Chapter 12
The Political and Ethical Significance of Waiting: Heidegger and the Legacy of Thinking*

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"All things come to those who wait." This saying implies an understanding of waiting which is anything but resigned, quietist and fatalist. Waiting, in such an understanding, is a preparedness for the future, a withdrawal from the busyness of the now and an acceptance of things as that which comes rather than what is conquered or appropriated. Philosophy, which begins in wonder we are told by Plato and by Aristotle, must similarly wait; it must perhaps cultivate waiting above all and have patience as its greatest virtue. Philosophers fail – and in some cases have failed scandalously – when they lapse in their exercise of that virtue. The legacy of philosophy remains tied to the patience of waiting, however, and despite his failures Heidegger remains true to that legacy. It is a legacy which is politically and ethically significant, but is so only indirectly. Philosophy for Heidegger concerns the possibility of action, but can only understand that possibility through a withdrawal from ethical and political action, a withdrawal which is neither ethically nor politically justifiable.

Heidegger's thought has become a legacy with which we struggle. This struggle is one with the history of the past century, in particular that of the Nazi regime. This struggle has been there almost since the beginning of the reception of Heidegger's work, but – in the English and French speaking worlds – only became a central issue since the late 1980s. But such a struggle with the legacy of Heidegger is part of a wider struggle with the legacy of philosophy. This should not be surprising: unless with culpable smugness we distort the history of the Nazi period as simply an aberration, then the traces of Heidegger's response to the political and ethical situation of his time must in part be related to wider issues of the legacy of philosophy in its

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relation to politics and ethics. The following cannot hope to do any more than suggest certain directions of investigation regarding the legacy of Heidegger's thought within the legacy of philosophy. The debates regarding Heidegger's Nazi engagement are barely mentioned. Instead, I try to situate Heidegger in terms of the place of philosophy in relation to politics and ethics and the manner in which phenomenology redefines that place.

This essay is divided into three parts. The first argues that in an important respect the legacy of philosophy is apolitical and unethical. The second asks about the place of phenomenology in this legacy and attempts to show how, precisely as apolitical and unethical, the comportment of waiting is essential to phenomenology. The third section then goes on to show how Heidegger is true to this essential element of phenomenology and how his thought leads to an encounter between philosophy and poetry.

12.1

Philosophy, at least since Socrates, has required a withdrawal from the world of political and ethical engagement.[1] This motif of withdrawal arises again and again in the history of philosophy and for reasons essential to philosophy itself. Philosophy asks about the 'taking' and the 'granting' of the 'taken-for-granted'. It is not concerned with the imperative of a certain politically or ethically constituted act, but rather with the possibility of such an imperative at all. In the case of any action I take in response to my political or ethical commitments the context of such action is put behind me, is taken-for-granted. The actor, Goethe says, is without conscience;[2] but philosophy *is* only as listening to the claims of conscience.[3] That is the paradox: to question responsibility, to question the place of the human being in being (*Sein*), indeed to question being, all that involves the breaking away from those commitments, those ties of responsibility, of love and friendship, of duty and service, through which we are persons, citizens, friends. To ask about the possibility of politics or the nature of ethics is to open oneself to the contingency of all political and ethical claims and this makes philosophy apolitical and unethical. It is apolitical because only by a lack of engagement in the political can philosophy ask what it is for a being to be or not to be concerned with justice. It is unethical because philosophy is rooted in self-responsibility, which is not the responsibility to act well towards

[1] Cf. Plato, "The Apology," trans. H. Tredennick in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 23b8 "This occupation [testing the truth of the oracle's pronouncement on Socrates] has kept me too busy to do much either in politics or in my own affairs."

[2] "Der Handelnde ist immer gewissenlos", Goethe, J.W.: Maximenen und Reflexionen. Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe XII, Munich: DTV, 1998, p. 399.

[3] This is an insight which we can find already with Socrates and the figure of the daimon and one which is deepened in Stoicism and given further articulation by Saint Augustine. The place of conscience for philosophy is, however, first given truly systematic treatment by Heidegger in sections 54–60 of *Being and Time*.

others and oneself, but rather to question the grounds of all such action.[4] To ask such questions is to open up the contingency of justice and responsibility in a way which our normal political and ethical commitments cannot justify.[5]

That is the crucial point here: philosophy is politically and ethically unjustifiable and it is so because it claims to put ethics and politics into question in such a manner that is politically and ethically irresponsible. Philosophy is not responsible to society, it is responsible to nothing, to no entity (*Seiende*). Philosophy is by its very calling irresponsible politically, ethically, personally. It is so for a reason which phenomenology first uncovered explicitly: only in breaking the *ties* of responsibility can responsibility be allowed to appear as itself.

In other words, philosophy as the pursuit of the taking and granting of the taken-for-granted, is only possible if thought is free to pursue that which gives itself to thought and has no other responsibility except to that. This may mean that the very pursuit of philosophy is questionable, but if so only on grounds which are philosophically question-begging.

Of course the philosopher is also a citizen, a lover, a friend, a colleague. What she thinks influences what she is in these relations and what she is in these relations influences what she thinks philosophically. But this influence is merely empirical: why *in fact* she thinks the way she does is something different to why she thinks, i.e. which way of thinking gives rise to, that same thought. Only the latter is relevant philosophically: only in relation to thinking, not to praxis, is a philosophical position open to question.

At another level, though, at the origins of philosophy the life of the philosopher was and is relevant. This is captured in the Socratic idea that virtue is knowledge. Contrary to Aristotle's critique, this does not amount to an unjustifiable optimism concerning human continence, but rather is the reverse side of a profound insight, that knowledge is virtue. In other words, to know the good is to be good, is to correspond proportionately to the good[6]: reasoning is proportional correspondence to the logos and only that which is of the same (*koinos*) nature can correspond. The fascination with the human arose essentially not out of some anthropological navel

[4] It is only on the basis of such responsibility of the philosopher (one which in different ways was already made thematic by Nietzsche and Husserl) that Heidegger's account of authenticity in *Being and Time* can be understood.

[5] It may be objected that throughout the history of philosophy the claim has been made to the political relevance of philosophy. But philosophy is thinking and thinking has no effects, it alone brings nothing about. To act politically is to attempt to bring things about and such an attempt requires an understanding of the specific situation in which one finds oneself. If I may quote from Plato's seventh letter (325d–326a): "I who had at first been full of eagerness for a public career, as I gazed upon the whirlpool of public life and saw the incessant movement of shifting currents, at last felt dizzy, and while I did not cease to consider means of improving this particular situation and indeed of reforming the whole constitution, yet, in regard to action, I kept waiting for favourable moments". The time of action is not the time of philosophy (although I will attempt to show that they are closer for Heidegger than for Plato).

[6] Cf. Plato, "The Republic," trans. P. Shorey in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 508b7–508c1I.

gazing, but rather with the realisation that the human ultimately had nothing to which *out of necessity* it could correspond, but rather that such a correspondence was a task to be completed. The question how this was to be fulfilled depended on what that was to which human beings could strive to correspond. Philosophy's vocation was to aid this completion. Heidegger in *Being and Time* with the figure of Dasein and in later works with that of the 'mortal', repeats and at the same time disrupts that vocation.

12.2

The Greek legacy of philosophy is responded to differently in each epoch and phenomenology is characterized by the radicality of its response. A first clue can be taken from the slogan "*zu den Sachen selbst*", "back to that which itself matters".[7] That which matters to philosophy is the granting and taking of things, the appearing of things in their appearing for those to whom they appear. It is the great service of phenomenology to have renewed this age-old philosophical impulse. It is this which lies at the core of Husserl's claim to a presuppositionless science. The way to such a position for Husserl began and ended with the phenomenon: only there, with the appearance of things, with their granting, can philosophy begin to reach knowledge which is absolute – freed, ab-solved, of societal connections. This absolving from what Husserl termed the natural attitude took the form of a reduction, of a leading back (*re-ducere*), to that which came before all relationships, all commitments. Here quite strongly we can hear the echoes of the first paragraph of Descartes' *Meditations*, which themselves however merely echo Socrates' *Apology*. The leading back is not a return to some empirical ego, a return which would in effect amount to a reaffirming of the societal connections he wished to overcome, but rather a return to the very possibility of the ego. It is there in the transcendental ego that the taking and the granting of things are seen in their inner unity.

The epoché is a putting out of play of all worldly involvements. This sounds innocuous enough when discussed epistemologically, but it amounts to a radical putting out of play of all interested engagements, such that the ego is disinterested even – indeed especially – with respect to itself. All ongoing political and ethical relations and their attendant commitments and responsibilities are to be put out of play: only thus can we move from the natural to the philosophical attitude. It is not surprising that Husserl throughout his reflections on the epoché and the reduction questioned the motivation of what he sometimes termed a "conversion" to the philosophical attitude.[8] Finally the only appropriate justification is that of wonder: philosophical wonder points beyond the natural attitude. But what it points towards is not anything new, not something to be done, but rather the "phenomenological

[7] This translation is of course tendentious, but no more so than "to the things themselves". In the end "*Sache*" is not translatable into English.

[8] For an illustrative example of this c.f. Husserl, E., *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 137.

residuum" which the epoché reveals, is one in which "we have not lost anything, but rather gained the total absolute being, which understood correctly contains all worldly transcendents within it".[9] This gain, however, is won precisely at the cost of my ethical and political relations as embedded in my natural attitude – in the philosophical attitude they are disclosed as those in which I am only disinterestedly involved.

If the philosopher must withdraw from societal connections, then the question arises as to whether he finds himself "beyond good and evil". Is he unconstrained and free from all convention? Certainly the case of Alcibiades shows how a limited appreciation of philosophy can suggest just that. Philosophy though is concerned with thinking, concerned with that which gives itself to thought. Such thinking is not calculation, but rather the becoming *as* that which is to be thought. It is first and foremost a responding to what calls to be thought. To respond it is necessary to wait. Philosophy from its beginnings knew of the necessity. To quote Heraclitus: "being (*phusis*) loves to conceal itself". (Diels/Kranz, B 123) Only a patient waiting can bring to sight what conceals itself. Phenomenology is rooted in this insight. "Back to that which itself matters" is a return *from* philosophy as argumentation, as the neutral working out of plausible positions, to that which shows itself as mattering, as being a matter which matters. The impatience of argument – which we often witness among analytic philosophers – is avoided in favour of a form of intellectual fitness programme which trains the philosopher to see and hear and feel and even smell and taste in a new and purified manner. The philosopher needs to correspond to that which shows itself. This is an exercise in patience and waiting, by which we can allow the thing to show itself to us.

That which itself matters in perception is an object which shows itself only in profile. To perceive the object fully, from all aspects, requires time or intersubjectivity: either the assumption of another point of view or of my own future point of view on the object. For the latter I must wait: that appearance as much with the house as with the boat coming up the river – to allude to Kant's examples[10] – is an appearance *to come*. And this waiting is in fact constitutive of appearance itself. For something to appear to me it must appear *as* something and how it appears either fulfils or disappoints my expectations. Either way I must wait on the thing, on its appearance. Waiting – and this is a basic phenomenological insight – is at the basis of all experience to the extent to which experience is temporal.

Now, certainly for Husserl phenomenology was governed by the paradigm of consciousness, in particular perceptual consciousness. Heidegger, for reasons central to his reworking of phenomenology, breaks with this paradigm. But for him too waiting lies at the core of philosophy. As he puts it at the end of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*,"to be able to question means to be able to wait" (*Fragen können heisst*

[9] E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenological Philosophy*, *Book One*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 1950, 113.

[10] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929), B 232/A 189 – B256/A 211.

warten können).[11] Questioning meant for Heidegger being responsive to where we find ourselves (*sich befinden*). For him – as indeed for the later Husserl – we find ourselves in a time of crisis.

12.3

Philosophy for Husserl neither stands above the world nor acts within it, but rather reflects on the world as phenomenon. For Heidegger – as indeed for the later Husserl – such reflection requires a thinking of the crisis (the danger and the decision) which faces humankind at this historical time. The response to this crisis animates Heidegger's thinking from the 1919 "War Emergency" lectures to his last testament in the *Spiegel* interview. If philosophy asks about the possibility of politics and ethics, it must think historically.

I wish briefly to indicate what the crisis in which we find ourselves is for Heidegger, then look at what it is to be in a crisis, and finally how in thinking that crisis Heidegger opens up the possibility of a radically new politics and ethics. In all of this I wish to stress the element of correspondence (*Entsprechung*) which Heidegger never ceases to emphasise.

The crisis in which we live is not immediately evident. Certainly the signs are there, but what in fact the crisis is remains initially obscure. The crisis revolves around being, but the obscurity of the crisis is indicated by the fact that we think being is no longer an issue. "There is no crisis" because the issue has long been decided. To reveal the crisis Heidegger has to dig beneath the surface, his method for doing so he calls *Destruktion*. This method upsets the taken-for-grantedness of the taken-for-granted, or in Heidegger's terms the forgetting of the forgetting. *Destruktion* is a method of reduction. It leads back to an originating experience.[12] This does not mean that it brings us back to a primal stage, but rather to that which gets covered over when we – we in the legacy of Plato – start to philosophise.[13] We ask about the presence of things to consciousness, but we do not question the presencing itself. The granting of entities remains unthought. *Destruktion* is not the wilful destroying of ontology, but the listening to what is unsaid. While Husserlian phenomenology waited on the appearing of things, it did not allow that appearing as granting to appear because it made all appearing subject to consciousness. The problem for Heidegger is not so much the impossibility of the completion of the

[11] M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 206 (translation modified).

[12] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 20; "We understand this task as the destructuring [*Destruktion*] of the traditional content of ancient ontology … This destructuring is based upon the original experiences in which the first and subsequently guiding determinations of being were gained."

[13] Ibid., "its [destructuring's] critique concerns 'today'".

reduction,[14] as that Husserl did not carry the project far enough. While Husserl reduced things to their appearance for consciousness, Heidegger attempted to reduce entities to being.[15] To speak of a phenomenological reduction in Heidegger does not imply that he takes over the reduction as practiced by Husserl, manifestly he does not.[16] For Heidegger Dasein is not to be understood in terms of its sensual *kinaesthesia* in the manner of Husserl's account of sensibility, but rather as an entity (*Seiendes)* through which being is disclosed. "Dasein is its disclosedness [*Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit*]."[17] Phenomena are reduced from the self-evidence of their appearance, to the *how* of their appearing.[18]

On the basis of fundamental moods, Heidegger questions the presence of entities as phenomena as to the coming to presence of such phenomena. This coming to presence which Heidegger terms unconcealment, indicates a concealment at the heart of appearance. This concealment cannot appear as an entity, cannot be made present (to consciousness), but – and this is Heidegger's attempt – may be allowed appear precisely as non-presence. This non-presence is – as Heidegger never tires of pointing out – addressed whenever we speak of the entity: this *is* a table, this *is* a jug. It comes to appearance not as a thing, rather as the granting of things to presence. Heidegger asks of the givenness of things, their granting. While for Husserl this question always meant givenness to consciousness (hence the principle of all principles),[19] for Heidegger the question is how being is given. To answer that question it is necessary to wait not simply for the appearance of a thing, but for that which makes both granting and taking possible. The unconcealment of entities which Heidegger calls truth (*aletheia*) is that which makes Dasein possible. But the emphasis on Dasein obscured the search for that which lies at the root both of taking and of granting. This could not itself be an entity, because then the question as to *its*

[14] As Merleau-Ponty suggests, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C.Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1964*)*, viii.

[15] Cf. J-L. Marion, "Beings and Phenomenon" and "The Nothing and the Claim" in *Reduction and Givenness* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). Far from discounting the need for the *epoché*, Heidegger's own account of the relation of the inauthentic to the authentic can best be understood precisely as an *epoché* which however happens to Dasein rather than being an act of Dasein. So understood the analysis of *Angst* becomes less (as is sometimes alleged) a psychological and firmly a phenomenological account as can be seen in the following famous passage: "In Angst the things at hand in the surrounding world sink away, and so do innerworldly beings in general. …Angst individuates Dasein to its ownmost being-in-the world [and] … discloses Dasein and *being-possible*." (Being and Time, pp. 175f.).

[16] Rudolf Bernet, indeed, states that "the difference [between Husserl and Heidegger] concerns the concept of the phenomenological reduction and the manner of carrying it out." (Bernet, "Phenomenological Reduction and the Double Life of the Subject" in T. Kisiel and J. van Buren, *Reading Heidegger from the Start. Essays in his earliest thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 258).

[17] *Being and Time*, p. 125 (translation modified).

[18] "To let that what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself." (*Being and Time*, p. 30).

[19] Cf. *Ideas I*, p. 52.

granting would arise. Rather, this is an event, a happening. This conclusion is glimpsed at the end of *Being and Time* in the section on historicity,[20] but receives its explicit statement only in the *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936–1938).[21]

The appearance of entities is possible only insofar as the granting of their appearance does not appear. But, for us, all that *is* what appears as objects. The crisis in which we find ourselves results hence from the almost total concealing of that granting, such that the human only meets the human.[22] But implicit since the Greek concept of proportional correspondence as task is that alterity is essential to being human: to be human is only possible in response to a claim which comes from elsewhere. This alterity though does not simply stand outside the human being, that would mean that the human was already decided. Rather, to be human is to be other, to be placed in the play of alterity. The crisis is precisely that the possibility of decision (*kritein*) has been removed. Decision involves the initiation of the new, the opening up of the future. Decision requires alterity. In Homer we read whenever the hero comes to a point of decision they are approached by a god or goddess.[23] From the goddess comes the beginning (*Anfang*), to which they then respond to in starting a new course of action. The beginning is not in human power because it is a break with what was, a move beyond all existing grounds (principle of sufficient reason). In Christianity this was known as *kairos.* This is a time which cannot be calculated, only prepared for; the time when an epiphany – the appearance of the wholly other – calls for response. This appearance is the appearing of appearing, the bringing to light of light, which both is and is not of the visible. Such alterity comes not from human beings, is not of human beings, but is only possible for human beings and by human beings. It calls for response.[24]

Response begins with an initiation from an other. The one who responds is the one upon whom a claim is made.. This claim – *Anspruch* – calls for a response, indeed a correspondence – *Entsprechen*. This speaking is not the expression of opinion or of knowledge, it arises out of a fundamental mood (*Grundstimmung*) where we are affected and speechless. Speechless because here is experienced not the given but the event of givenness itself. It is this which philosophy since its beginnings has attempted to respond to. Speechlessness though seems an unlikely place from which to approach politics or ethics. Yet while ethics and politics are in the

[20] *Being and Time*, § 75.

[21] M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

[22] Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 27.

[23] Homer, *Iliad*, book 1 (200–260) where Achilles at a decisive moment in his confrontation with Agamemnon is approached by Athena who initiates a course of action which sets the course of much of the rest of the *Iliad*.

[24] On the importance of the concept of kairos for an understanding of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* and beyond see the author's *Zeit des Handelns und Moglichkeit der Verwandlung: Kairologie und Chronologie bei Heidegger im Jahrzehnt nach "Sein und Zeit"* (Wurzburg: Konigshausen & N., 1999).

realm of speech, the fluency of speech gliding over the rough edges actually spells their demise. To answer the claim of being is not to rehearse long learnt words, but rather the words which emerge from the speechlessness of mood arise out of response.[25] The speaking, which lies at the base of politics and ethics, responds to the claim and either corresponds to it or does not. The possibility to be human depends on such speaking, out of which political and ethical being with others emerges. Such speech attempts at response, its success cannot be known in advance, because it depends on no past. It is a speaking which allows the possibility of acting and dwelling.

The place of judgement here becomes particularly problematic and its basis essentially fragile. Already in *Being and Time* Heidegger speaks of the choice of a hero,[26] and this theme is continued in the 1930s with the discussion of the demigods in relation to Hölderlin.[27] Heidegger's own choice in 1933 of Hitler as 'hero' was a disastrous one. But in making that choice he had already given up the place of philosophy and mistaken his role as philosopher. That role was not to enter into the political domain, but to think the very possibility of speech out of speechlessness, a possibility which is essentially a-political, because it comes before any polis. It is here that Heidegger turns to the poet, in the hope that the poet has an ear for that which can be brought to language. But this does not amount to a turning away from the political. In his first lecture course on Hölderlin, in 1934, Heidegger makes clear that the poet, the statesman and the thinker are all three the creators (*die Schaffenden*) of the polis.[28] All three act outside the polis, but aim to establish the polis, i.e. the domain in which speech and discourse is possible.[29] Each of these three creators acts in the midst of the struggle of revealing and concealing, which in the "Artwork Lectures" Heidegger understood as a struggle between world and earth and later as a struggle of earth and sky, mortals and gods. Central to these accounts is the experience of making – poiesis. Poiesis, however, has been levelled off into mere production: the earth and all upon it, including human beings, have become mere material, standing reserve. The poetic ear for alterity has been deafened.

Yet the claim of being is to be heard, precisely as the claim of technology. Technology is, for Heidegger, not a human doing but rather is how entities are unhidden, how they are granted, in the current epoch. This sounds like fatalism and as such the death knell of any ethics and any politics. But that which is not a human doing, and not in human control, is not on that account blind necessity: such a conclusion would be based on a metaphysical dichotomy of human freedom and natural

[25] See "Postscript to 'What Is Metaphysics?'" in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 237.

[26] *Being and Time*, p. 352.

[27] M. Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'der* Rhein' Gesamtausgabe vol. 39, ed. S. Ziegler (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989).

[28] *Ibid*, p. 51 f.

[29] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 152.

necessity. Freedom, for Heidegger, is not the realm of politics and ethics in contrast to nature as necessity. Freedom is rather that which makes politics and ethics possible in the first place and this possibility is a possibility of 'nature' (earth and sky). Freedom is a gift, a giving of space. It is in this sense that Heidegger can say that freedom is not a property of human beings, but rather that freedom is letting be of entities.[30] It is the opening in which entities appear. Freedom in the sense of the open is what politics and ethics require; they *are* indeed only through letting the open be. Without such opening, without the future as an aspect of time, action would be impossible. The open, however, *is* not except for the closed, the open is the disclosed. The possibility of freedom lies in the destining of being (*Seinsgeschick*), which is the gift of opening. This gift is contingent, is changeable.[31]

Such change Heidegger frequently characterises by a small word, *jäh*, which is generally translated as sudden or suddenly. The sudden is that which brings past and future to be in a decisive moment, precisely by differentiating them. This moment is not to be planned, not to be produced. If it were, it would simply amount to a continuation of what went before. Production depends on continuity, on the absence of surprise. The political and the ethical though can only arise through surprise, or at least a preparedness for surprise. Freedom is not the spontaneous capacity to control the future, but rather the preparedness for a future which is other. Such a preparedness opens up the possibility of change and transformation: it is a preparedness for the granting of a future which can only be taken in the mode of response. When the claim of technology is recognised, the granting of entities is disclosed. The taking of those entities is not a separate matter as the very entity which we are is itself standing reserve, is itself granted through technology. The taking is obscured because the granting is such that it hides itself as granting by making the one who takes – the human – into one more material resource. The possibility of corresponding to technology resides in the human capacity to see this granting as granting. How is that possible? It is possible precisely through the recognition that technology is not a human product. This recognition is the beginning of a response. Response begins with a recognition of our position as in the accusative case, of being subject to a claim, the claim of being itself which shows itself as that which matters.

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[30] "The Essence of Truth", in *Pathmarks*, p. 145 f.

[31] The implications of this are quite far-reaching in terms of Heidegger's critique of modernity. It is modernity which understands freedom purely as spontaneity. In such a view destiny as the givenness of a situation can only seem a curb on freedom. But freedom for Heidegger is the setting forth of a situation in which to act, and that lies not in the power of the individual actors but is a matter of destiny (*moira*, *fortuna).* In this Heidegger's position only seems strange to moderns. It is revealing to remember that for the Greeks even Zeus himself was subject to *moira*. Modernity, by subjectivising the Judaeo-Christian creator god, has distorted the relation of freedom and necessity. Cf.. Heidegger, "Moira" in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. D.F. Krell and F. Capuzzi (New York: Harper Collins, 1985), 50 ff.; see also W. McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye. Heidegger, Aristotle and the Ends of Theory* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 143.

With the exception of some oblique references, this essay has passed over Heidegger's Nazi engagement in silence. This engagement for all its sordid and scandalous nature can in its philosophical significance only be understood with reference to the wider legacy of philosophy. That legacy encountered a radicalisation with the phenomenological performance of the epoché and reduction which Heidegger brought to its political and ethical significance. As I have attempted to show, such a radicalisation does not amount to a 'holiday' from such ethical and political commitments and responsibilities, but a profound reflection upon them. Such a reflection places philosophy in essential relation to the time of politics and of ethics, to the historical. As such philosophy can neither be timeless nor engaged, but rather a thinking of the present *kairos*, the present decisive moment, in the opening of which ethics and politics are possible. Heidegger's legacy is to radicalize the philosophic disengagement from politics and ethics into a timely thinking of the historical destiny of the present in which, if at all, it is possible to act politically and ethically. Such thinking is a thinking which is prepared to wait.