

# On the Way to Thought: Heidegger's Philosophical Practice

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**ABSTRACT:** Much has been said about Martin Heidegger's revolution within the history of Western philosophy: he intensely confronted the works of ancient philosophers, modern thinkers, and colleagues contemporary to him, challenging each one of them with his sharp questioning. Shall we deduce that Heidegger wanted to formulate the ultimate philosophical system, i.e., a philosophy that aims at gaining the most sophisticated, erudite knowledge *only*? Indeed, Heidegger's style seems to be uniquely focused on the theoretical side of wisdom. However, Heidegger's philosophy speaks at length about his training in thinking and his practice of meditating. Motivating for this consideration, how should we understand his teachings and philosophical suggestions? With this paper, I want to propose a reading of Heidegger that goes beyond *theoresis* alone and that shows how he urges each of us to undertake our philosophical path.

**KEYWORDS:** Heidegger, ontology, philosophical practices, ethics, meditation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Heidegger's theoretical focus on being is well attested by his entire philosophical production: while other philosophical movements were, on the one side, interested in the gnosiological analysis of the human or, on the other, in "returning to the things themselves" as promoted by his mentor Husserl, Heidegger insisted on the questioning around being as a fundamental, pivotal concern. Already at an early stage, although presented in the fashion of a methodological way of proceeding, Heidegger proposes the questioning around being as a philosophical practice: he suggests that whoever is interested in taking up a serious philosophical investigation, besides reading and studying, should learn to *formulate appropriate questions*, therefore being disposed of such an attitude that permits thought to arise appropriately. In other words, Heidegger points out that, at that time, the philosophical reflection was still moving from concepts taken from previous traditions, stratified by centuries of interpretation: because being busy with each of those considerations concerning the many entities of the world, no one paid proper attention to the very source of those entities. Even worse: no one was even *aware* of the need for reflection on such a source.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, philosophy has transformed itself into an elaboration of theoretical bridges between separated concepts, gradually departing from actual lived experience.<sup>2</sup>

Differently from the scholars who try to deduce ethical values from Heidegger's pages or who attempt to establish connections between Heidegger's elaborations and current moral discussions,<sup>3</sup> here the aim is to go in the other direction. Moving from Heidegger's claims on the right disposition to achieve the experience of thought, as well as from the reports given by students who shared some time with him, it will be possible to trace his very own philosophical practice.<sup>4</sup> Not only through words and works, then, but through his way of coming to philosophy and embodying his philosophical commitment, Heidegger proposes a path for philosophy itself. In the next paragraphs, we will consider some eloquent passages that prove Heidegger's peculiar engagement with philosophy – an engagement that is both worth studying and still inspiring for today's philosophical research.

## 2. SOME INITIAL TESTIMONIES

In the biography of Heidegger written by Rüdiger Safranski,<sup>5</sup> the author reports the words of Arnold von Buggenhagen, who claims:

Heidegger spoke in a medium-loud voice, without notes, and into his speech flowed an exceptional intellect, but even more so a force of will that determined the direction his speech would take, especially when the subject became dangerous. In the role of a speaker on ontological matters, he presented not so much the image of a professor as that of a captain-commodore on the bridge of an ocean giant in an age when drifting icebergs could still mean the sinking of even a Titanic craft.<sup>6</sup>

Considering the performative aspects of Heidegger's mode of lecturing together with the subjects he presented, it is compelling to notice von Buggenhagen's opinion: resembling the behavior of other young students, yearning to find a master who could indoctrinate them with the ultimate truth, the teacher they found in front of them instead presented a new way of philosophizing. According to them, Heidegger paid no interest in assuring or comforting his young audience with a philosophical scheme that could be applied to whatever scope of knowledge. From Buggenhagen's words, besides the fascination of a student for his charismatic teacher, it is possible to verify how Heidegger approached his philosophical work thanks to someone who stood in his vivid presence. It is quite striking to learn that Heidegger displayed a medium tone of voice and that he willingly and bravely engaged with philosophy, facing important questions. According to this report, Heidegger seemed quiet and deeply involved in the discussion, without the need for notes. Interestingly enough, since the beginning, the German philosopher preferred to ground his philosophy on different terms than those belonging to traditional metaphysics, in fact, he rather tried to challenge and re-define metaphysical terms. This is not at all surprising considering the entirety of his philosophical project, ultimately coming to a *poietic* understanding of language in his later work;<sup>7</sup> at the same time, however,

it shows the urgency of his task to go beyond terminology even while it is nevertheless necessary to employ a philosophical lexicon. Hence, Heidegger not only taught his students a university course, but he personified a way of embodying his philosophical commitment. Adopting a metaphor, Buggenhagen compares his teacher to a captain who leads the students through the dangers of thinking, where it is common to deal with important, or even deadly, difficulties. Although Buggenhagen does not disclose expressly what would be the actual fatal risk in thinking according to his allegory, it may be possible to understand it in terms of the danger of grounding one's system of thought in the wrong fundament or, also, to cease questioning that which should be the most questionable. Thus, Heidegger led the students with his example of fearless confrontation, challenging every concept usually taken for granted by metaphysics.

In other words, Buggenhagen's statement describes how the "philosophy of existence" began from the dialogue between teachers and students on the puzzling questions inherited from the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy, especially about the relation between human beings and the knowledge of the world.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence of this new behavior toward philosophy, they took "an encouragement to bring oneself into play 'somehow,'" where "its charm was in the very vagueness of this 'somehow.'"<sup>9</sup> The way Heidegger presented himself to the audience showed a personal implication with the questions at issue: it was clear to the students that the ontological problems brought to their attention were to be considered more than just theoretical concerns, even more than inquiries needed to be solved schematically or to be mechanically applied later. Therefore, the core of the entire reflection, which is about how human beings can deal with such open possibilities, stands undefined: no answers are assured, only more questions are posed. It is precisely such an ambiguity, i.e., this aporetic indistinctness raised by increasingly refined questioning, that causes a feeling of disorientation and bewilderment among them. Using Heideggerian terminology we could claim that Dasein's thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), described by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, is already at play here, in his access to philosophy, in what we could call his philosophical practice. To clarify the matter, Safranski concludes: "it soon

became obvious that Heidegger's philosophizing was not concerned with personal confessions, with expressionism";<sup>10</sup> and: "Heidegger's students soon realized that his philosophy course could not simply be 'crammed for' like traditional university subjects."<sup>11</sup>

In Heidegger's classes, therefore, philosophy was put to the test of life, challenged by every question, and provoked by each reflection that emerged. Methodologically, the attitude suggested is to apprehend philosophy moving away from the strict dichotomy between theory and practice, where the first has to be passively undergone while the second actively follows as if it were a contingent application of more general principles. Consequently, anyone who attempts their way on this path must experience a solitary confrontation with doubt and the shivers coming from the lack of a solid foundation. Some years later, in *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, Heidegger presents a reflection on the importance of questioning to underlying the fundamental role of this kind of attitude for the philosophical inquiry. In his words,

and yet, in the driving onset of questioning, there is affirmation of what is not yet accomplished, and there is the widening of questioning into what is still not weighed out and needs to be considered. What reigns here is going beyond ourselves into what raises us above ourselves. Questioning is becoming free for what is compelling, though sheltered. In what is seldom experienced as its ownmost, questioning is quite different from the semblance of what is precisely not its ownmost. This often robs the discouraged of their last reserve of fortitude.  
(GA 65: 10/8)

Concerning Heidegger's posture, in the book dedicated to Hannah Arendt's life,<sup>12</sup> Alois Prinz attests to similar evidence, confirming that:

Many students in Marburg expect Heidegger to create a new worldview that they can then choose. But that's a misunderstanding. Heidegger refuses to say what this determination should cling to. [...] However, Heidegger

is not further away from supplying rules of life or giving comforting orientation.<sup>13</sup>

Prinz validates once more that Heidegger's way of teaching, and therefore also of doing his philosophical work, showed a systematic resistance to pre-established rules, against applicable lines of behavior that disable any kind of reflexive stimulus. To overcome such "consoling guidelines" there is only one thing to do: go back to "actual life." Husserl's motto "to the things themselves" was not enough for Heidegger: this latter pushes his efforts further, up to *factual life*. Facticity is, in fact, one of Heidegger's main interests since the early beginning of his career: instead of paying attention to things, according to his perspective, philosophy should devote its curiosity to the very fact of existence in the developmental unfolding of life. Deriving this position from the work of Dilthey, Theodore Kisiel underlines the point of view of Heidegger, saying that:

the young Heidegger thus sharply juxtaposes the historically situated I over against any sort of theoretical I or transcendental ego abstracted in Cartesian fashion from its vital context, thereby denuded of its world, dehistoricized and devitalized.<sup>14</sup>

If Heidegger's proposal is willing to remain as close as possible to how life appears and how human beings live it, then transcendental egos, detached from their peculiar historical connotations, are no longer useful. The definition of a theoretical "I" immune from its proper horizon, i.e., from the circumstances in which human beings live and act, is not the ambition of a proper philosophical project. Paying attention to historical context means acknowledging the unicity that is on display before any sort of theoretical reflection, ahead of any conceptualized appropriation, when we simply live – when we openly are. The phenomenological interest of the young Heidegger aims towards an investigation of the philosophical terms used to consider, interpret, and provide a meaning to this pre-theoretical or proto-scientific experience.

### 3. THE PRACTICE OF HEARING AND SILENCE

Hermann Mörchen, one of Heidegger's early students, describes the meaningful silences of Heidegger's thinking when he was together with them in the classroom. Words did matter greatly in the philosophical approach perpetuated by the German thinker, but the quiet lack of words played a crucial role as well. Already in *Being and Time*, we read about the power of silence, i.e., the incitement to interrupt small talks or chats.<sup>15</sup> And, again, already in the same text, silence is connected to *Dasein's* capacity to listen (GA 2: 214/SZ 161).<sup>16</sup> The exercise of listening, as the awareness of the true function of discourse, is a trait that remains in Heidegger's later work, acquiring even more value. In the summer semester course of 1944, for instance, he discusses Heraclitus' Fragment 50, for which he provides the following translation:

If you have listened not merely to me, but rather have listened to the Logos (in obedience to it, hearkening to it), then knowledge (which subsists therein) is to say the same as the Logos: one is all. (GA 55: 243/187)<sup>17</sup>

In this initial interpretation, the elements acknowledged in such a statement concern knowledge; however, no erudite acquaintance is mentioned – rather only hearing, and therefore saying, are indicated. In particular, it is told that λόγος – which indeed turns out to represent an expressive way for being to be displayed – is something we hear (*hören*), i.e., it is audible. Nevertheless, according to Heraclitus' phrase, it cannot be something that leads back to whoever speaks in the fragment. At the same time, as we know, to listen “means to apprehend something by means of the ear” (GA 55: 244/187). However, Heidegger claims, there is a certain difference between simple hearing with our ears, which he calls “effortless and will-less” hearing (GA 55: 244/187), and a more attentive one (*hinhören*), as we actually do when we are “all ears” (GA 55: 244/188). In effect, as Heidegger suggests, the human being's tendency to hear is rooted in our very own nature, to the extent that we in fact have ears because of it and not the other way around (GA 55: 247/189).<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, according to Heidegger's provocative account, here he attests that our physiological structure is due to a more essential disposition that characterizes our being since its very origin. In this perspective, even if we hear because of our ears, this is not the most fundamental way of hearing, but rather a more superficial experience of it. With a sharp gesture, Heidegger suggests that language itself, with the expression "all ears," says in a very enigmatic way that, indeed, we "have forgotten about our actual ears" (GA 55: 244/188). This means, perhaps, that what is essential is no longer the particular hearing that happens through our physical ears – or, at least, not only; rather, "that which we are apprehending takes us along with it and accepts us. Attending-to does not depend upon what is presently in the ear" (GA 55: 244/188). Heidegger indicates that actual hearing happens when no-thing is audible, and therefore listening is actually "hearkening" (*hорchen*) (GA 55: 245/188). Hence, the proper hearkening of which Dasein is capable of does not happen when we pay attention to single elements, to discrete entities, but to what comes to us as in its meaningful togetherness – being as Λόγος. If we can hearken to it, that is because we are somehow already obedient to what comes forward to meet us, then an encounter occurs, and such an encounter is an attunement. Attunement is the unique possibility that precedes knowledge, and it represents a disposition of openness. Heidegger then suggests that when we say what Λόγος says, this is real σοφία, real wisdom. The ὁμολογεῖν mentioned in Heraclitus' fragment, in fact, attests that Dasein can recognize and express the same that Λόγος says. The kind of behavior implied in Heidegger's above considerations is an all-encompassing approach that invites us to engage with what happens around and with the world in a receptive disposition. The openness just described is to all intents and purposes a philosophical practice that, according to the thinker, represents the actual philosophical knowledge. In other words, Heidegger is reporting a way of being for the human being, a methodological attitude that includes but doesn't stop at the level of a textual search. Although the German philosopher eludes a detailed delineation of effective practical exercises, he indeed indicates modes of existence and a proper meditative disposition to philosophize. Not



enough proper attention is given to the difference that Heidegger tries constantly to make between reasoning and thinking, that is, between a sophisticated logical argumentation and actual thought. Heidegger's suggestion shows his intention to follow this second direction in a poetic way that is inspired by being itself (GA 50).

Considering Heidegger's account in the *Zollikon Seminars* (GA 89) as well as what was affirmed in that context, we can deduce some further considerations about the involvement of our physical dimension in hearing. Whereas, previously, Heidegger seems not to emphasize the physical dimension of hearing, now we will examine a passage where this physical aspect is instead enhanced. Unsurprisingly, in doing so he mentions the same phrase – “I am all ears” – employed in the analysis of Heraclitus' Fragment 50. Here Heidegger speaks of “bodily participation,” stating:

Hearing and speaking, and thus language in general, are *also* always *phenomena of the body*. Hearing is a being-with-the-theme in a bodily way. To hear something in itself involves the relation of bodying forth to what is heard. Bodying forth [*Leiben*] always belongs to being-in-the-world. *It always codetermines being-in-the-world, openness, and the having of a world.* (GA 89: 126/zS 96–97, em)

About these lines, I would like to stress the explicit bond between hearing and the body that Heidegger expresses. Language in general, he says, is always a phenomenon of the body: this signifies that, independently from our willingness, our body is entailed in Λόγος, our body is affected by and affects Λόγος – that is, being. But there is more: language is a phenomenon of the body not only when we speak, that is, when we actively engage with the linguistic dimension; it is always a phenomenon of the body, starting from the very moment of hearing. Our bodily sphere, whose confines are not identifiable with the borders of our skin,<sup>19</sup> is part of the attunement that characterizes our being-in-the-world. This attunement is twofold, as Daniela Vallega-Neu points

out: on the one hand, it says the way we are “addressed and claimed by something or a sense of being”;<sup>20</sup> on the other, it tells the way “this being claimed and being attuned configures our lived bodies, orients, and directs them, opens them up and lets them stay concealed.”<sup>21</sup> Most importantly, the attunement in which we are involved concerns “how the dispositions of our bodies may allow us to listen and be open to what calls to be thought.”<sup>22</sup> When solicited to give precise indications about which one of the two dimensions of hearing – physical or not – is the most important, Heidegger always addresses both, showing their complex interwovenness. Hence, we have ears because we hear, and yet such hearkening is not at all just a bodily activity. And yet, physiological hearing is an essential part of the human being’s attunement.

Hearing is a practice of connection: it links us to others, to the community we were born and raised in, and to the meaning that structures the world in which we dwell. Such a bond tells our orientation in this world, says our being situated, that is, provides the framework so that everything involved here is meaningful. The hearing Heidegger talks about calls us, asks us to respond to this same being that questions us, and, in doing so, immediately grasps us in a hiatus that, looking better, is the same one characterizing our existence since the very beginning. When we pay attention to what is, if we hearken to what presents itself in its wholeness – as one –, we never fail to understand the meaning of our existence. It comes to us by itself.

Following the reasonings presented in Heidegger’s *The End of Philosophy*, Claudia Baracchi draws some consequences about the future of thought we should try to bring forth. According to her reading, from now on the task of philosophy should be the care of sensibility. Baracchi recognizes the reticence showed by Heidegger concerning the employment of the term “sensation,” probably due to his striving to not reduce the human being to one’s bodily borders. Nevertheless, she attests that

his reflection on the end is a constellation of references to the phenomenological turning point, to the return to “things themselves” (which is in itself a motif of Platonic-Aristotelian thought). Turning to things, to

their sensible splendor, implies a further sensitization [...]. Where Heidegger crosses paths with the unthinkable in Aristotle, we could try to say: the end of philosophy *is* the task of thought, *and this task is sensitivity*. That is to say: the task glimpsed in this end involves the care of feeling, since in such cultivation and refinement one can perhaps find access to what remains to be thought.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, the scholar makes explicit some hints that otherwise would remain unexpressed through Heidegger's words, and she does so by a quite provocative – however well-grounded – proposal: if as human beings who should devote their highest capability to the active engagement with thought – not to philosophy understood as an enclosed system of propositions – we need to come back to things themselves and then see beyond things themselves, therefore we are required to take care of the way we have primary access to them, i.e., sensibility. Her invitation is to shed light on the very modality thanks to which the world comes to us: it is not at all a passive undergoing, but an attuned awareness of presence. Through simple, meditative exercises, it is possible to increase this sensibility. Taking care of it means also paying attention to the situations we put ourselves into, to the circumstances through which we decide to situate ourselves or in which we are placed. Paying attention to our sensibility is a secure, even though quite difficult, practice to perfect our way of thinking, to avoid falling back into theories, into conceptual frameworks that, instead of expressing what occurs, curb it into inappropriate forms. As we have seen, it is Heidegger himself who suggests this methodological approach.

#### **4. THE GOAL IS THE VERY SEEKING ITSELF**

Other examples of Heidegger's way of taking up his philosophical task can be drawn from the intimate letters he wrote to the people close to him. In particular, it is interesting to read how he described to Hannah Arendt and to his wife Elfride how he preferred to do research work, especially the kind of mood Heidegger tried to get into or recreate when

he wanted to access a certain state of mind. In this sense, Heidegger preferred the solitude of the mountains and the company of farmers in Todtnauberg, where Elfride had a cabin built in the summer of 1922. The simple life of the countryside, a very essential existence, contributed to helping him focus on important ontological themes. As we have seen, however, the disposition toward thinking is not a matter of thought only or, to be more precise, it is a practice that is not possible to distinguish from an actual concrete engagement. In other words, Heidegger shows that the intellectual work he was busy with needs to become a habit, an ἔξις, that must be trained in order to bear the weight of such an effort. The philosopher was reluctant to formulate theories to this extent; nevertheless, these teachings permeate the description of his philosophical work. In a letter to Arendt, he says: "But the most overwhelming thing is that only a few manage to imagine that thinking is a rigorous profession, even if the calloused hands and all the corresponding equipment are not exhibited."<sup>24</sup>

Because of the specific features of philosophical labor, which is mostly a matter of inner conversion, it becomes difficult to show to others the results of such work. Or, better, there is apparently no physical change, according to Heidegger, that can be exhibited to demonstrate the effort, the struggle, the confrontation. Philosophy leaves invisible teachings and undetectable scars. Nevertheless, the intimate modification shines through the way in which whoever does that work lives, especially in a tension towards a relentless questioning that seems to never be satisfied. A first evident testimony in this sense is traceable at the very beginning of *Basic Questions of Philosophy. Selected "Problems" of "Logic"* (GA 45). Here, Heidegger claims:

Only one who throws himself into the all-consuming fire of the questioning of what is most worthy of questioning has the right to say more of the basic disposition than its allusive name. Yet once he has wrested for himself this right, he will not employ it but will keep silent. For all the more reason, the basic disposition should never become an object of mere talk, for

example in the popular and rash claim that what we are now teaching is a philosophy of restraint. (GA 45: 2/4)<sup>25</sup>

The reflection concerning the preliminary disposition that prepares to think points out the overall involvement of those who devote themselves to the philosophical spirit.<sup>26</sup> Heidegger underlines the need to expose oneself firsthand to this kind of experience before speaking of philosophical or ontological matters. Moreover, once touched, what remains of that very matter is *silence*. One could understand this silence in terms of a passive withstanding ruled by being, in which the human remains mute and unexpressed. I think, though, that this silence represents the awareness of the impossibility of grasping being with our vocal or written signs, not even by employing an archaic term or by crossing out a noun. When being reclaims the attention of human beings, they cannot properly speak, and so they wander or keep searching. Heidegger further specifies:

*For our goal is the very seeking itself.* What is the seeking but the most constant being-in-proximity to what conceals itself, out of which each need happens to come to us and every jubilation fills us with enthusiasm. The very seeking is the goal and at the same time what is found. (GA 45: 3/6)<sup>27</sup>

This last quotation is particularly significant to understand Heidegger's approach to philosophy. It stimulates a continuous attentiveness to what comes to us, to what is revealed in front of our eyes. Interestingly enough, such a way of enduring the philosophical work does lead to seeking itself: no solid ground or arrival is assured for who does philosophy and so does not stop caring.<sup>28</sup> It is indeed a solicitation to keep wondering, to never settle, and to do philosophy in our everydayness.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Through this paper, I attempted to display some of the indications provided by Heidegger's behavior and works, aiming to encourage everyone interested in philosophy to begin their own path – an incitement to be open, but especially attentive, to what comes to us and to what has yet to be, what has not yet been said. Far from being a school subject separated from life, detached from everydayness or from the occurrences and the deep turbulences of this existence, philosophy shows itself to be the most sincere way, thanks to which we can live meaningfully. If we pay attention to the words and the example he embodied, Heidegger indeed showed a way to do so.

NOTES

- 1 This point can be illuminated by the quotation taken from Plato's *Sophist* employed as exergue, attesting that we should be more aware of the philosophical background usually taken for granted, that is, the very consideration of what is understood as being. At the very beginning of his most known work, Heidegger clarifies the issues surrounding the very word 'being' – i.e., the universality of the concept, its indefinability, its self-evidence – and then frames the ontological questions of which he intends to provide his contribution in the following pages. In Heidegger's words: "...δῆλον γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς μὲν ταῦτα (τί ποτε βούλεσθε σημαίνειν ὁπότεν ὄν φθέγγησθε) πάλαι γιγνώσκετε, ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ᾧόμεθα, νῦν δ' ἠπορήκαμεν... [Plato, *Sophist* 244a] "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression 'being.' We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed." Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'being'? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew *the question of the meaning of being*. But are we nowadays even perplexed at our inability to understand the expression 'being'? Not at all. So first of all we must reawaken an understanding for the meaning of this question. Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of *being* and to do so concretely" (GA 2: sv/SZ 1). Also see some pages later (GA 2: 4-5/SZ 3-4).
- 2 For an understanding of the historical origin of philosophy as a way of living see the work of Pierre Hadot, especially *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 3 Reading the volume by François Raffoul and David Pettigrew, eds., *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002) has been particularly encouraging in this sense, especially the essays authored by Jean-Luc Nancy, Jean Greisch, Miguel de Beistegui, Charles E. Scott, Peg Birmingham, Lawrence J. Hatab,

Pierre Jacerme, Andrew Mitchell, and William J. Richardson. I refer also to the volume edited by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, *After Heidegger?* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), with special attention to the essays of Dennis J. Schmidt, Arun Iyer, Daniela Vallega-Neu, Andrew J. Mitchell, and Iain Thomson.

- 4 The specific claims proposed by Heidegger as well as the names of the scholars who gave accounts of Heidegger's attitude will be provided in the following sections.
- 5 Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. E. Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 6 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 132.
- 7 On this topic, see Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Poietic Writings. From Contributions to Philosophy to The Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).
- 8 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 132: "Buggenhagen describes the effect of this new tone of philosophizing, which was christened 'existential philosophy' only after the publication of Jaspers's principal philosophical work in 1932. It was a relief from the demands of a seemingly shallow rational universalism and an encouragement to bring oneself into play 'somehow.'"
- 9 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 132.
- 10 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 132.
- 11 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 133.
- 12 Alois Prinz, *Beruf Philosophin oder die Liebe zur Welt. Die Lebensgeschichte der Hannah Arendt* (Weinheim: Gulliver, 2002).
- 13 Prinz, *Beruf Philosophin oder die Liebe zur Welt. Die Lebensgeschichte der Hannah Arendt*, 52-53: "Viele Studenten in Marburg erwarten, dass Heidegger eine neue Weltanschauung entwirft, für die sie sich dann entscheiden können. Aber das ist ein Missverständnis. Heidegger weigert sich, Auskunft zu geben darüber, woran sich diese Entschlossenheit festhalten soll. [...] Nicht liegt jedoch Heidegger ferner, als Lebensregeln zu liefern oder tröstliche Orientierungen zu geben" (my translation).



- 14 Theodore Kisiel, “Hermeneutics of Facticity,” in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. B. W. Davis (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 19.
- 15 For the inspiring exchange we had on this topic, I would like to acknowledge Zack Sievers, PhD.
- 16 “As the existential constitution of the disclosedness of Da-sein, discourse is constitutive for the existence of Da-sein. *Hearing* and *keeping silent* are possibilities belonging to discoursing speech. The constitutive function of discourse for the existentiality of existence first becomes completely clear in these phenomena. First of all, we must develop the structure of discourse as such.” And again (GA 2: 218–9/SZ 164–5): “Another essential possibility of discourse has the same existential foundation, *keeping silent*. In talking with one another the person who is silent ‘lets something be understood,’ that is, he can develop an understanding more authentically than the person who never runs out of words. [...] Authentic silence is possible only in genuine discourse. In order to be silent, Da-sein must have something to say, that is, must be in command of an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself. Then reticence makes manifest and puts down ‘idle talk.’ As a mode of discourse, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein so primordially that it gives rise to a genuine potentiality for hearing and to be a being-with-one-another that is transparent.”
- 17 οὐκ ἔμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν “Ἐν Πάντα” (DK 22B50).
- 18 “We do not listen because we have ears: rather, we have and can have ears because we listen” (GA 55: 247/189).
- 19 Daniela Vallega-Neu, “Thinking Bodily Time-Spaces with and Beyond Heidegger,” in *After Heidegger?*, ed. G. Fried and R. Polt (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), 300: “This bodying-forth is fundamentally ecstatic, in Heidegger’s account. The limit of bodying-forth is not the skin, not even what lies within the scope of our senses, but rather the horizon of being in which I dwell” (zs 87).

- 20 Vallega-Neu, "Thinking Bodily Time-Spaces with and Beyond Heidegger," 300.
- 21 Vallega-Neu, "Thinking Bodily Time-Spaces with and Beyond Heidegger," 300.
- 22 Vallega-Neu, "Thinking Bodily Time-Spaces with and Beyond Heidegger," 300-1.
- 23 Claudia Baracchi, *Filosofia Antica e Vita Effimera. Migrazioni, trasmigrazioni e laboratori della psiche* (Pistoia: petite plaisance, 2020), 33. Here is the entire passage, which I think is worth reading in its entirety: "his reflection on the end is a constellation of references to the phenomenological turning point, to the return to 'things themselves' (which is in itself a motif of Platonic-Aristotelian thought). Turning to things, to their sensible splendor, implies a further sensitization: since, in turn, the radiant manifestation of things evokes the open, expansive opening of the world that is always already at stake, albeit inconspicuous, in the unfolding of the manifestation. So this turning point (to the things themselves) keeps philosophy at the limit, in a confrontation with the other than itself, the other that can only be received and affirmed starting from this passivity. The end of philosophy is always signaled in the reference to things, and it is in this call (to things and to the open which is the condition of their manifest becoming) that the task of thinking is given, what is yet to be thought. Where Heidegger crosses paths with the unthinkable in Aristotle, we could try to say: the end of philosophy is the task of thought, and this task is sensitivity. That is to say: the task glimpsed in this end involves the care of feeling, since in such cultivation and refinement one can perhaps find access to what remains to be thought" (my translation).
- See also Claudia Baracchi, "A Vibrant Silence: Heidegger and the End of Philosophy," in *Being Shaken: Ontology and the Event*, ed. Michael Marder and Santiago Zabala (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 92-121.

- 24 Massimo Bonola and Ursula Ludz, *Hannah Arendt Martin Heidegger Lettere 1925-1975 e altre testimonianze* (Torino: Edizioni di Comunità, 2001), 82 (my translation).
- 25 Just before, Heidegger had spoken of restraint in terms of the basic disposition to achieve to be introduced to philosophical thinking (GA 45: 1/3): “The task of this brief preliminary interpretation of the essence of philosophy will simply be to attune [*abzustimmen*] our questioning attitude to the right basic disposition [*Grundstimmung*] or, to put it more prudently, to allow this basic disposition a first resonance. But, then, philosophy, the most rigorous work of abstract thought, and – disposition? Can these two really go together, philosophy and disposition? To be sure; for precisely when, and because, philosophy is the most rigorous thinking in the purest dispassion, it originates from and remains within a very high disposition. Pure dispassion is not nothing, certainly not the absence of disposition, and not the sheer coldness of the stark concept. On the contrary, the pure dispassion of thought is at bottom only the most rigorous maintenance of the highest disposition, the one open to the uniquely uncanny fact: that there *are* beings, rather than not.”
- 26 Here I intend “spirit” and “spiritual” in the sense of Pierre Hadot, that is, according to a connotation not necessarily connected with a religious or divine dimension, rather indicating the human being in its existential complexity.
- 27 He follows: “Yet we maintain that seeking brings into existence the highest constancy and equanimity – though only when this seeking *genuinely* seeks, i.e., extends into the farthest reaches of what is most concealed and thereby leaves behind all mere curiosity. And what is more concealed than the ground of what is so uncanny, namely that beings are rather than are not? What withdraws from us more than the essence of Being, i.e., the essence of that which, in all the fabricated and disposed beings holding sway around us and bearing us on, is the closest but at the same time the most worn out (through constant handling) and therefore the most ungraspable?”

To posit the very seeking as a goal means to anchor the beginning and the end of all reflection in the question of the truth – not of this or that being or even of all beings, but of Being itself. The grandeur of man is measured according to what he seeks and according to the urgency by which he remains a seeker. Such questioning of the truth of Being is sovereign knowledge, philosophy. Here questioning already counts as knowing, because no matter how essential and decisive an answer might be, the answer cannot be other than the penultimate step in the long series of steps of a questioning founded in itself. In the domain of genuine seeking, to find does not mean to cease seeking but is the highest intensity of seeking. This preliminary interpretation of the essence of philosophy will, to be sure, have meaning for us only when we experience such knowledge in the labour of questioning [...]” (GA 45: 5-6/6-7).

- 28 Laurel A. Madison, “Have We Been Careless with Socrates’ Last Words? A Rereading of the *Phaedo*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (October 2002): 421-36.