority of *sophia* on a mistaken understanding of Being, as ever-Being or the unchanging.⁷⁶ As Volpi has argued, Aristotle in Heidegger's view was unable to see the basic ontological constitution of human life because he remained captive to the horizon of a naturalistic, chronological, and thus nonkairological understanding of time that denied him insight into original temporality as the ontological ground of the human *psychê*.⁷⁷ In this respect, Aristotle, in Heidegger's view, was unable to free himself from the ontological error he inherited from Plato.⁷⁸

Aristotle's misunderstanding of the true relation of *sophia* and *phronêsis* leads him to another error, the notion that there is a *technê* akin to *sophia* that can guide political life, a real *politikê technê*.⁷⁹ This conclusion treats *Dasein* as if it were just another being and our Being-with-one-another as if it were a thing that could be produced and brought to perfection. There is, however, no perfection to our communal lives because living together is a historical phenomenon that does not have a natural end, a "what" that can be produced in a better or worse fashion. What is needed is always dependent on the idiosyncratic circumstances of the moment. *Dasein* has a history—indeed, *Dasein* is history—and as such it cannot be treated like other beings that merely exist in time. There is thus no authentic art or technical organization of politics and no authentic science of politics guided by theory, whether it be a theory of values, an ideology, or a worldview. In short, there is no authentic politics that is based on either *sophia* or *technê*. An authentic politics always depends on *phronêsis*, on circumspection and insight into what is necessary at this moment.

It is on this point that Heidegger departs most radically from a traditional Aristotelian ethics and embarks on a path that leads to Hitler and National Socialism.⁸⁰ For Aristotle, *phronêsis* is principally concerned with the affairs of everyday life and particularly the life of politics. Heidegger, however,

interprets *phronêsis* historically. Here Dilthey's historicism exercised an important influence on his reading of Aristotle. Heidegger argues that the *Nichomachean Ethics* is anything other than the ethics of a moderate everydayness and conventionalism.⁸¹ Everydayness for Heidegger is the epitome of fallenness and inauthenticity. He thus concludes in Diltheyian fashion that we see human beings (*Da-seiendes*) authentically only when we see them in their history.⁸² When placed in the context of history, however, *phronêsis* is fundamentally transformed, deciding, as Kisiel has noted, "not by the light of reason but by the light of time! Thus, *Lichtung* replaces *nous* within an otherwise Aristotelian fabric of diantetic virtues."⁸³ Decision by practical human reason becomes decision by something approaching mystical inspiration.⁸⁴

Phronêsis crucially depends on intuition into the moment. Indeed, when understood within the metaphysics of historicity rather than within the metaphysics of presence, *phronêsis* is the moment of vision and decision. As Safranski has pointed out, this focus on the moment was hardly original to Heidegger, who was well acquainted with similar notions in Kierkegaard, Ernst Bloch, Schmitt, Jünger, and Tillich. For all of these thinkers, the moment forces a decision and holds open the possibility of breaking out of the mundane present into a different and truer reality.⁸⁵ All long for the advent of something new, but what that something is remains indeterminate. The same could easily be said of Heidegger, for in his view, "the moment (*Augenblick*) is nothing other than the gaze (*Blick*) of resolve, in which the full situation of action opens itself up and holds itself open."⁸⁶ It is this phronetic moment that opens up the possibility of the authentic existence of *Dasein*.

This moment of vision is always unique. Each decision occurs in a particular context and is determined not by a series of antecedent causes but by an evaluation of the future possibilities opened up in this moment.⁸⁷ What is seen is not what has been and on that basis must be, but how the world "worlds" (i.e., how we are projected toward the future by the particular character of the question of Being that strikes us here and now) in this concrete situation.⁸⁸ As Heidegger puts it, "*Phronêsis* makes the location of the one who performs the action accessible: in securing the *ou eneka* (the 'Why'), in making available the particular Towards-what-end [*Wozu*], in apprehending the 'Now,' and in stretching out the How."⁸⁹ Put in phenomenological terms, it is the intuition of the fundamental intentionality of life itself. This moment of vision thus provides the answer to the question of how one ought to live and what one ought to do.

In this respect, this phronetic moment of vision looks more like a conversion experience than a deliberative judgment. Heidegger here reads Aristotle more through Paul, Augustine, Eckhardt, and Luther than through the Aristotelian ethical tradition. The moment of vision is identified as the *kairos*, but

this *kairos* is understood in a fundamentally theological fashion. Drawing on Augustine's account of the birth of Christ as the moment in which the world comes into being, stretching itself backward to creation and forward to the apocalypse, Heidegger sees each moment of vision as revealing a new world, both forward and backward in time. This is not to say that the world is thereby re-created *ex nihilo*, but rather that in such moments the world is there in a new sense, that the "as" that determines the character of beings in their Being is new in each case and causes us to reevaluate the past and reconfigure the future accordingly.

This phronetic moment of vision brings about not merely a transformation of the world but first and foremost a transformation or conversion of *Dasein* itself.⁹⁰ Following Paul and Luther, Heidegger sees the experience of this moment as an absolute affliction in which one faces the possibility of one's own death and thus the possibility of the nothing.⁹¹ This is also the moment of personal commitment.⁹² *Phronêsis* in this sense is conscience, the call to face this decision and the destiny it entails.⁹³ The content of the revelation in the moment of vision, however, is not set in advance because the good varies according to the *kairos*.⁹⁴ Therefore, it is necessary to hold oneself open to this moment. Given the human tendency to flee the anguish of this openness, the moment can only be successfully traversed if one precommits oneself to endure it. Aristotle's term for such a holding-oneself-ready is *hexis*, which we typically translate as 'habit.'⁹⁵ Training is thus necessary to endure such a transformation. This training, as Heidegger understands it, however, is more an Augustinian commitment to continence versus the dissipation of everyday life rather than an Aristotelian habituation in the moral virtues.⁹⁶

In establishing *phronêsis* in this way as a world-historical force, Heidegger was seeking a solution to the dehumanizing hegemony of science and technology. In his interpretation of *phronêsis*, however, Heidegger departs from Aristotle in a decisive way, converting practical reason and deliberation into a confrontation with nothingness and a revelation of destiny. Heidegger seeks to solve the problem of technology by establishing the rule of *phronêsis* but finds *phronêsis* not on practical reason but on sheer insight. It remains for us to see how this project works itself out, first very briefly in *Being and Time* and then in Heidegger's encounter with Nazism.

THE ARISTOTELIAN CORE OF BEING AND TIME

Being and Time, in a very real sense, was the final draft of Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle. Division One of Part One is an

analysis of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world that seeks to expose the practical reality of human existence as *technê* or what Heidegger there calls equipment (*Zeug*). As objects of our concern, the things in the world are thus not primarily objects for theoretical knowing but entities to be produced and used.⁹⁷ The world in this sense is revealed as ready-to-hand. The theoretical or scientific encounter with this existence is understood as derivative, revealing the world as merely present-at-hand. The first part of the work is thus an attempt to present a purified Aristotelianism against the Platonic metaphysics of presence. It presents the case for the superiority of human doing or praxis through the argument for the superiority of *technê* over *epistêmê* and *sophia*. This reversal is made possible by the rejection of the Platonic understanding of Being as ever-Being or presence in favor of a historicist view that recognizes that Being is not presence but time itself.

It is this insight that is decisive to Division Two of Part One that examines *Dasein* not as *technê* or *theôria* but as *phronêsis*. Seen in this light, the focus of the discussion of human existence in terms of possibility delimited by death becomes clear as the fundamental structure of *phronêsis*, or what Heidegger there calls historicity. Similarly, the focus on conscience, resoluteness, and the moment of vision as the decisive characteristics of authentic Being-as-a-whole define the character of the *phronimos*, the practically wise man who is able to understand and affirm his destiny (i.e., what is necessary at this particular time in and with his people or generation).

Division Three of Part One, which was never published, was to have moved from this improved Aristotelian anthropology to a correct understanding of Being itself as time. This part would then have corrected the fundamental Platonic error and provided the foundation for a complete reversal of the Western understanding of Being as presence. On the basis of such a reversal, Heidegger could then have produced a new first philosophy as the foundation for the phronetic mastery and political rule of technology. A demonstration of the way in which the West had consistently embodied this mistake would then have been necessary, but more as an addendum than as an essential part of its phenomenological program.

Much has been written about why the rest of this work was never published, and I will not speculate on that here. Suffice it to say that the crucial foundations had been laid for Heidegger's philosophy of praxis and his phronetic politics. The enormous success of the book also convinced Heidegger that he himself had arrived and that he lacked only the moment that his kairological imagination longed for. Unfortunately, that moment was about to arrive.

*HEIDEGGER'S VISION OF NATIONAL
SOCIALISM: THE RULE OF PHRONËSIS*

In the crisis of the early 1930s, Heidegger believed he saw the decisive moment for the transformation of Germany and the West: "Everywhere there are convulsions, crises, catastrophes, misery: daily anguish, political chaos, the impotence of science, the undermining of art, the groundlessness of philosophy, the powerlessness of religion."⁹⁸ In contrast to many of his contemporaries, Heidegger saw this crisis not as a disaster but as a valuable shock that he hoped would stimulate a communal confrontation with the question of Being. However, he was generally disappointed by the response to this crisis: the question that dominated public concern was not how to humanize technology but how to repair it and make it work better (i.e., more productively). In this context, Americanism and communism seemed to seep in everywhere. Heidegger did believe, however, that he discerned the possibility for renewal and salvation in the social and political program of Hitler and the Nazi movement. They seemed to offer the possibility of a confrontation with the problem of technology and the chance of subordinating it to the rule of *phronêsis*, in short of establishing what Heidegger was later to call a free relationship to technology. Heidegger never believed that every Nazi had this goal in mind or even that the Nazi movement would inevitably bring this about, but he was convinced that the possibility for such a revolution existed within this movement and within this movement alone. What was necessary to bring this revolution about was a commitment by the positive intellectual forces in Germany to join this movement and spiritualize it from within. He saw himself playing a leading role in this effort.⁹⁹

Despite his grave concerns about the role that technology played in the modern world, Heidegger was never simply an opponent of technology and never sought its abolition or destruction. The problem, as he saw it, was not technology per se but the hegemony that technology had come to exercise over human action. *Technê* as a form of uncovering reveals the world as a process of production. Everything within the world is thus merely the equipment with which this productive enterprise is carried out. Modern man imagines that technology produces goods to satisfy his wants and desires, providing what Hobbes called commodious living. Technology, however, can only serve human beings if they act untechnologically—that is, only if they live according to something other than technical (and that includes economic) imperatives. Only if distinctively human action is placed at the center of our concern will technology serve our ends. We thus can only become active (as opposed to productive) beings if we are guided by *phronêsis*. Phronetic

insight, however, is only possible if we resolutely face the possibility of our own death and accept the destiny that is revealed in the moment of vision. Thus, we must resolve ourselves to face the dangerous question of Being. Without such resolve, we will lose the capacity for action and become mere cogs in the equipment that constitutes the world uncovered by *technê*. It was such a resolve that Heidegger saw in the Nazi movement.

Heidegger's understanding of the relationship of technology and politics was certainly influenced by Jünger's notion of total mobilization and his vision of the worker as the coming superman, but it would be easy to exaggerate Jünger's impact on Heidegger.¹⁰⁰ Jünger believed at the time that the future belonged to technology. As World War I in his view made evident, victory comes to those who are best able to mobilize all material and human resources in the process of production. Politically that means producing the kinds of human beings who are most productive. Jünger himself holds up America as the political model for the regime of the future because in America, mobilization is not constrained by class differences, cultural traditions, or any other factors. Heidegger carefully studied Jünger's work, but he did not endorse Jünger's political conclusions because he realized it meant giving up the possibility for authentic human action. On the other hand, he recognized as well that the destiny of our times was essentially technological. The problem was thus not to eliminate technology but to establish a free relationship to it (i.e., a relationship that put the machine itself in service of human action). It was this transformation of technology by *phronêsis* that Heidegger believed the Nazi movement might bring about.

The Nazis, Heidegger believed, were resolutely opposed to both Americanism and communism. They also despised high theory, experts, and intellectuals, trusting instead to the feelings and sensibilities of the *Volk*. They accepted the need for and value of technology and technical expertise but insisted it be subordinated to the good of the *Volk*. They were also resolute in their determination to form the German *Volk* into a German state. And finally, they recognized the necessity of leaders who posed the deepest questions and acted resolutely on their insight into the necessities of the moment.

Central to Heidegger's support of the Nazis was his belief that their radicalism made possible a courageous confrontation with the question of Being. This experience in his view would

shatter the encapsulation of the various fields of knowledge into separate disciplines . . . and ground science once again directly in the fruitfulness and blessing of all the world-shaping forces of man's historical existence, such as nature, history, language, the *Volk*, custom, the state; poetry, thought, belief; sickness, madness, death; law, economy, technology.¹⁰¹

In short, it would make possible a truly human, or what Heidegger in this period calls a truly spiritual, world. If spiritual leaders pose this question radically enough, a common questioning will pervade the community.¹⁰² Thereby, the *Volk* can play “an active role in shaping its fate by placing its history into the openness of the overpowering might of all the world-shaping forces of human existence and by struggling ever anew to secure its spiritual world.”¹⁰³ This, however, cannot be achieved by a merely theoretical engagement. “What the real gravity of the new situation calls for is the experience of affliction, is the active engagement with real conditions. Only that activity is justified that is performed with full inner commitment to the future.”¹⁰⁴ Students thus need to be “forced out into the uncertainty of all things, in which the necessity of engagement is grounded.”¹⁰⁵ Such a profound questioning is essential to the foundation of a Volkish science. To achieve it, the courage either to grow or be destroyed in a confrontation with Being is needed.¹⁰⁶

Facing the question of Being requires courage and resolution because it means facing the possibility of one’s own death. The young Schlageter who was executed by the French for sabotage in 1923 (and held by the Nazis to be a national hero) exemplifies in Heidegger’s view the kind of courage that is necessary. He praises Schlageter’s clarity of heart, which in the face of death won him a view of “what was greatest and most remote.”¹⁰⁷ Heidegger believed such courage characterized many members of the Nazi movement.¹⁰⁸ We know from letters and personal accounts how much Heidegger admired Hitler. Hitler, he believed, was committed to facing the deepest and most troubling questions, and his inspirational example, Heidegger hoped, would evoke a communal reflection on the question of Being. In effect, Hitler would engineer a communal escape from the Platonic cave into the light of reality.¹⁰⁹ Heidegger believed that this process had already begun, but he was also convinced that his own assistance was necessary to bring it to fruition.

In Heidegger’s view, the Nazis understood that knowledge was fundamentally rooted in praxis and thus were reconstituting the unity of life in a way unknown since the time of the pre-Socratics. For the Greeks before Plato, there was no theory apart from (let alone above) practice. Theory, as the Greeks understood it, was the highest mode of human activity (*energeia*), but they understood it as the supreme realization of genuine practice, the innermost determining center of their entire existence as a people.¹¹⁰ The new way of knowing that Heidegger believed was being awakened in the Nazi movement and that was exemplified in his own thinking could similarly root human beings in practice.¹¹¹

‘*Wissenschaft*’ [science] is not the possession of a privileged class of citizens, to be used as a weapon in the exploitation of the working people. Rather, *Wissenschaft* is merely the

more rigorous and hence *more responsible* form of that knowledge which the entire German *Volk* must seek and demand for its own historical existence as a state if it still wants to secure its continued existence and greatness and to preserve them in the future. *In its essence*, the knowledge of true *Wissenschaft* does *not* differ *at all* from the knowledge of the farmer, woodcutter, the miner, the artisan. For knowledge means: *to know one's way around* in the world into which we are placed, as a community and as individuals. Knowledge means in our decisions and actions *to be up to* the task that is assigned us.¹¹²

What is decisive is thus not the quantity of knowledge that one has but whether knowledge springs out of one's own concrete existence.¹¹³ If it does, it is genuine knowledge; if not, it is merely pseudo-knowledge. Thus, in thinking about the future of university education in the National Socialist state, Heidegger believes that it will be necessary to train students not merely in intellectual disciplines but in practical ways as well. He thus recommends training in labor service, military service, and knowledge service to further perfect this growing unity of acting and knowing.¹¹⁴ The reestablishment of praxis as the central moment of human life and of *phronêsis* as the principal form of human knowing dethrones technology and subordinates it to human ends. This is particularly evident in the Nazi transformation of the role of labor. Labor under the hegemony of technology is merely a means to further means, what Heidegger in the later 1930s came to call the will to will that turns everything into standing reserve. Technology under the rule of *phronêsis* roots production in human purposes. Thus, Heidegger argues that "every worker of our people must know why and to what end he stands there, where he stands," for it is only in this way that the individual is rooted in the people as a whole and their fate.¹¹⁵

Labor is also not simply the production of goods for others. Nor is labor simply the occasion and the means to earn a living. Rather: *For us, "work" is the title of every well-ordered action that is borne by the responsibility of the individual, the group, and the State and which is thus of service to the Volk.*¹¹⁶

It is just such an experience of labor that National Socialism offers. Heidegger clearly has in mind the work camps of the labor service and a similar science camp he ran for faculty and students. Here, he believes, the distinction between theory and practice, between thinking and doing, is eliminated as individuals come to think of themselves not as self-interested actors but as members of the work group and the people. What counts in the camp, according to Heidegger, is exemplary acting and working together, not standing by and supervising.¹¹⁷ Such service provides the basic experience of hardness, of closeness to the soil and to the implements of labor, of the rigorous law that

governs the simplest physical labor in a group.¹¹⁸ As a result, the differences between intellectual work and handwork disappear.

While all of these are hopeful developments, they crucially depend on the self-assertion of the people in an act of founding in which it wills itself as the end of its activity. This is the supreme phronetic act, and it was an act that Heidegger was convinced the Nazi movement was in the process of carrying out. A people or *Volk*, as Heidegger understands it, is not based on blood but on a common feeling or mood (*Stimmung*).¹¹⁹ In this respect, he distances himself from the explicitly racist elements in the National Socialist movement. In his view, moods or feelings are not expressions of individual souls but a fundamental occurrence of temporality in which our *Dasein* primordially is.¹²⁰ We thus wrongly denigrate feelings because we do not see how they connect us to beings as a whole.¹²¹ They are the way that we as a people are in the world and have our determination (*Bestimmung*).¹²² The I-centered world of liberalism is thus overcome and disappears when we immerse ourselves in the feelings or mood of the people.¹²³ The self-assertion or self-creation of a people thus crucially depends on the emotional immersion and indeed submersion of the individual in the people as a whole. To submit to this mood is the highest form of self-responsibility. Indeed, it is only in this way that one becomes an authentic self.

Heidegger argues that this will to self-responsibility is not only the basic law of the existence of the people; it is also the fundamental event that brings about the Nazi state.¹²⁴ Appealing to his fellow Germans to vote for Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, Heidegger argues that Hitler is "giving the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest free decision of all: whether it—the entire people—wants its own existence [*Dasein*] or whether it does not want it."¹²⁵ This withdrawal, according to Heidegger, is necessary for the internal self-constitution of the people and is not the result of ambition or a desire for glory or a hunger for power.¹²⁶ This is not merely a decision that Germany has to make but one that all peoples must make to find and preserve the greatness and truth of their destiny.¹²⁷ The dissolution of the League of Nations is thus the prerequisite for a lasting and manly peace among autonomous peoples.

A people can maintain itself, Heidegger argues, only by self-governance that aims not at maximizing technical or economic efficiency but in determining "what we ourselves ought to be."¹²⁸ Self-governance depends not on abstract theory but on self-examination and is thus the ground of a new freedom. Heidegger here understands freedom in an essentially Greek fashion as the freedom of the people that arises from giving themselves their own laws (i.e., from constituting themselves as a people).¹²⁹ Such freedom thus is not

individual freedom. Indeed, it imposes new duties on individuals.¹³⁰ The duties and social roles that fall to individuals will vary, but they will not be determined by theoretical or technical necessities. Indeed, social differences based on economic or technical distinctions will be swept away and replaced by the human distinctions that arise out of the needs of the people. Heidegger believed that the Nazis were already beginning this transformation. Village and city were being reunified and bound to rural areas.¹³¹ National Socialism was eroding class differences, bringing together people from different parts of society through their cooperation in the joint enterprise.¹³² Individuals thereby ceased to be members of a class and became fellow countrymen (*Volksgenossen*). As countrymen, they were members not of an abstract and anomic society but of a community (*Volksgemeinschaft*).

The successful establishment of the *Volk*, its self-government, the freedom it affords, and the elimination of previous class differences all depend on the preeminence of *phronêsis*. *Phronêsis*, however, is not present in all human beings. Indeed, for the most part, human beings are lost in their everyday concerns. Only those rare individuals who are resolute in their questioning and courageous enough to face death and nothingness have *phronêsis*. It is these *phronimoi* who must lead the people.¹³³ Indeed, without such leaders, a free community cannot come into being or sustain itself. Successful leadership, however, depends on others being able and willing to follow. "All leadership must allow following to have its own strength. In each instance, however, to follow carries resistance within it. This essential opposition between leading and following must neither be covered over nor, indeed, obliterated altogether."¹³⁴ Struggle is thus necessary to preserve this opposition and secure true self-governance, but at the same time it is necessary that "loyalty and the will to follow be daily and hourly strengthened."¹³⁵ Heidegger thus believed that "the Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its law," but he also recognized that a leader could only lead with the willing compliance of his followers.¹³⁶ Both the leader and the people must share the same fundamental feeling or mood, for it is only the basis of such a fundamental feeling or mood that great things are possible.¹³⁷ An authentic leader thus cannot merely command or work his will; he must convince and inspire by directing the people according to the fundamental mood through which they are a people.

We can gain some more concrete idea of this notion of leadership from Heidegger's own activities when he became rector at the University of Freiburg. He first attempted to reorganize the university according to the *Führerprinzip* to refound it on the basis of a philosophical questioning of Being. He sought to push individual disciplines and departments to consider

fundamental questions. He also enthusiastically attempted to insert labor and military training exercises into the curriculum to counteract what he saw as the hyperintellectualism of students and faculty. Finally, he organized science camps (retreats for selected members of the faculty and a few students) according to the *Führerprinzip* to try to integrate the practical and theoretical sides of education. He wrote to one potential participant in one of these camps that

the success of the camp depends upon the extent of new courage, on the clarity and alertness for what is coming, on the greatest possible casting off the burden of what has been, on the determination of the will to fidelity, to sacrifice and service. Out of these forces true followership arises. And these first bear and protect genuine German community.¹³⁸

All of Heidegger's efforts failed. In part, this was because the party was suspicious of his intellectualism and his Jesuit and Jewish connections. A more important reason for his failure, however, was resistance from within the university and especially from the natural scientists who did not want their research programs derailed by philosophical questioning. The faculty as a whole was also bitterly opposed to required labor and military exercises. Faced with this failure and unwilling to compromise with either the party or the faculty, Heidegger resigned. He remained convinced, however, that he was right about what needed to be done.

Heidegger clearly recognized the difficulty of such a project in a university system that was already thoroughly dominated by theory and technology. To counteract this domination and provide a more practical orientation, Heidegger laid out plans for a new academy in Berlin to train all future university instructors. His plans give us some concrete indications of what he thought might be done on a National Socialist foundation to transform Germany. This academy was to be a philosophic cloister, akin to a holy order. Teachers and students would live together and perform their academic work in common. They would also labor together at different jobs. In their free time, there would be communal recreational activities, including martial exercises, marching, and celebrations. Not all of their activities, however, would be in common. There would also be time for solitude and gathering together in small groups for conversation. Moreover, each person would have his own cell.¹³⁹ The vision of National Socialism that is embodied in these institutions is reminiscent of monasticism. Indeed, the Nazi movement as Heidegger understood it was a cross between the Greek polis and the Christian monastery. What is missing, however, are the gods and any established rituals and traditions. Moreover, at its head stands not the man of God who has retreated

from the world but the *phronimos* who seeks an engagement with it in the most concrete way to lead his people and help them fulfill their common destiny.

*CONCLUSION: THE FAILURE OF PHRONËSIS
AND THE PURSUIT OF POETIC PROPHECY*

National Socialism failed to realize Heidegger's millenarian dreams. Indeed, Heidegger came to recognize that Nazism, like Americanism and Marxism, was dominated by technology. However, he did not believe that this was the necessary or inevitable conclusion of the Nazi revolution. In reflecting on the period, he asks, "What would have happened and what could have been averted if in 1933 all available powers had arisen, gradually and in secret unity, in order to purify and moderate the 'movement' that had come to power?"¹⁴⁰

The failure of National Socialism to achieve the kind of transformation Heidegger desired demonstrated to him that the forgetfulness of Being and the hegemony of technology were much more profound than he had imagined.¹⁴¹ He concluded that the West was not on the verge of a new dawn as he had believed but at the "world-midnight." No immediate relief was possible, and as he later put it, "Only a God can save us." This does not mean that human beings can do nothing. He remained convinced that the possibility for revolutionary change had existed in the Nazi movement but that the Germans had not been prepared to take advantage of it. At this time, the task of thinking is thus not revolutionary transformation but a preparation for the coming return of the gods. This preparation requires a critical philosophy that deconstructs the philosophic tradition to open up the question of Being. Such deconstruction reveals the current domination of technology and makes it possible for us to understand the essence of technology in *poiësis*. In this way, we may be able to establish a free relationship to technology.

Such a freedom, however, will be useless unless we have some idea of where we need to go. This was what Heidegger imagined *phronësis* would reveal for us. In his later thought, however, he came to believe that *phronësis* arises not in a moment of vision in the face of death (i.e., not out of facing directly the question of Being) but in listening to the poetic voices that speak out of the midnight hours of coming gods. Heidegger believed that the herald of this future for Germany was Hölderlin. *Phronësis*, in this sense, depends on harkening to the poet-prophets who have peered into the abyss of Being and marked out our way and destination.

Heidegger's turn from *phronêsis* to *poiêsis* is important in too many ways to discuss fully here. However, it makes little difference politically since in either case political life remains dependent on a mystical insight into the abyss of Being. Heidegger's later thought is thus no less susceptible to something like National Socialism than his thought of the 1920s. To employ an analogy, the young Heidegger believed that a new Oedipus could solve the riddle of the technological Sphinx and establish the rule of *phronêsis*. The result was a monstrosity. In the aftermath of that failure, an older Heidegger concluded that we must listen not to Oedipus but to Teiresias. Such blind wisdom, however, can provide no better ground for human praxis. What is surprising is that it never occurred to him to attend to the prayer of the ordinary people of Thebes that the hubristic adventurer who confronts the nothing in search of world transformation never frequents their hearth. This was a truth that Aristotle recognized and embodied in his own ethics and politics. It was a truth lamentably and disastrously absent in Heidegger's thought. Its absence constitutes the un-Aristotelian core of Heidegger's Aristotelian National Socialism.

NOTES

1. These questions were first raised immediately after World War II in Sartre's journal *Les Temps moderne*. They arose again with the 1953 publication of Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, with its reference to "the inner truth and greatness" of the National Socialist movement. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 199. The current debate has perhaps less to do with Heidegger than with the Heideggerianism of postmodernism. See Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *Heidegger and Modernity*, trans. Franklin Philip (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 77. To deflect the charge that their thought was implicitly fascist, postmodern thinkers mounted a defense especially of Heidegger's later thought. Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and the Jews*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. C. Turner (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1990). In their view, Nazism is humanism, and they believe that Heidegger fell into Nazism because he still retained elements of humanism in his earlier thought. On this debate, see Richard Wolin, "French Heidegger Wars," *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. R. Wolin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 272-300.

2. See Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1988) and Rüdiger Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland: Heidegger und seine Zeit* (Munich: Hanser, 1994).

3. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 199.

4. Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 6.

5. Richard Bernstein has pointed out that Heidegger, Marx, Weber, and Lukács all develop similar analyses of technology. *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of*

Modernity and Postmodernity (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 100. According to Otto Pöggeler, Heidegger believed this crisis could be "traced back to the alienated civilization of the big cities in which the West was dying." "Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 210.

6. In 1942, Heidegger suggested that Bolshevism was a variant of Americanism. Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Der Ister"* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1984), 86. See also Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 236.

7. Karl Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome, 1936," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 142.

8. "An Exchange of Letters: Herbert Marcuse and Martin Heidegger," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 162.

9. Karl Löwith, "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 172. Löwith claimed this remained hidden under a veneer that suggested religious devotion. The argument presented here suggests that the religious element was more important in Heidegger's thought than Löwith maintains. See also Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 297.

10. "In 1933 I had indeed stepped in to say yes to the national and the social, but not at all to the nationalism—nor the intellectual and metaphysical foundations that underlay biologism and the party doctrine." Quoted in Maurice Blanchot, "Thinking the Apocalypse: A Letter from Maurice Blanchot to Catherine David," trans. Paula Wissing, *Critical Inquiry* 15 (1989): 478.

11. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 74. He wrote to Elizabeth Blochmann that "the new life that we want, or that wants to be in us, has given up the desire to be universal, i.e., inauthentic and flat (superficial)." Cited in Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 111.

12. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 72-73.

13. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 14.

14. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, 111.

15. *Ibid.*, 112.

16. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 107.

17. *Ibid.*, 84. See also *ibid.*, 17. The tyranny of the theoretical was at heart of problem, as Lask recognized. *Ibid.*, 57.

18. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 16-17.

19. *Ibid.*, 113.

20. After reading the work of Nietzsche's friend Franz Overbeck, Heidegger concluded that it was the true task of theology to seek the word that could call men back to faith. Gadamer, "Martin Heidegger und die Marburger Theologie," 169. See also Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 70.

21. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 66-67.

22. Gadamer, "Heidegger's Phenomenology," 19.

23. The impact of these lectures and their importance for twentieth-century political philosophy can hardly be overrated. Heidegger's students during this period included Löwith, Gadamer, Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Helene Weiss, Jacob Klein, Friedrich Neumann, Eugen Fink, and others. That nearly all of them moved in a direction different than that of Heidegger is important for understanding both their work and the possibilities inherent in the thought of the young Heidegger that the later Heidegger did not pursue.

24. Heidegger interprets Aristotle's *psychê* as *alêtheuein*. Franco Volpi, "Being and Time: A 'Translation' of the Nichomachean Ethics?" *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed. T. Kisiel and J. van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press,

1994), 199. Scholars have often derided what they take to be Heidegger's idiosyncratic translation of *alêtheia*, but in translating it as 'uncovering,' he merely employs the standard translation from earlier German lexicons.

25. Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), 16.

26. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* (manuscript in Marcuse Archive), 8.

27. *Ibid.*, 94.

28. *Ibid.*, 18.

29. *Ibid.*, 6.

30. *Ibid.*, 6, 7, 18, 22.

31. *Ibid.*, 16.

32. *Ibid.*, 23.

33. *Ibid.*, 19.

34. *Ibid.*, 23.

35. *Ibid.*, 37.

36. *Ibid.*, 18.

37. *Ibid.*, 37. However, this fellow feeling of the *koinônia* cannot be extended to include all humanity because then there is no limit (*peras*) in this case, and such a limit is essential to establish the community as a community. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, 6, 38.

39. *Ibid.*, 48. Contrary to Plato, it is thus not dialectic but rhetoric that is essential to praxis. *Ibid.*, 49. Rhetoric is the way in which *phronêsis* appears in the public sphere.

40. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 302-3.

41. *Platon: Sophistes*, 19.

42. *Ibid.*, 21-22; Kisiel, *Genesis*, 273.

43. *Platon: Sophistes*, 28.

44. Brogran, "Heidegger's Aristotelian Reading of Plato: The Discovery of the Philosopher," *Research in Phenomenology* 25 (1995): 278.

45. *Platon: Sophistes*, 37.

46. *Ibid.*, 38, 48. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 305.

47. *Platon: Sophistes*, 61.

48. *Ibid.*, 71.

49. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 304.

50. Brogran, "The Place of Aristotle in the Development of Heidegger's Phenomenology," *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed. T. Kisiel and J. van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 218. These terms, of course, play an important role in *Being and Time*. All of them at one time or another are employed to translate *phronêsis*.

51. *Platon: Sophistes*, 53.

52. Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indications of the Hermeneutic Situation," *Mind and World* 25 (1992): 381.

53. *Platon: Sophistes*, 51-52.

54. Heidegger concludes that Aristotle may not have recognized the significance of his discovery here of the phenomenon of conscience.

55. *Platon: Sophistes*, 56. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 260-70; Kisiel, *Genesis*, 305.

56. *Platon: Sophistes*, 56.

57. *Ibid.*, 95.

58. Brogran, "Heidegger's Aristotelian Reading of Plato," 280.
59. *Platon: Sophistes*, 124. Or, to put it in other terms, the theoretical life is only a particular form of praxis.
60. *Ibid.*, 59.
61. *Ibid.*, 132.
62. Brogran, "The Place of Aristotle in the Development of Heidegger's Phenomenology," 218-19.
63. *Platon: Sophistes*, 135.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*, 145.
66. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 125.
67. *Platon: Sophistes*, 156.
68. Brogran, "Heidegger's Aristotelian Reading of Plato," 278.
69. *Platon: Sophistes*, 163.
70. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 4.
71. *Ibid.*, 15.
72. *Platon: Sophistes*, 214. Brogran, "Heidegger's Aristotelian Reading of Plato," 275. The path to Being passes not through beings but through the nothing as Heidegger was to make clear in his inaugural lecture in Freiburg, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1929).
73. *Platon: Sophistes*, 224.
74. *Ibid.*, 225.
75. *Ibid.*, 140.
76. *Ibid.*, 178.
77. Volpi, "Being and Time: A 'Translation' of the Nichomachean Ethics?" 210.
78. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 161. Stanley Rosen argues that what Heidegger calls Platonism is more properly titled Aristotelianism. *The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), xxii-xxiii.
79. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 25.
80. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 198.
81. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 70-71. Heidegger sees the norms of everyday life "bogged down in inauthentic tradition and habituation." Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle," 365.
82. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 12.
83. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 347.
84. While this equation of *phronêsis* with mystical insight may be troubling to those who want to read Heidegger hermeneutically, Heidegger himself would have had no such qualms about this interpretation. Indeed, his goal since at least 1918 had been to attain an understanding equivalent to the mystical insight of thinkers such as Eckhardt.
85. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 207-10. See also Martin Heidegger, *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), 113.
86. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 224.
87. It would thus be a mistake to believe that human action is determined in any way by our ordinary historical experience. History itself is rewritten on the basis of this moment of insight into Being itself. As Heidegger argues in his 1934 lectures on logic, that which we determine ourselves for is our task, and this task comes to us out of the future as our destiny. *Logik*, 127. The revelation of history is thus not like a weather prediction but is available only to those who stand resolutely in the revelation of the question of Being. *Ibid.*, 161.

88. Theodore Kisiel, "Genealogical Supplements: A Reply of Sorts," *Research in Phenomenology* 25 (1995): 245.
89. Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle," 381.
90. Heidegger, *Logik*, 120, 160.
91. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 184.
92. *Ibid.*, 437.
93. *Ibid.*, 306; Brogran, "Heidegger's Aristotelian Reading of Plato," 278.
94. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 299.
95. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, 71.
96. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 438.
97. *Sein und Zeit*, 14th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), 67.
98. *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 243.
99. Heidegger to Jaspers, 3 April 1933: "As dark and questionable as everything is, so I sense ever more, that we are growing into a new actuality and that a time is becoming old. Everything depends upon whether we prepare the right point of attack for philosophy and help it come to its task." Cited in Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, 139.
100. As Tom Rockmore does in his "Heidegger on Technology, Nazism, and the Thought of Being," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 13 (1993): 267.
101. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 33.
102. *Ibid.*, 34.
103. *Ibid.*, 35.
104. "The University in the New Reich," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 45.
105. *Ibid.*
106. "Declaration of Support for Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist State," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 51.
107. "Schlageter," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 41.
108. *Ibid.*, "The University in the New Reich," 45; "Declaration of Support for Adolph Hitler," 51.
109. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 266. This Platonic imagery is not ad hoc but corresponds to Heidegger's reading of and reflection on Plato's *Republic* at the time.
110. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 31-32.
111. "National Socialist Education," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 58.
112. *Ibid.*, 57-58.
113. *Ibid.*, 58.
114. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 37. Heidegger's knowledge service was consciously in opposition to Jünger's focus on a labor front and a war front. Otto Pöggeler, "Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 212.
115. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 305.
116. "National Socialist Education," 59. See also *Logik*, 57. Heidegger describes the importance of labor at considerable length in this lecture course. Labor, he argues, is an authentic concretization of the task of the *Volk*, and it is only through such labor in the context of the *Volk* that man is able to be *Dasein*. *Ibid.*, 129, 154. Labor is thus the fundamental connection of man to man, the foundation of our possibility of being with and for others. *Ibid.*, 156. To be without work is to be alienated from things and the world as such; unemployment is thus spiritual destruction. *Ibid.*, 154.
117. "Labor Service and the University," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 42.
118. "The Call to Labor Service," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 53.
119. Heidegger, *Logik*, 153.

120. *Ibid.*, 130.
 121. *Ibid.*, 150.
 122. *Ibid.*, 163.
 123. *Ibid.*, 151, 155.
 124. "Declaration of Support for Adolph Hitler," 50.
 125. "German Men and Women!" in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 47. See also "Declaration of Support for Adolph Hitler," 49, and *Logik*, 165.
 126. "German Men and Women!" in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 48.
 127. *Ibid.*
 128. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 29.
 129. *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 243. Heidegger remarked in 1934 that the question of the world war was not who won but which *Volk* was able to answer the question of "who we are." *Logik*, 46. This, in Heidegger's view, is the crucial question, the question of the self, and it points to the *Volk* and not to the I. *Ibid.*, 52.
 130. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 34-35. Heidegger suggests that freedom is not merely doing what one wants but taking over the historical task that Being sets out for a *Volk* through the appropriate organization of the people in a state. *Logik*, 164.
 131. "The Call to Labor Service," 53.
 132. "National Socialist Education," 59.
 133. Heidegger remarked in 1934 that the "we" of the authentic community does not have unconditional precedence because there are many decisive things that come from the ruling force and solitude of a single man. *Logik*, 51. He apparently is thinking here not merely of Hitler but of the violent Greek creators and founders who as creators and founders became *apolis*. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 152-53.
 134. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 38.
 135. "German Students," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 47.
 136. *Ibid.*
 137. Heidegger, *Logik*, 130.
 138. Cited in Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, 218.
 139. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, 325-26.
 140. "Das Rektorat, 1933-1934," *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, ed. Günther Neske and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon, 1990), 25. On the surface, this remark seems to be overtly political. Seen in the best possible light, Heidegger may only have meant that there was the necessity for a continuing openness to the question of Being, the question of who we are, in opposition to the ideological closedness that he found in the work of the party ideologues. *Logik*, 76-77, 121.
 141. "Letter to the Rector of Freiburg University," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 63.

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