

# CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY IN AMERICA

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## SEVEN

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ON THE WAY TO *EREIGNIS*:  
HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION OF *PHYSIS*

THIS ESSAY SEEKS TO SHOW HOW Heidegger's interpretation of *physis* in Aristotle lays the foundation for his understanding of *Ereignis*. Specifically, I want to point out how Heidegger finds the meaning of *physis* to lie in movement, the meaning of movement to lie in *dynamis*, and the meaning of *dynamis* to be "retrieval" (*Wiederholung*) in the primary sense of that term. The structure of retrieval in the realm of *physis* underlies the structure of resolve (*Entschlossenheit*) in the realm of human existence. Resolve issues in authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) and is itself the entrance to *Ereignis*. The essay draws on Heidegger's lectures, published and unpublished, and particularly on his 1940 seminar, the protocol of which has been published as "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*: Aristoteles, *Physik B*, 1."<sup>1</sup>

The first step toward understanding Heidegger's interpretation of *physis* is to clarify how he reads Aristotle phenomenologically (Section I). Heidegger maintains that the Greeks, especially Aristotle, read entities as *phainomena*, appearances that show up in a correlative *noein* or *legein*, which manifests their meaningful presentness-as or is-ness (*ousia*, *Seiendheit*, beingness). The question of first philosophy concerns the analogical unity of is-ness as such. Heidegger's phenomenological orientation toward Aristotle led him to transform the Aristotelian question about is-ness or being-

<sup>1</sup>Originally published in *Il Pensiero*, Milano, 3 (1958), 131-156, 265-289, ed. G. Guzzoni; issued as a separate fascicule by the same press in 1960. Republished with slight orthographical changes in WEG (1967), 309-371. English translation by Thomas Sheehan, "On the Being and Conception of *Physis* in Aristotle's *Physics B*, 1," *Man and World*, 9 (1976), 219-270. In referring to Heidegger's works, this paper cites first the abbreviated title of the German work (following the list of abbreviations in William J. Richardson's *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* [see n. 2, infra], p. xxxi) with the addition of "WEG" to abbreviate *Wegmarken*, 1967), then the German pagination and; after an "equals" sign, the pagination in existing English translations.

ness: he radically reinvestigates *logos* (in SZ: *Dasein*) and works out the analogical unity of its beingness. This he finds to be a modality of that which Aristotle called *energeia atelēs* or *dynamis*, that is, a modality of movement, or, if the term be correctly understood, of "temporality." This was the task of *Being and Time*, Part One, Divisions One and Two (the only sections of that book ever to be published), and the results provided Heidegger with the horizon for understanding the meaning of being (*das Sein*) in terms of *dynamis* or movement. The crowning section of *Being and Time*—the unpublished Part One, Division Three—was to have read the analogical meaning of being as movement in the proper sense, which Heidegger at that time called *die Temporalität des Seins*, the time-character of being. Section I of this essay only alludes to this program and then goes on to elaborate what I call here an Aristotelian "phenomenological lexicon" for understanding *Physics B*, 1. This lexicon is, in fact, the fruit of Heidegger's own rereading or retrieval of Aristotle from the earliest courses in the twenties up through his interpretation of Aristotle's *Physics* in 1940.

Section II of this essay turns to Heidegger's interpretation of *physis* in Aristotle and focuses on Heidegger's characterization of *physis* as a mode of *ousia*, or beingness. The clue here is Heidegger's reading of *kinēsis* (movement) as a mode of beingness. An investigation of movement in terms of *energeia atelēs* (incomplete appearance or beingness) shows that the fundamental meaning of *physis* is *Wiederholung*, or retrieval, in the original and proper sense: regrasping possibility by letting it remain the relatively hidden source for the appearance of a moving entity. It will be shown below that *physis*, understood as this kind of retrieval, is called *Eignung*, the "appropriation" of possibility (as the relatively hidden source) into the limited appearance of natural entities. Heidegger's interpretation of *physis* as retrieval and appropriation merely spells out his understanding of *physis* as *dynamis*.

On the basis of that reading of *physis*, Section III of this essay goes on to show how *physis*, read as *dynamis*, lays the foundation for Heidegger's understanding of *Ereignis* in his later works. A step in that direction can already be found in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger made use of the notion of *Wiederholung* for his understanding of the phenomenon of resolve. Section III shows that resolve, as the aware retrieval of existence's possibility as possibility, is the core of the published portions of *Being and Time*, and it points the way to Heidegger's later transformation of *Wiederholung* and *Eignung* into *Ereignis*.

As a whole the essay argues that the topic or *Sache* of Heidegger's thought—which he originally expressed as the problematic of "being and time" and which he later called *Ereignis*—is "movement," the movement of disclosure conjoined to and indeed initiating the disclosive movement that is man's nature. One way, and perhaps the most important way, that Heidegger worked out this topic was by way of a retrieval of the proper movement-character of *dynamis*. He found that *dynamis* as movement was itself a retrieval and hence that the answer to the question about the meaning of being was an ongoing retrieval of this primordial retrieval, that is, it consisted in letting possibility remain possibility, letting appearance appear by not directly appearing. This "answer" is a matter of simply "being-underway," *Unterwegssein*, where the only operative authority is the ineluctable movement of disclosure.

Before entering upon the subject matter of this essay, I wish to make some remarks on the sources for what follows.

It has long been known that Heidegger's reading of Aristotle was essential to his entire life's work. Richardson writes that "Aristotle has influenced him more profoundly than any other thinker," and Gadamer, Arendt, Szilasi, Tillich, Spiegelberg, Gründer, and Kaufmann report as much.<sup>2</sup> We know that his philosophical objectives were defined in terms of Greek philosophy in the context of Greek poetry and literature, and indeed that from the time he was eighteen years of age he spent an hour a day reading the Greek poets and historians.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it is common knowledge that the Aristotelian problem of the analogy of being, first awakened in him by his 1907 reading of Brentano's dissertation on Aristotle, remained

<sup>2</sup>William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), p. 309. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Martin Heidegger und die Marburger Theologie"; in *Heidegger: Perspektiven zur Deutung seines Werks*, ed., O. Pöggeler (Cologne: Kuperbeur and Witsch, 1969), esp. p. 171. Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," trans. Albert Hofstadter, *The New York Review*, 17 (Oct. 21, 1971) 50–54. Wilhelm Szilasi, "Interpretation und Geschichte der Philosophie"; in *Martin Heideggers Einfluss auf die Wissenschaften*, ed. C. Astrada et al. (Bern: Francke, 1949), pp. 73–87. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, ed. R. C. Kimball (New York: Oxford-Galaxy, 1964), p. 78. Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, Vol. 1 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 271–357, and esp. pp. 292–297. Karlfried Gründer, "Heidegger's Critique of Science in its Historical Background," *Philosophy Today*, 7 (1963), 22. Walter Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*, (New York: Doubleday-Anchor, 1969), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Re Greek philosophy: US 134f=39. Also Manuel de Diéquez, "Chez Heidegger à Freiburg," *Les Nouvelles Littéraires artistiques et scientifiques*, Paris, 31, no. 1295 (June 26, 1952), p. 5. Re Heidegger's reading of Greek literature: Jean-Michel Palmier and Frederick de Towarnicki, "Entretien avec Heidegger," *L'Express*, Paris, 954 (October 20–26, 1969), 78–85, esp. p. 80.

"the ceaseless impetus for the treatise *Being and Time* which appeared two decades later."<sup>4</sup>

This impetus gained momentum in his lectures and seminars from 1919 on, when he seems to have taken to heart Hegel's words, "If philosophy were done in earnest, nothing would be more worthy than to give lectures on Aristotle."<sup>5</sup> It was in those early Freiburg and Marburg lectures that Heidegger tried out what he called "a transformed understanding of Aristotle," which was the basis for his eventual break with Husserl.<sup>6</sup> In 1928 Gibson recorded Heidegger's position (which was reported through Iskar Becker and went back at least to the 1923–1924 lecture course *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*) that "Aristotle was really in *De Anima* phenomenological (without the explicit Reduction)."<sup>7</sup>

We know as well that Heidegger projected a book prior to *Being and Time*, one that was to summarize his interpretations of Aristotle, and that Paul Natorp got Heidegger hired at Marburg in 1923 on the basis of the introduction to that projected work.<sup>8</sup> And Aristotle's influence continued to work even on the later Heidegger. In the fifties he told his students, "It is advisable, therefore, that you post-

<sup>4</sup>*Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972), p. x. Translation by Hans Seigfried, "A Recollection (1957)" in *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), 21f.

<sup>5</sup>Heidegger cites this sentence from Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (WW, XIV, 314), in "Hegel und die Griechen," WEG 266.

<sup>6</sup>SD 86=78. Note: not "a seminar," as in the English translation, but "the seminar." Husserl realized that the cause of the break went back to Heidegger's (Aristotelian) beginnings in philosophy: "Ich hatte leider seine philos. Ausbildung nicht bestimmt, offenbar war er schon in Eigenart, als er meine Schriften studierte," Edmund Husserl, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ed. R. Ingarden (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968), p. 41. Husserl's strongest remarks on Heidegger are found in his letter to Alexander Pfänder, January 6, 1931 (Husserl Archives, R I Pfänder 6.I.31), soon to be published by Herbert Spiegelberg.

<sup>7</sup>W. R. B. Gibson, "From Husserl to Heidegger: Excerpts from a 1928 Freiburg Diary," ed., Herbert Spiegelberg, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2 (1971), 73. The winter semester course referred to here, which the prospectus of the *Gesamtausgabe* lists as "Der Beginn der neuzeitlichen Philosophie" and which the Marburg catalogue (see Richardson, p. 665) subtitled "(Descartes Interpretation)," was recorded by Heidegger's students under the title "Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung" and dealt at length in its opening lectures with Aristotle's *De Anima* B (November 2–22, 1923). Gibson (p. 72) went on to write, "Husserl is the Plato to Heidegger's Aristotle." Further information on Heidegger's relation to Husserl before SZ can be found in my article, "Heidegger's Early Years: Fragments for a Philosophical Biography," *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*, pp. 3–19.

<sup>8</sup>Gadamer, 170; Szilasi, 77; H. Knittermeyer, *Die Philosophie der Existenz* (Vienna: Humboldt, 1952), p. 212; Sheehan, *art. cit.*, p. 11f. Husserl wrote Ingarden on December 14, 1922: "In VII [the seventh volume of the *Jahrbuch*] erscheint eine grundlegende gr. Arbeit über Aristot. von Heidegger" (Ingarden, 25), but Prof. Mrs. Malvine Husserl wrote on February 25, 1924, "Der Beitrag von Prof. Heidegger hat sich durch seine Berufung nach Marburg verzögert. . . ." Szilasi says that the introduction was written in the spring of 1923, but Gadamer, on the basis of a 1922 letter

pone reading Nietzsche for the time being, and first study Aristotle for ten to fifteen years" (WD 70=73). And to judge by an interview that the present writer had with Heidegger in 1971, Heidegger himself continued living out that program into his final years.

But if the influence of Aristotle on Heidegger is undeniable, the manner and degree of it remain among Heidegger's best-kept secrets. Sufficient index of the secret is the infrequency with which Heideggerian scholars elaborate the Aristotelian bases of Heidegger's work;<sup>9</sup> and this infrequency is not the fault of the commentators. Heidegger himself published only one essay devoted entirely to Aristotle ("Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*"), and even there the theme is Aristotle and not his influence on Heidegger. Likewise, in *Being and Time*, where Aristotle's presence can be felt virtually everywhere, the nature of the influence is concealed behind the language of phenomenology.

The secret lies hidden in Heidegger's courses—chiefly those from 1919 through 1952—and, since it is not clear that his *Gesamtausgabe* will include the early Freiburg courses (1916–1923), the secret may be kept until Heidegger's *Nachlass* becomes available. But parts of it have leaked out. For example, the appearance of his 1925–1926 course *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* revealed the deep influence of Aristotle's *Peri Hermēneias* (specifically the question of *logos apophantikos*) and *Metaphysics* Theta 10 (*alētheia*) on *Being and Time*. Likewise the publication of *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* has clarified Heidegger's reading of the meaning of *energeia* in Aristotle and the transformation of that meaning in the medieval problematic of *essentia* and *existentia*.<sup>10</sup>

from Heidegger, is correct in locating its writing in the year previous. In a conversation with me on January 27, 1975, Gadamer recalled that the work was to cover *Nic. Ethics Z*, *Metaphysics A* and *Z*, *H*, *Theta*, *De Anima G*, and *Physics B*. Before his death in 1924, Natorp gave his copy of the manuscript—typewritten with copious handwritten marginalia by Heidegger—to Gadamer, but this copy, along with Heidegger's letters to Gadamer, was destroyed in the bombings of Leipzig during World War II. Heidegger kept a copy without the marginalia, but it is not announced for publication in the *Gesamtausgabe*. Presumably it is in the Marbach Archives.

<sup>9</sup>Werner Marx's *Heidegger and the Tradition*, trans. Theodore Kisiel and Murray Green (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971), is a notable exception.

<sup>10</sup>*Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, ed. Walter Biemel (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976); English translation *Logic: The Question of Truth* by Thomas Sheehan, forthcoming from Indiana University Press. *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975); English translation *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). Heidegger's 1931 course, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik Theta, 1–3: Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, ed. Heinrich Hüni (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1981), appeared after the present essay was completed.

Moreover, there exist secondary works that either grew out of the earliest courses or extend them or report their contents. Among these is Helene Weiss' *Kausalität und Zufall in der Philosophie des Aristoteles* (1940), which Heidegger recommended to his seminar students in 1951 as one of the few good works on the *Physics* and perhaps on Aristotle's thought as a whole. (This recommendation may have been influenced by the fact that Professor Weiss, a former student of Heidegger's, reports, often in close paraphrase, much of the content of Heidegger's lectures on Aristotle in the twenties.<sup>11</sup>) Among the unpublished seminars and lecture courses that inform what follows, the seminar of 1928, summer semester, entitled "Phänomenologische Übungen: Interpretation von Aristoteles, *Physik* II," is important, as is the major lecture course on Aristotle that Heidegger gave at Freiburg in 1921-1922, winter semester, and 1922, summer semester. However, since Heidegger's explications of *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *physis* are generally (and I emphasize that word) constant from the early twenties up through the winter semester of 1951-1952 (Übungen im Lesen: Aristoteles, *Metaphysik*, IV und IX, 10") and differ only in minor and generally contextual ways from "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*," attention will be directed principally to that last text.

### I. READING ARISTOTLE "PHENOMENOLOGICALLY"

Crucial to the argument that will be developed here is a proper understanding of the "method" according to which Heidegger reads Aristotle at all.<sup>12</sup> To call this method "phenomenological," as

<sup>11</sup>Originally published in Basel, Prof. Weiss' book was reissued in 1967 by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (Darmstadt). Pages 20-29 closely follow sections of Heidegger's 1922 course on *Physics* A. Cf. also pp. 6, 52 n., and 100 n. Other works that follow Heidegger's interpretations to some degree are Rudolf Boehm, *Das Grundlegende und das Wesentliche: Zu Aristoteles' Abhandlungen über das Sein und das Seiende (Metaphysik Z)* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965); Walter Bröker, *Aristoteles* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1964), third expanded edition; Wilhelm Szilasi, *Macht und Ohnmacht des Geistes* (Bern: Francke, 1946), esp. pp. 285-291, which Szilasi (p. 76) calls "Eine durch die viel späteren Bemühungen verdeckte Erinnerung" of Heidegger's early interpretation of *Peri Hermeneias*; Ernst Tugendhat, *TI KATA TINOS: Eine Untersuchung zu Struktur und Ursprung aristotelischer Grundbegriffe* (Freiburg: Alber, 1958); to some extent, Karl Ulmer, *Wahrheit, Kunst und Natur bei Aristoteles* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953); Wolfgang Wieland, *Die aristotelische Physik* (Göttingen, 1962); see E. Tugendhat's review of it in *Gnomon* 35 (1963), 543-555, esp. p. 554; Fridolin Wipflinger, *Physis und Logos: Zum Körperphänomen in seiner Bedeutung für den Ursprung der Metaphysik bei Aristoteles* (Freiburg: Alber, 1971).

<sup>12</sup>"Method" is written in inverted commas to indicate Heidegger's self-distancing from the method of modern philosophy; see US 178=74, 197=91 and FD 79=102. Heidegger's "method" follows Aristotle's *methodos* (*Physics* G, 1, 200 b 13 and WEG

Heidegger indeed does, is not to drag Husserl's phenomenology back to an epoch where it does not and could not belong. Rather Heidegger claimed that his own phenomenological procedure is no more than the explicitation of Aristotle's own way of investigation and of the way of reading entities that was indigenous to Greek thought itself. This explicitation led to Heidegger's break with Husserl and the philosophical tradition and entailed as well a transformation of Aristotle's problematic.<sup>13</sup> Before spelling out the concrete shape of the phenomenological correlation that Heidegger found in Aristotle's works I will sketch a preliminary idea of phenomenology in Aristotle according to Heidegger and indicate how Heidegger used that idea to transform the Aristotelian problematic.

### A. PHENOMENOLOGY: PERSPECTIVE AND PROGRAM

According to Heidegger the Greeks were the first people to experience entities (*to on, ta onta*) as *phainomena*, as things that of themselves show themselves or appear. Professor John H. Finley, Jr., in an informative study *Four Stages of Greek Thought*, confirms from a classicist's point of view what Heidegger finds operative in Greek thought from Homer through Aristotle, namely, that the presence of entities in the world was experienced as the appearing or *phainesthai* of those entities, where *phainesthai* means that an entity brings itself to radiant self-manifestation (*sich zum Scheinen bringen*) and "is" precisely insofar as it shows itself in that self-manifestation.<sup>14</sup>

In appearing, an entity appears as something meaningful—as a shield that the warrior can use or as the ship that he can launch or as

341=246). For Heidegger's claim that his work remains "phenomenological" from beginning to end, see SZ 38=62f, SD 90=82, and his "Über das Zeitverständnis in der Phänomenologie und im Denken der Seinsfrage," *Phänomenologie—lebendig oder tot?*, ed. Helmut Gehrig (Karlsruhe: Badenia Verlag), p. 47; English translation by Thomas Sheehan and Frederick Ellison, "The Understanding of Time in Phenomenology and in the Thinking of the Being-Question," *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 10, 2 (Summer 1979), 201.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. SZ 28=51, 213=256 on *auto to pragma* (*Meta. A*, 3, 984 a 18f); also FD 62f=81f, US 134f=39f and WP 12=45. See Walter Biemel, "Heidegger and Metaphysics" in *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*, p. 164: "The word 'phenomenology' [in SZ] took on an interpretation that was tied into Aristotle more than Husserl." Cf. as well Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1963), p. 132. On thinking "Greekier than the Greeks," see US 134f=39; also Heidegger's "Aus einer Erörterung der Wahrheitsfrage" (a selection from his course of winter 1937-1938, "Grundfragen der Philosophie: Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: *aletheia* und *poiesis*"), in *Zehn Jahre Neske Verlag*, ed. Günter Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1962), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup>Re *phainomena*, see US 132=38 and SZ 28f=51, EM 46=50, 54=59, 77=85, 79=88, 138=151, and WEG 345f=249f. See John H. Finley, Jr., *Four Stages of Greek Thought* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 3, 5, 27, 29, and 53f.

the god that he can revere or challenge. This "as"-character be-speaks the arrival of meaning among entities, the irruption that occurs only with the arrival of man. If man can deal with entities only insofar as they appear as such and so, the philosopher is distinguished by the fact that he asks the question of their "appearing-as" as such, the question of their being.

To say that much is to indicate two things:

First, whenever the Greeks speak of *to on*, they always imply *to on hēi* . . . , an entity in terms of some modality of meaningful presence, even if the "as" (*hēi*) is not expressly articulated. This as-dimension of entities, which gets expressed in the "is" of apophantic discourse, articulates the being-dimension of entities. Hence, *to on* always means an-entity-in-a-modality-of-being, and so Heidegger correctly translates *to on* as *das seiend-Sein*.<sup>15</sup> To express the togetherness of entities and their given modes of being, Aristotle often uses *ousia*, which, derived through the participle *ousa* from the infinitive *einai*, can refer either to the particular present entity or to its presence or being. When it refers to the *being* of an entity, Heidegger accurately renders it as *Seiendheit*, that is, "beingness" or "is-ness." Therefore, the question that defines first philosophy—"What is *to on*?"—must be fleshed out to say "What is *to on hēi on*?" The *hei on* indicates that the question points beyond the realm of the ontic (shields, ships, gods) and seeks an ontological answer: "entities as *in-being*." The question focuses on the is-ness of any given entity, and in fact Aristotle says that the question "What is *to on hēi on*?" comes down to the question "What is is-ness?" (*tis hē ousia*), and indeed not the is-ness of any delimited region of entities but of all entities in terms of the analogical unity of all possible modes of is-ness. Aristotle's aporetic question about *ousia* is his formulation of the question about the meaning of being (*Meta. G 1* and *Z 1*, 1028 b 2).

Secondly, to speak of entities as *phainomena* is at least to imply the locus of their meaningful appearance, the horizon within which that meaningfulness is experienced. Entities as *phainomena* are in some way correlative to modes of awareness (*Vernehmen*) in the broadest sense. They comport a *legein* or a *logos* (a bringing-to-appearance) that reveals them as what and how they are (without *logos*, no is-

<sup>15</sup>WP 31=97; cf. EM 24=25f. Also, "Vorwort" to Richardson, p. xi=x: "das Seiende . . . hinsichtlich seines Seins." On *to on* as always in-being, see WEG 330=238 and Gottfried Martin, *Introduction to General Metaphysics*, trans. E. Schaper and I. Leclerc (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961), p. 60.

ness).<sup>16</sup> The uniqueness of man as "the living being that has *logos*" (*to zōion to logon echon*)<sup>17</sup> is that his essence is the locus of meaning and he has access to entities only in terms of their appearance-as or being-as in *logos*. Aristotle thematizes the function of *logos* as *dēloun* (to make visible), as *apophainesthai* (to show forth) and most importantly as *alētheuein* (to uncover, bring out of hiddenness, bring into intelligibility).<sup>18</sup> For man *to on* is always *to on legomenon*; an entity is always interpreted or "read," more or less articulated according to one or many of the multiple modes of meaningful presence that we can discover in the implicit "as" of practical activity or the explicit "is" of apophantic discourse.

To summarize these two points we may say: If *to on* always implies a being-dimension or meaningful presence that is indicated by the "as" (*hēi*), the only locus of this being-dimension is man's essence as *logos* or *alētheuein*, disclosure. *To on* and *logos* are apriori correlative; man's very nature is to be ontological (*legein ta onta*) and phenomenological (*legein ta phainomena*). If man raises the question of first philosophy ("What is *to on hēi on*?"), the resultant ontology must be implicitly or explicitly phenomenological.

Before moving on, let us ask whether this alleged explicitation of the implicit phenomenological bases of Aristotle's philosophy is not merely a reading back of contemporary (specifically Husserlian) <sup>perspe</sup> into Greek thought. We could, of course, raise the question as to whether or not any interpretation of Greek thought, whether carried out by Thomas Aquinas, Werner Jaeger, William David Ross, or whomever, can hope to be without presuppositions. But rather than opening up the important issue of the hermeneutical fore-structure, I will simply let Heidegger speak for himself, and I will leave open the question he poses. This paragraph is cited here at some length because it reveals the broad context within which Heidegger's reading of Greek philosophy moves.

The totality of entities is the field from which the positive sciences of nature, history, space always get their regions of objects.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. SZ 212=255: "Allerdings nur solange Dasein ist, das heisst die ontische Möglichkeit von Seinsverständnis, 'gibt es' Sein." This paper prescind from the question of *nous*.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. *Politics* A, 2, 1253 a 9-12, *Nic. Ethics* A 13, 1102 a 30 and Z 1, 1139 a 5.

<sup>18</sup>SZ 32f.=56f and the footnote thereto. Heidegger's reading is grounded in texts such as *De Interpretatione*, 4 and 5, esp. 17 a 15f (*apophantikos*=*delon*); cf. *Meta. G 2*, 1003 b 31f. (*dēloi*); *Nic. Ethics* Z 4, 1140 a 10f and 21f (*meta logou alēthous*), Z 5, 1140 b 6ff and 20ff (*alēthe meta logou*), Z 6, 1141 a 4 (*alētheuomen*), Z 7, 1141 a 17f (*alētheuein*).

Directed straight at entities, these sciences in their totality take charge of exploring everything that is. So it seems there is no field of possible investigation left over for philosophy, although from antiquity it has been considered the fundamental science. But doesn't Greek philosophy, since its decisive beginnings, make "entities" the object of its inquiry? It certainly does, but not in order to define this or that entity, but in order to understand entities as *entities-in-being*, i.e., with regard to their *being*. The posing of the question and consequently the answers were for a long time caught in obscurities. But already in the beginnings something remarkable comes to light. Philosophy seeks to elucidate being via reflection on the *thinking* of entities (Parmenides). Plato's disclosure of the Ideas takes its bearings from the *soul's conversation* (*logos*) with itself. The Aristotelian categories originate in view of *reason's* assertoric knowledge. Descartes explicitly founded First Philosophy on the *res cogitans*. Kant's transcendental problematic moves in the field of *consciousness*. Now, is this turning of the gaze away from entities and onto consciousness something accidental, or is it finally demanded by the specific character of what has been constantly sought for, under the title "being," as philosophy's field of problems?<sup>19</sup>

The last question, which echoes Aristotle's *aei zētoumenon kai aei aporoumenon* (*Meta. Z*, 1, 1028 b 2f.), serves as Heidegger's starting point for radicalizing the Aristotelian question about the analogical unity of all is-ness. We may now proceed to show how Heidegger's explicitation of the implicit phenomenology in Aristotle also entails the transformation of the Aristotelian problematic.

Man has access to entities only in terms of their meaning in the broadest sense, that is, only in terms of some form of presentness-as in *logos*. This presentness-as, whereby entities are understood and eventually articulated (*legetai*), has many possible modalities. Thus: *to on legetai pollachōs*, "entities are revealed in their presentness-as in many modes."<sup>20</sup> In *Meta. E 2* Aristotle gives an unsystematized list of

<sup>19</sup>This text is the opening lines of Heidegger's redaction of an introduction to Husserl's *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on phenomenology: Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie* (*Husserliana*, IX), ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968), p. 256. An English translation of the entire redaction appears as "The Idea of Phenomenology, with a Letter to Edmund Husserl (1927)," trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Listening* 12 (1977), 111–121; the present excerpt appears on p. 111.

<sup>20</sup>*Meta. G* 2, 1003 a 33; *E* 2, 1026 a 33ff; *Z* 1, 1028 a 10; *Theta* 1, 1045 b 33ff. Heidegger translates the Greek variously: "Das seiend-Sein kommt vielfältig zum Scheinen" (WP 31=97); "Das Seiende wird (nämlich hinsichtlich seines Seins) in vielfacher Weise offenkundig," "Vorwort" to Richardson (p. xi=x). Cf. "Seiendes kann sich nun in verschiedener Weise, je nach der Zugangsart zu ihm, von ihm, selbst her zeigen" (SZ 28=51); "birgt das 'ist', d.h. das Sein in sich selbst, die Vielfalt, deren Faltung es ermöglicht, dass wir überhaupt mannigfaltiges Seiendes in dem, wie es jeweils ist, uns zugänglich machen? . . . das 'ist' bekundet im Sagen eine reiche Mannigfaltigkeit der Bedeutungen" (EM 69=76). Cf. also Heidegger's redaction of the phenomenology article (previous note): "Dieses [Ding] stellt sich vielmehr in der Wahrnehmung durch mannigfaltige 'Erscheinungsweisen' dar" (p. 259=113).

four general ways that entities are revealed as in-being: (a) entities as being "accidental," (b) entities as being "true" or "false," (c) entities as being according to the schemata of the *kategoria*, and (d) entities as being in *dynamis* and *energeia*. But all of these four ways (and not just those within the schemata of the categories) are related analogically to a common term (*pros hen*) insofar as each is a modality of presentness-as in which entities are revealed as *being* this way or that. If there were a science that could reveal that analogical unity of being, it would be the science of all entities in terms of their is-ness as such—the science of *to on hēi on*.

Unlike Aristotle, Heidegger carried out a search for the common meaning that analogically unifies the many meanings of the being of entities by first thematically reinvestigating the very locus of any and all meaning: *logos* as the "faculty" of revealing. In so doing he transformed Aristotle's problematic. We may put the matter this way. If entities are present in *logos* in many ways, then those many ways are themselves modifications of *logos*, and hence *logos* itself appears in many ways. If *logos* in its revelatory function has a variety of ways of being (for example, the theoretical, the practical, and all their subdivisions), then the first and foundational step toward clarifying the meaning of being (the analogical unity of the ways in which entities appear) should be to question the unity of *logos* itself. *Logos* must, as it were, turn on itself and carry out an interpretation of the revelatory function that it itself is, and it must seek the essence of that function. And since the modes of *logos* are correlative to the modes of the appearance of entities, the discovery of the unity of *logos* would provide the philosopher with the a priori horizon for working out the analogical unity of all modes of the appearance of entities. This would be the meaning of being itself.

We can see here in a roughly Aristotelian formulation the program announced in *Being and Time*. And indirectly we can see how this program could not be carried out on Aristotelian grounds but only on the condition of a transformation of the Aristotelian problematic. To begin with, we must affirm, against misunderstandings of Heidegger's claim about the "forgottenness of being," that being is questioned by Aristotle with regard to its meaning. But the question is misplaced insofar as it does not investigate the being of *logos* deeply enough, and specifically insofar as it misses the *kinetic* meaning of the revelatory function and therefore the kinetic meaning of being itself. Aristotle did not get beyond the thematization of the being of entities as *ousia*, whether in the particular regions of entities or in the highest instance—the divine. Aristotle, as Heidegger reads him, understood *ousia* as the relatively stable presentness of entities

in a *logos* whose basic being is the relatively stable revelation of entities in their presentness. Given Aristotle's understanding of the revelatory function of *logos* as a categorial-assertoric "making present" of entities, for him the analogical unity of the many modes of the presentness of entities was pure presentness as such, pure *energeia*. If Heidegger hoped to justify his claim that such a formulation does not disclose the authentic meaning of being, he would have to reformulate critically the fundamental meaning of *logos* at a level deeper than the categorial-assertoric unity of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, at which Aristotle stopped. If it could be shown (as the course *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* attempts to do in terms of Aristotelian texts, and as *Being and Time* attempts to do by a hermeneutic of "factual life") that the apophantic *logos* of Aristotle is a derived form of a more basic "dynamic" or kinetic (Heidegger says "temporal") form of disclosure, then the way would be opened for stating the unified meaning of being not as pure *energeia* but as *dynamis* and movement, that is, as *energeia ateles*. In a non-Aristotelian formulation of the same proposition, the meaning of being would be "time."

I state these matters programatically and in Aristotelian terms in accordance with the limited aim that was stated at the beginning of this section: to show the perspective within which Heidegger re-reads Aristotle "phenomenologically" and to indicate the consequences of that reading for Heidegger's own program. Moreover, stating Heidegger's program in roughly Aristotelian terms may also have the advantage of demystifying some of the unique and difficult language in which Heidegger formulates his own project of thought. For example, as we shall see later, if an accurate translation of *dynamis* were *Eignung* (roughly "appropriation"), as Heidegger claims it is, then we might be able to find the justification for calling the meaning of being *Ereignis* by investigating the meaning of *dynamis* rather than by chasing the word *Ereignis* down the dubious paths of German etymologies.<sup>21</sup> But that may be only a personal preference. We turn now to the second topic of this first section, namely, the concrete shape of the phenomenological correlation as Heidegger finds it hiding in the key terms of Aristotle's philosophical vocabulary.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Heidegger's etymology for *Ereignis*, ID 24f (omitted from the English translation at p. 36). For his claim that the word *Ereignis* is not arbitrary but demanded by the issue, see "Vorwort" to Richardson, p. xxi=xxf). For his apologiae for his use of language, see SZ 38f=63 and VA 27f (1, 19f)=20.

## B. PHENOMENOLOGY: AN ARISTOTELIAN LEXICON

We have seen that all human knowing, as "phenomenological," entails knowing an entity in a mode of its presentness-as in *logos* (i.e., in a mode of its being). In Aristotle these modes of being can be expressed in terms of *eidōs*, the "appearance" of an entity as what and how that entity is. It is not our concern here that Aristotle's thematization of the modes of being as modes of visibility (*eidōs*: "the seen," derived from *horaō*, "I see") may carry over aspects of the Platonic emphasis on seeing. Rather, what is important is Aristotle's ontological transformation of Plato's *eidōs*. Aristotle experiences entities so differently from the way Plato does that he radically changes the phenomenological correlativity of *eidōs* and *logos*, which Plato already knew, and thereby achieves a more adequate ontological formulation (cf. N II, 228, 409=9f). Aristotle's *eidōs*, as the being of an entity, cannot be some thing existing off by itself apart from *logos* (*ou choriston on*. . .) but rather exists only in *logos* (. . . *all' e kata ton logon*—*Physics* B, 1, 193 b 5). Both the Platonic *eidōs* and the Aristotelian *eidōs* are formulations of being, and both are correlative to some kind of awareness. But in Aristotle's unique formulation of that correlativity Heidegger finds a more adequate phenomenological formulation, which is at the same time a more adequate ontological formulation. Insofar as Plato's *eidōs* (at least as Aristotle understands it) can stand off on its own, it lends itself to an ontical characterization (i.e., to being taken as an entity), whereas insofar as Aristotle's *eidōs* appears only in the disclosive declaration about an entity (i.e., in the *legein* of an *on*), it has a properly onto-logical character—it names the being of an entity. We see here again how ontology is controlled by phenomenology. If Aristotle's ontology is more to the point (*zur Sache*) than Plato's, that is because his phenomenology is more properly formulated. And indeed, if Heidegger's ontology is to lay claim to more originality than that of Aristotle, this could be only because its thematization of *logos* would supposedly issue in a formulation of phenomenology that is more to the point.

But back to the lexicon. Granted that the phenomenological correlativity can be articulated as *eidōs-logos*, the *eidōs*, as the presentness of an entity in what and how that entity is, has the element of stability about it. Aristotle often speaks of *ta onta* (entities) as *synhestota* and *synhistanena* (respectively, *Physics* B, 1, 192 b 13 and 193 a 36). These participial forms are from the verb *histemi*, "I stand" or "I make to stand." With this clue Heidegger claims that the Greeks experienced entities as "the stable" (*das Ständige*) with the twofold meaning of (a)

“that which has its stand in and of itself and therefore stands ‘there,’” and (b) that which is stable in the sense of enduring and lasting (WEG 316=227). Another word that equally expresses the element of stability is *hypokeimenon*, which comes from the verb *hypokeimai*, “I lie before. . . .” An entity understood as *hypokeimenon*, “that which lies or is present” (cf. the Latin *subjectum*), can equally be called *hypostasis*, “that which stands of and by itself” (cf. the Latin *substantia*). Heidegger says that the “standing” and the “lying” indicate a common Greek understanding of what an entity is: it is “that which is stably present of itself” (WEG 331=239). There is yet another designation for the element of stability in being: *ousia*. In popular Greek usage, before it was taken up as a philosophical term, *ousia* designated one’s present possessions, one’s tools or property. These connotations were continued in the philosophical use of the term, especially by Aristotle, and the correct German translations of *ousia* as *die Habe* and *das Anwesen* (“present holdings”) capture the sense of stable presentness that for the Greeks characterized the being of an entity.<sup>22</sup>

These words connoting stability can now be read in terms of *energeia* and *entelecheia*.<sup>23</sup> An entity that stands there, lies there, or is held in presence (*synhestota*, *hypostasis*, *hypokeimenon*, *ousia*) and shows itself as what it is (*eidōs*) is seen as having “gathered itself up” into stability. The words *telos*, *peras*, and *ergon* point to this stable ingathering. *Telos* does not mean primarily “aim” or “purpose” or “cessation” but rather “completion, fulfillment, accomplishment.” (Cf. the Latin translation of *teleion* as *perfectum*.) Likewise, *peras* does not mean “limitation” in the sense of an externally imposed restraint and therefore a kind of deficiency; rather it means self-limitation in the sense of a “holding of itself together” in such a way that an entity can stand of and by itself and so *be*. To express the unity of all these modes of stability as modes of being we may say: An entity, standing or lying present (*hypokeimenon*, etc.) in its self-limitation (*peras*) and showing itself for what it is (*eidōs*), “has itself” (cf. *echein*) “in its fulfillment” (*en telei*): *en-tel-echeia*. And because all of these meanings

<sup>22</sup>WEG 330=238, EM 47=50, 148=162. Cf. Martin, (note 15, supra), p. 112f, and Joseph Owens (note 13 supra), p. 152 n. 63. Also KM 216f=249.

<sup>23</sup>For what follows: On *peras* and *telos*: EM 46=49, 48=52, 87=96, 100=110; FD 63=81; VA 17 (I, 9)=8; WEG 321=231, 339=244f., 349=252, 354=256f.; N II 405=6; “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1960), 96ff=83f. For “das Gesprochene” as *telos* of “Sprechen”: US 16=194. Confirmation of the fact that *peras* does not mean primarily “cessation” might be found in the verb *perainō*, “I bring to perfection.” On *energeia* and *entelecheia*: EM 46=50, 146=150; HW 68=81; WP 15f=55; VA 50 (I, 42)=160; N I, 77=64, 404f.=5f; WEG 352-356=255-258, 361=261.

can also be expressed by the Greek *ergon*—not in the sense of the end-product of technical making but in the sense of what has been placed into the self-manifestation of its own *eidōs*—then *en-erg-eia* says the same as *en-tel-echeia*. All of these terms express an entity-in-being, and as such are correlative with *logos*.

Two final lexical entries: *morphe* and *aei*. Heidegger reads *morphe* as saying the “same” as *eidōs* (appearance), but with the added nuance of an entity’s “placing itself into the appearance” (*die Gestellung in das Aussehen*).<sup>24</sup> What this nuance achieves is a delineation of the difference of Aristotelian *eidōs* from the Platonic. “Overwhelmed, as it were, by the essence of *eidōs*,” Heidegger writes, “Plato grasped *eidōs* itself in turn as something present for itself and thus as something common (*koinon*) to the individual ‘entities’ which stand in such an appearance”; thereby the individual, as subordinate to *idea* as the real entity, was displaced into the role of non-being” (WEG 345=249). In contrast, Aristotle grasps the individual as a real entity, that is, as something that has being insofar as it places itself into its own *eidōs*, which appears in *logos*. Conversely: “The clue by which *eidōs*—and thereby also *morphe*—are graspable is *logos*” (WEG 345f=250). “*Morphe* must be understood from *eidōs*, and *eidōs* must be understood from *logos*” (WEG 345=249). In summary:

By translating *morphe* as placing into appearance, we mean to express chiefly two things which are equal in the Greek word but thoroughly lacking in our word “form.” First, placing into the appearance is a mode of becoming present, *ousia*. *Morphe* is not an *ontic* property present in matter, but a mode of being. Secondly, “placing into the appearance” is movedness, *kinesis*, and this “movement” is radically lacking in the concept of form (WEG 346=250).

Finally a word about *aei* (See WEG 338–340=244f). Heidegger undertakes a reading of *Physics* 193 a 21–28 where *aidion* (“eternal,” from *aei*) and *apeirakis* (“without limit”; compare *a* + *peras* and the Latin translation *infinites*) appear, and he argues that *aei* is to be understood not in terms of “limitless duration” (this would be the *apeirakis* that is the very opposite of *aei*) but rather in terms of presentness in *peras*. An entity that is *aidion* is not one that is “always going on without ceasing” but rather one that is authentically present for the time being. When Aeschylus has Prometheus speak of *ho aei krāton* (*Prometheus*, line 937), he does not mean “the eternal king” but “whoever is king at the time,” the current king. If *aei* names an

<sup>24</sup>Gestellung: WEG 351=254. *Morphe*: EM 46=50, 131=144; HW 18=28, 27=38, 56=69; WEG 344-346=248-250, 357=258, 360=261.



ontological characteristic of entities-in-being (cf. the highest entity as *aei on*), it does not designate chronological permanence but rather primarily stability within *peras*—and for that reason perhaps permanence. Again, the focus of the Greek understanding of being is on presentness in unhiddenness (*aletheia*).

Here we may stop our preliminary sketch of how Heidegger reads Aristotle phenomenologically. What may seem like a complex journey through Aristotle's vocabulary can be briefly summarized as follows. The uniqueness of man among the animals is that with him there arrives meaning, indeed he has access to entities only in terms of their presence in *logos*. Man's very being is *logos*, and its revelatory function is that whereby and wherein the is-ness of entities becomes manifest. This is-ness is expressed equally as *eidos*, *ousia*, *entelecheia*, and *energeia*. Furthermore, the primary philosophical task is the determination of is-ness as such, the analogical unity that governs all possible modes of the presentness of entities. The question about the unified meaning of *ousia* rests on a prior (thematic or unthematic) understanding of the analogical unity of the being of *logos* itself. Heidegger's radical thematization of the being of *logos* is the basis of his claim that the authentic meaning of being remains overlooked in Aristotle, and it is as well the starting point for his own question about the meaning of being as *dynamis*.

## II. HEIDEGGER'S READING OF *PHYSIS* IN ARISTOTLE

The preceding section is prologue to the present task of understanding how Heidegger interprets the meaning of Aristotle's *physis* as *dynamis*. The final goal of this essay is to understand how such a reading provided Heidegger with the raw material for understanding the meaning of being as *Ereignis*. We may put the argument briefly. The discovery that *physis* as *dynamis* is the meaning of the being of one particular region of entities (Aristotle's *physei on* or natural entities) raises the question of whether the heretofore undiscovered analogical unity of all the modes of being of all regions of entities may not itself be *dynamis*. To raise that question is to enter upon the project of *Being and Time*.

Our guide in the present section is the protocol of Heidegger's 1940 seminar (first published in 1958), "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*: Aristoteles, *Physik* B, 1." In form, this sixty-page protocol is a translation (and therefore already an interpretation) of and running commentary on *Physics* B, 1 with the exception of 193 b 9 (*dio kai*) through 193 b 12 (*ex anthropou anthropos*).

Heidegger divides the text into nineteen sections, on which he comments individually, but for our purposes the movement of his essay can be divided as follows.

- A. An introduction that establishes the importance of the *Physics* as a whole and that shows, via *Physics* A, 2, 185 a 12 ff, that the clue to understanding *physis* is movement (WEG 309–315=221–226).
- B. The delineation of that group of moved entities which makes up natural entities (*physei onta*) as over against that group which comprises man-made entities (*technei onta*) (*Physics* 192 b 8–32; WEG 315–329=226–237).
- C. The decisive statement that *physis* is a kind of beingness (*ousia*) (*Physics* 192 b 32–193 a 2; WEG 329–332=237–239).
- D. The ontological characterization of *physis* in terms of movement (specifically *genesis*) and the interpretation of the unified twofoldness of *physis* (*Physics* 193 a 3–193 b 20; WEG 332–371=239–269).

The first three divisions can be summarized briefly, more or less in thesis form. It is the last division that forms the major task of Heidegger's interpretation and so will require more attention.

### A. THE OPTIC: MOVEMENT

For Heidegger, Aristotle's *Physics* remains the hidden basis on which the entire metaphysical tradition of the West is constructed. Indeed, the *Physics* is itself a metaphysical work.<sup>25</sup> Not at all a book about what we call physics today, it is a regional ontology that inquires into the beingness (*ousia*) of a particular group of entities: natural as contrasted with man-made entities. But more than that, although Aristotle's *physis* is a regional narrowing of the originally broader understanding of *physis* as being as such, the work preserves an echo of those meditations on being that mark the origin of Greek thinking in Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides. We may expect, therefore, that in interpreting *physis* in Aristotle's narrower sense, Heidegger will attempt as well to recall the original meaning of *physis*. We know, of course, that even such a thematization of the pre-Socratic meaning of *physis* is not the goal of Heidegger's thinking, but that it only sets the stage for a thinking about being that is even more original, a "second origin" that thematizes *Ereignis*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>For this paragraph: WEG 312=234; HW 298f=15, 305=21.

<sup>26</sup>On "first and second origins" see Joseph P. Fell, "Heidegger's Notion of Two Beginnings," *Review of Metaphysics*, 25 (1971), 213–237. The translation "Anfang" as "origin" is preferable, leaving "der Beginn" translated as "the beginning" (i.e., philosophy in Plato and Aristotle).