

Interpretation

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- 359 *Rodrigo Chacón* Philosophy as Awareness of Fundamental Problems, or Leo Strauss's Debt to Heidegger's Aristotle
- 379 *W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz* Why a World State Is Unnecessary: The Continuing Debate on World Government
- 403 *Laurence Lampert* Reading Benardete: A New *Parmenides*
- 425 *Ronald Beiner*
431 *Charles U. Zug* **An Exchange:**
Nietzsche's Final Teaching
by Michael Allen Gillespie
- 439 *Michael Allen Gillespie* On *Nietzsche's Final Teaching*: A Response to My Critics
- 447 *Charles U. Zug* Developing a Nietzschean Account of Musical Form: A Rejoinder to Michael Gillespie's Response
- 451 *José A. Colen* **Review Essay:**
What Is Wrong with Human Rights?
La loi naturelle et les droits de l'homme
by Pierre Manent
- 471 *Marco Andreacchio* **Book Reviews:**
For Humanism, edited by David Alderson and Robert Spencer
- 475 *Bernard J. Dobski* *Tyrants: A History of Power, Injustice, and Terror*
by Waller R. Newell
- 483 *Jerome C. Foss* *James Madison and Constitutional Imperfection*
by Jeremy D. Bailey
- 487 *Raymond Hain* *The Virtue Ethics of Levi Gersonides*
by Alexander Green
- 493 *Richard Jordan* *Public Intellectuals in the Global Arena: Professors or Pundits?*, edited by Michael C. Desch
- 501 *Mary Mathie* *Fate and Freedom in the Novels of David Adams Richards* by Sara MacDonald and Barry Craig
- 507 *Tyler Tritten* "Philosophie und Religion": Schellings *Politische Philosophie* by Ryan Scheerlinck

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Philosophy as Awareness of Fundamental Problems, or Leo Strauss's Debt to Heidegger's Aristotle

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Abstract: Leo Strauss has been understood as one of the foremost critics of Heidegger, and as having provided an alternative to his thought: against Heidegger's *Destruktion* of Plato and Aristotle, Strauss enacted a recovery; against Heidegger's "historicist turn," Strauss rediscovered a superior alternative in the "Socratic turn." This paper argues that, rather than opposing or superseding Heidegger, Strauss engaged Heidegger dialectically. On fundamental philosophical problems, Strauss both critiqued Heidegger and retrieved the kernel of truth contained in Heidegger's position. This method is based on Strauss's zetetic conception of philosophy, which has deep roots in Heidegger's 1922 reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

I understood something on one occasion: when he
interpreted the beginning of the *Metaphysics*.

—Leo Strauss¹

Wir setzen uns zusammen ins Kolleg zu Aristoteles; nur dafür
Sorge tragen, dass wir ihn nicht missverstehen.

—Martin Heidegger²

I wish to thank Tim Burns, Pierpaolo Ciccarelli, and Hannes Kerber for helpful comments and suggestions.

¹ Leo Strauss on Martin Heidegger, in "A Giving of Accounts," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Kenneth H. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 461. Hereafter *JPCM*.

² Heidegger's 1922 lecture on Aristotle attended by Strauss, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 62, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zur Ontologie und Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), 10. Hereafter *GA 62*. Roughly: "We shall sit together in Aristotle's

That Leo Strauss's thought is, in key respects, a response to Martin Heidegger is now a well-established fact. Whereas it was long believed that Strauss regarded Heidegger as the main obstacle to the recovery of classical political philosophy, recent scholarship has shown that Strauss incurred a positive debt. Perhaps the strongest version of this view is that Strauss's Socratic political philosophy "belongs in the succession to Heidegger's approach to the question of Being."³ Understanding Strauss, it seems, is impossible without understanding his debt to Heidegger.⁴ This is an enormous challenge, which would require becoming familiar with each man's entire work. But a more limited approach is possible—one that remains fundamental to understanding Strauss.

Strauss claimed that Heidegger's most important contribution was to have shown, without intending it, that a return to classical philosophy is possible.⁵ Specifically, Heidegger showed that "Plato and Aristotle have *not* been understood by the modern philosophers."⁶ Strauss implied that Heidegger, by contrast, did at least *begin* to understand the classics: he read with "the necessary zeal to know what Plato and Aristotle really meant."⁷

This article returns to the source of Strauss's assessment: Heidegger's 1922 lecture on the beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. I argue that this lecture, published in 2005, is a key source of Strauss's understanding of philosophy as "genuine awareness of the problems, i.e., of the fundamental and comprehensive problems."⁸ Heidegger's aim in 1922 was to recover the "natural consciousness of life" as it was first articulated by Aristotle.⁹ The "natural consciousness" of prescientific experience, Heidegger argued, is the source of philosophy and its nourishing ground. In a deceptively simple way, Heidegger suggested that philosophy is the articulation of life and the

college. Just make sure that we do not misunderstand him."

³ Richard Velkley, *Heidegger, Strauss, and the Premises of Philosophy: On Original Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2. See also Christopher Bruell, "The Question of Nature and the Thought of Leo Strauss," *Klēsīs: Revue Philosophique*, no. 19 (2011): 97.

⁵ Leo Strauss, "An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John's College in Honor of Jacob Klein," in *JPCM*, 450.

⁶ Leo Strauss, "Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy," in *Leo Strauss and the Theological-Political Problem*, by Heinrich Meier (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 134.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, rev. ed., ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 196.

⁹ GA 62:305 ("natürlichen Lebensbewußtseins").

“fundamental problems” (*Grundprobleme*) it contains.¹⁰ The main problem Heidegger addressed in the lecture concerns the meaning of science or philosophy as a human possibility. What does it mean to say that “all human beings by nature desire to know”?¹¹ What is “by nature” human? And how does the “seeing” of science relate to our prescientific understanding of the world?

Strauss suggested that Heidegger ultimately failed in his attempt to retrieve the “natural consciousness” he first sought in Aristotle, and therefore the truly fundamental problems.¹² In particular, Heidegger failed to grasp the centrality of divine law or *nomos*, understood as a binding order of life that unites religion, politics, and morality, in the ancient Greek self-understanding.¹³ More deeply, by failing to grasp that *any* human self-understanding is initially tied to a given law, or way of life, he also missed the essential conflict that separates the philosophic life from the prescientific understanding of political life.¹⁴ And yet, I shall argue, Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle still provides an indispensable beginning for Strauss’s political philosophy.

The key premise that unites Strauss with Heidegger (and his Aristotle) concerns philosophical anthropology. The nature of man can be understood only in light of our openness to the whole of Being.¹⁵ In contrast to modern thought, where the most primitive notion of self-awareness is the experience of desire or pure thought (e.g., in Hegel and Descartes, respectively), for Aristotle to live is to perceive.¹⁶ Prior to thinking or desiring, we have already “seen” or become aware of a world that is open to human intelligibility. Philosophy and science are throughout dependent on this primary awareness:

¹⁰ GA 62:10, 348–49.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 980a22.

¹² The quest for the “natural consciousness” goes back to Hegel, and was taken up by Husserl, Heidegger, and Strauss. See Leo Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 17, 75; Timothy W. Burns, “Leo Strauss’ Recovery of Classical Political Philosophy,” in *Brill’s Companion to Leo Strauss’ Writings on Classical Political Thought*, ed. Timothy W. Burns (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 13–18.

¹³ Leo Strauss, “Cohen und Maimuni,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, *Philosophie und Gesetz*, ed. Heinrich Meier (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1997), 428.

¹⁴ On the universality of the phenomenon of “way,” “custom,” or “*dharma*,” see Leo Strauss, “Progress or Return?,” in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 253–54; see also Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 79–80.

¹⁵ Leo Strauss, “The Problem of Socrates,” in *Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, 164; Leo Strauss, “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism,” in *Rebirth*, 37.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, B73; Rémi Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde: Essai sur le contexte cosmologique et anthropologique de l’ontologie* (Paris: Cerf, 2009), 63–64, 79, 91.

there is no possible knowledge that does not depend on our prescientific awareness of the world. This means, however, that philosophy and science rest on indemonstrable premises—on the phenomenological datum of the world (in Heidegger and his Aristotle) or in our openness to a mysterious whole (in Strauss).¹⁷ The ground of philosophy shifts as it becomes zetetic: there is an element of thought—namely, our awareness of Being—that we can neither master nor radically doubt.

In what follows, I begin by discussing Heidegger's 1922 reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. I then turn to the fundamental problems Heidegger addressed. The first problem is the meaning of science presupposed in Aristotle's quest for "the science called wisdom,"¹⁸ later known as "metaphysics." The second problem concerns access: with what does science begin? The third and final problem is the subject matter of philosophy or science—in particular, Aristotle's understanding of nature.

Strauss's work has largely been understood as a recovery of what Heidegger neglected, or missed, in his "deconstructive" reading of the ancients. It will be the burden of this article to begin to show that this is only partially true: Strauss often appears as the white-on-black negative of Heidegger only because both begin from shared problems. For every Heideggerian thesis, Strauss may suggest the opposite, but this does not mean that the underlying problem has been settled: the fundamental problems were unsolvable even for Aristotle.

THE OPENING OF THE *METAPHYSICS*, OR THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

Western science may be said to begin with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle for the first time defines the philosophic-scientific quest as a "theoretical" search for "universal" principles.¹⁹ It is also in the *Metaphysics* that the primary quest of occidental rationalism—in Socrates's words, "to know the causes of everything, why each thing comes into being and why it perishes and why it exists"²⁰—finds its most consequential answer: to know something is to know its cause or principle.²¹ The principle could be (say)

¹⁷ See, respectively, Brague, *Aristote*, and Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy?*, 39.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Met.* 981b28.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Met.* 982a24 (to *katholou*), b9 (*epistēmē theōretikē*). Plato does not use the terms "theoretical" or "universal." See Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Metaphysics: From Parmenides to Levinas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 61.

²⁰ Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 96a–b.

²¹ Aristotle, *Met.* 981b20; *Posterior Analytics* 71b10–14.

physical, mathematical, or theological. Of decisive importance alone is that there *are* principles that make things intelligible; that they can be known; and that there is a universal principle that explains Being in its totality.²² Heidegger sought to dismantle this structure of science by retrieving the questions or problems it raises. Before considering Heidegger's reading, it is necessary first to briefly recall Aristotle's quest.

Following a Platonic inquiry, Aristotle sets out in the *Metaphysics* to find the science most worthy of the name of wisdom.²³ This most important science remains, according to Aristotle, without a name and without a place. It is, and continues to be, as Leibniz called it, the "desired" or "sought-after" science.²⁴ Aristotle begins with an account of where we stand prior to it: "All human beings by nature desire to know."²⁵ A sign of this is the delight we take in the senses, particularly the sense of sight. While other animals are also born with the power of sensation, and some form memories which allow them to partake in experience, human beings in addition live by art and judgment. We learn an art "when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about similar objects is produced"—for instance, when we learn that a certain treatment benefited "all persons of a certain constitution, marked off in one class [or kind: *eidos*]."²⁶ And we believe that those who have mastered such an art (in this case the art of medicine) are wiser than those who are merely experienced in curing ailments. While the latter know "that the thing is so,"²⁷ or that a certain treatment benefited Socrates, the former also know *why* the treatment worked. Wisest of all, however, are those who know the causes and principles of *all* things, or the "first causes and principles."²⁸ Aristotle describes this stage of knowledge, which most closely approximates wisdom, in terms of six characteristics. The "supreme science" is the most universal, the hardest, the most accurate, the most capable of

²² Aristotle does not specify this principle, but suggests that it could be "God" (the Prime Mover), or the "what" of every being, namely, "substance," or the good (i.e., the end for which each being exists). For the historical debate on this question, see Grondin, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 64, 91, 94–98, 102–6.

²³ See, e.g., Plato, *Charmides* 175b; *Epinomis* 976c–d. See also Pierre Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: PUF, 2013), 266–67.

²⁴ Grondin, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 126.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Met.* 980a22.

²⁶ *Met.* 981 a5–10. Common translations of *eidos* include "species," "form," "kind," "class," "shape," and "look." Here I follow W. D. Ross's translation; I shall also use "species-form" to distinguish the Aristotelian understanding of *eidos* from the Platonic "forms."

²⁷ *Met.* 981a27.

²⁸ *Met.* 982b2.

teaching, the freest, and the most fit to rule. Partly for these reasons, Aristotle describes the science of wisdom as divine, or as “theology.”²⁹

Aristotle’s quest for the subject of the first philosophy was inconclusive. Yet his tentative answers became the building blocks on which Western philosophy and theology were established. The “first” or ground-laying philosophy remained a central desideratum for virtually every major thinker, from Plotinus, through Descartes and Hobbes, to Husserl. If we could find a “substance” underlying all things, or a “God” that moves them, or a “subject” or mind that can represent the whole, then we could begin to build a universal science which would give rise to a universal culture.³⁰

THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS: TO SEE IS TO HAVE SEEN

Heidegger began by questioning this goal. The opening of the *Metaphysics*, he suggested, has not been understood. The locus classicus—“all human beings by nature desire to know”—is not the most “pure,” “earnest,” and “sublime” recommendation of knowledge ever written, as Werner Jaeger claimed. Theoretical studies are not the “fulfillment of man’s higher nature” and “the summit of culture.”³¹ The beginning of the *Metaphysics* does not really recommend anything. It is, rather, a phenomenological description or a “laying out” of the “natural consciousness of life.” Indeed, Aristotle was the first philosopher—and the last—to attempt such an interpretation.³² What he began to see is the existential meaning of science, that is, how science grows out of our “natural” everyday understanding (which gives it meaning), while also requiring a specific praxis or engagement (which makes science an “existential” possibility).³³ Contrary to the traditional Aristotelian understanding of “natural” as teleological, Heidegger also underscored that the alleged givenness of the “natural” is full of riddles.

The first riddle is access. Where does the knowledge that “all men by nature desire” begin? “All men by nature desire to *know*,” literally translated, means that all men by nature desire to *see* and to “have seen” (*eidenai*).³⁴ That

²⁹ *Met.* 1026a19, 1064a35.

³⁰ C. F. Gethmann, “Erste Philosophie,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Rittner (Basel: Schwabe, 1972), 2:726–29.

³¹ Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. Richard Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 68.

³² *GA* 62:305.

³³ *GA* 62:280.

³⁴ *GA* 62:17. Cf. Claudia Baracchi’s translation in *Aristotle’s Ethics as First Philosophy* (Cambridge:

this desire is “by nature” does not mean that it is the natural end of the human species. From a phenomenological standpoint, according to Heidegger, a life dedicated to contemplation is simply a possibility of the human way of being-open-to-the-world. Prior to knowing things in a scientific or technical way, we have already “seen” them in the most general sense, that is, we have had a sighting or vision of what we seek.³⁵ Thus, that “all men by nature *desire* to know” does not mean that humans have an urge to see and understand the world, as we may also desire, for example, recognition. Rather than being a self-generated movement, the desire to know is a stretching out towards the visible that is generated by the world itself, or by our openness to it. As beings-in-the-world, we do not *decide* to know or to see, nor are we moved (as Nietzsche would have it) by a *will* to know: we come already equipped with an original sight and fore-sight.³⁶

Heidegger’s aim was to redefine knowledge, and thus philosophy or science, on the basis of this new reading of Aristotle. The key was to recover Aristotle’s answer to a Hegelian problem, namely, “With what must the beginning of science be made?”³⁷ Rather than beginning with an examination of our capacity to know (epistemology) or with knowledge as it appears through historical experience (Hegelian phenomenology), Heidegger begins with every human action or comportment that illuminates or discloses the world. If to live is indeed to perceive, as Aristotle suggests, then science must begin at birth—the moment the world begins to in-form us, or (closer to Heidegger’s account) the moment we begin to see and to disclose the world through action and speech.

This grounding of philosophy in our openness to the world dissolves the modern problem of skepticism (that is, our purported incapacity to prove that our thoughts correspond to an “external reality”).³⁸ However, it also implies

Cambridge University Press, 2008), 17: “All human beings by nature desire having seen.” Seeing, in the broadest sense of gaining insight, is a form of *understanding*, the other term Heidegger uses to translate *eidenai* (GA 62:58).

³⁵ William McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 2. Cf. Plato, *Meno* 81d–e.

³⁶ James Dodd, “Aristotle and Phenomenology,” in *Phenomenology in a New Key: Between Analysis and History*, ed. Jeffrey Bloechl and Nicolas de Warren (Cham: Springer, 2015), 191.

³⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 45.

³⁸ See Charles B. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997).

a break with philosophical knowledge as originally understood, namely, as knowledge of intelligible necessity.³⁹

Let us examine more closely how Heidegger finds this problem prefigured in Aristotle. The new grounding is expressed in the translation of “to know” as “to see.” This original seeing refers not only to sense perception but also to the activity of bringing the world to light in various ways, including meaningful speech as well as the “foresight” that guides our actions.⁴⁰ Crucially, knowledge *is* possible—if understood as insight into the permanent structure or essence of phenomena. Thus, on Heidegger’s reading, Aristotle’s doctor (the standard example of an expert who has transcended mere experience and skill) can “see” what others cannot: he can see the “form” or “look” of an illness (its *eidōs*). Yet his insight is never final—and this for two reasons. First, it depends on a sight or awareness that is gained through changing practice. Second, the “object” of science—the “nature” of health in this case—is ultimately inscrutable.

“WHAT IS, IS MORE THAN IT IS”

In the traditional reading of Aristotle, the human soul is open to species-forms (*eidē*), understood as suprasensible, yet intelligible, substances, which act as generative principles that explain why things are as they are.⁴¹ Species-forms may be said to exist both in nature and in the human soul, which is the greatest (potential) repository of intelligible forms. It achieves this potential by becoming literally in-formed, or by apprehending the entirety of natural species.⁴²

In his earliest writings and lectures, Heidegger had understood Aristotle along these lines. Aristotelian *eidē*, he claimed, have “metaphysical significance as a forming principle of psychical, physical, and metaphysical reality.” But if that is true—if species-forms are “entities,” which are “supposed to be that which constitutes an entity *as* an entity”—then, Heidegger notes, “there is an infinite regress.”⁴³ One contemporary answer to this problem was to interpret Aristotelian *eidē* (say, “cat” or “humanity” or “health”) not as

³⁹ Cf. Leo Strauss, “An Untitled Lecture on Plato’s *Euthyphron*,” *Interpretation* 24, no. 1 (1996): 17.

⁴⁰ Cf. Dodd, “Aristotle and Phenomenology,” 193–96.

⁴¹ Jacob Klein, “Aristotle: An Introduction,” in *Lectures and Essays*, ed. Robert B. Williamson and Elliott Zuckerman (Annapolis: St. John’s College Press, 1985), 184.

⁴² Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 134.

⁴³ Martin Heidegger, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 1, *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 221.

entities but as concepts formed by the understanding.⁴⁴ This was, in effect, to dissolve Aristotle into Kant.

Heidegger avoided both extremes. Aristotelian forms, he argued, are neither entities nor concepts but the “look” or the outward appearance of things.⁴⁵ These “looks” are the principles of intelligibility from which any investigation into being must begin. More precisely, Heidegger argued that science or philosophy must begin from the prescientific understanding that constitutes the essential “soil” or “ground” of any scientific investigation.⁴⁶ Without that soil—without, say, a prescientific interest in the look of health—science cannot get off the ground. The challenge is to begin from such looks while also striving to “see more” or “more truly” (*malista eidenai*).⁴⁷

To continue with Aristotle’s account: whereas other animals “have but a small share of experience”—in Heidegger’s translation, of a “know-how in dealings”⁴⁸—“the human race lives also by art and reasoning,” that is, according to Heidegger, by “deliberation” and “something like a capacity for setting into work.”⁴⁹ Craft knowledge comes into being, according to Aristotle, “when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about similar objects is produced.”⁵⁰ Translating the Greek *hupolēpsis* (“judgment”) more literally as “belief,” Heidegger reads Aristotle as saying that different beliefs about things, or (still more literally) different ways of “taking [things] up” as this or that, will reveal different aspects of them.⁵¹ Craft knowledge, then, comes into being when, out of the many forms of know-how that are effective in our everyday dealings with the world, one of them becomes predominant, thus “taking up” or lifting up what shows up “in every case.”⁵²

⁴⁴ Hermann Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*, 4th ed. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1977), 344.

⁴⁵ GA 62:22, 315, 318–19 (“Aussehen”); *eidōs* is also rendered as *Gestalt* (83, 92). Heidegger denies that, as a principle of change, the Aristotelian *eidōs* is also the “ethical” goal of a thing: *eidōs*, he claims, is “nichts ethisches” (318–19).

⁴⁶ The key lecture on recovering the prescientific ground/soil (*Boden*) of science is from 1924, transcribed in part by Jacob Klein: Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, vol. 18 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002).

⁴⁷ This is the term Aristotle uses throughout *Metaphysics A* to characterize the wise who “see more,” i.e., who see (for example) “kinds” (*eidē*) that remain invisible to most of us. See notes 70 and 72 below.

⁴⁸ GA 62:23 (“umgänglicher Auskenntnis”); cf. 20, 305, 21.

⁴⁹ GA 62:21; Aristotle, *Met.* 980b25.

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Met.* 981a7–8.

⁵¹ GA 62:58, 315.

⁵² GA 62:22 (“in jedem Fall”), or “as a whole” (“im Ganzen”)—not, as the traditional translation suggests, “universally.”

Thus Heidegger's translation suggested that, far from being grounded in judgments, which connote mental activities, every science is grounded in an approach or take on the world formed out of repeated encounters with things. For example, Aristotle argues that out of a doctor's repeated treatment of patients, an intuition may light up that a certain treatment benefited all persons of a certain kind (*eidōs*).⁵³ Whereas neo-Kantians understood kinds as concepts,⁵⁴ Heidegger insisted that the term *eidōs* refers to the "look" that may "light up" or be thrown into relief through repeated dealings. Doctor and healer, for example, perceive the same patient, but the doctor "sees" what the healer cannot: she sees the patient (say) as "bilious" or "phlegmatic."

The problem of knowledge at this stage can be described as follows. We see *eidē* or intelligible forms all the time. A doctor today may see a person not as "phlegmatic" but probably as "hypertense." And all of us see *eidē* whenever we see things that have a body and color and weight, or when we see a circle in a round thing-shape, or a smooth surface as even.⁵⁵ The world does not show up as a formless mass but as an articulated whole. This makes it possible for the inquiring mind to gain more and more insight into any given thing—seemingly without end. To use Aristotle's terms to make a Heideggerian point, the hypothesis that a certain treatment benefited persons of a certain "kind" (*eidōs*) brings out the "nature" of that kind,⁵⁶ but it does not exhaust it: what is, is always more than it is.⁵⁷

⁵³ Aristotle, *Met.* 981a10.

⁵⁴ See, generally, Karl-Heinz Lembeck, *Platon in Marburg: Platonrezeption und Philosophiegeschichte bei Cohen und Natorp* (Würzburg: Königshausen, 1994), 31–35.

⁵⁵ The "being" of the forms (*eidē*) has, of course, been disputed since Plato and Aristotle. Heidegger draws on Husserl, who uses the term "essence" (*Wesen*) or "eidos" to refer to the universal and invariant structure of any given entity—a structure that is neither empirically given through "sense data" nor a conceptual construct (the latter being merely *empirically* universal, and thus subject to change as new discoveries are made—e.g., concepts such as "sodium" or "virus"). Husserlian essences are "seen" or intuited with the mind's eye (e.g., a triangle, or a dance) and are not subject to revision in light of new experiences. Heidegger shares Husserl's view that essences are, literally, *nothing*—i.e., they are not any kind of entity—but he questions the Husserlian claim that we "see" essences primarily through theoretical intuition, as well as the view that no experience will change an *eidōs* once it has been discovered. See Robert Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 59–74. For a thorough account of the meaning of *eidōs* in Plato, Aristotle, and Husserl, see Burt Hopkins, *The Philosophy of Husserl* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011).

⁵⁶ See Aristotle, *Physics* 193a30–31, trans. Joe Sachs (London: Rutgers, 2004), 50: Nature is "the form, or the look [*eidōs*] that is disclosed in speech."

⁵⁷ According to Heidegger, possibility is not governed (or exhausted) by actuality, in this case, by the full actualization of forms or *eidē* understood as generative principles. Thus, as discussed below, beings are "always [potentially] more than whatever we take them to be." See Iain Macdonald, "What Is, Is More than It Is: Adorno and Heidegger on the Priority of Possibility," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, no. 1 (2011): 57. On the nature of health as unrepresentable as a stable appearance or

The problem is that for Aristotle, what strictly speaking “is,” *cannot* be more than it is. A being *is* in the highest sense insofar as it has fully actualized its kind (*eidōs*).⁵⁸ This points to a crucial ambiguity in Aristotle’s understanding of being. *Eidōs* names both the “look” of any given being *and* the invisible principle that presides over its generation.⁵⁹ (In the example above, the *eidōs* that is sighted by the doctor refers both to an intelligible appearance and, ultimately, to the principle that generates it.)

To state more precisely why this is problematic, it will help to consider how far Heidegger goes along with Aristotle and where he departs from him. Heidegger agrees with Aristotle that the genesis of knowledge is necessarily phenomenological and “practical.” This means that the “look” of a thing is the proper beginning of cognition. How things appear is not simply up to us. To take a famous example, a cube with six equal sides is not only invisible but also inconceivable. However much we may flip around a cube, we will never see six equal sides. But beyond this, such a cube is also *inconceivable* because it is of the essence of a cube, *qua* object, or *Gegenstand*—literally, that which “stands over against” us—that it can only appear perspectively.⁶⁰

The Aristotelian example of an illness is analogous. An illness remains invisible until it is seen by the trained eye of a person who has mastered the art of healing. Here it is out of the question for a doctor to conceptually grasp or “construct” the object of her patient as (say) bilious. This is so because it is of the essence of an illness that it will manifest itself *differently* in different patients. The doctor must “draw out” the symptoms as they manifest themselves in each patient—notably by using the pressure of the hand to confirm or elicit a patient’s experience of pain.⁶¹ Thus, one could say that illness and health are like a cube with six equal sides. They are not conceptual constructions but objects of experience with an essential form. As objects, which, as such, are *other* than ourselves, “at a distance” from us,⁶² their form (or *eidōs*)

look, see Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence and Concept of *Physis* in Aristotle’s *Physics* B, 1 (1939),” in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 183–230, esp. 197.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Met.* 1050a16; for further references and discussion, see Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 50–53.

⁵⁹ See Klein, “Aristotle: An Introduction,” 185–86.

⁶⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2014), 210.

⁶¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Enigma of Health: The Art of Healing in a Scientific Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 108.

⁶² See Günter Figal, *Objectivity: The Hermeneutical and Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 115.

is never fully present to our minds—and yet it “is.” *The* question, of course, remains the precise manner of being of such forms. Suffice it here to restate what the *eidōs* of an illness suggests. An Aristotelian form is neither a meta-physical entity nor a conceptual construction; it is an intelligible appearance. Thus, it is *not* the case, contra Kant, that “reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design.”⁶³ Rather, reason has insight into essential forms, and ultimately into “nature” or “Being.”⁶⁴

Such insight is not only phenomenological but also “practical.” All knowledge presupposes practical know-how. Indeed, a doctor who does *not* have this know-how, but simply “applies” scientific knowledge by imposing standard values of health on a patient, will likely make the patient sick.⁶⁵ Science, that is, grows out of practical engagement (indeed, *care*) and art. It does not prescribe nature its laws but lets nature show itself—in the case of health, restore itself.

Heidegger breaks with Aristotle, or at least Aristotelianism, at the following point. No amount of engagement or “seeing” will ever “abstract” the “intelligible species” of anything.⁶⁶ In the example above, while health is *both* “by nature” *and* (partially) intelligible to humans, no one will ever “intellect” the *eidōs* (“man” or “humanity”) that presumably generates it. One reason for this is that the *eidē*, on Heidegger’s reading, are simply not generative principles that could be grasped. The deeper reason is that what does generate kinds or forms understood as intelligible appearances (to the extent that it can be known), namely *phusis*, is essentially movement or “movedness” that eludes our grasp.

⁶³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Bxiii, 109.

⁶⁴ According to Heidegger, in the beginning of Western philosophy “Being” was the word for “nature” (Heidegger, “On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*,” 229). On insight into “nature,” see 197: insight into health is insight into its principle, namely, *phusis*, but this insight can never be final—for health, like justice or beauty, is a way of being we participate in rather than produce. *Phusis* cannot be said to “cause” health; the relation between principles (or the “first things”) and appearances remains an insurmountable problem. Cf. Figal, *Objectivity*, 114.

⁶⁵ Gadamer, *Enigma of Health*, 107. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104a3–10.

⁶⁶ Contra Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, 12–13, as cited in Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 94.

WHAT IS NATURE?

In Heidegger's translation *phusis* is rendered as "how-being" or "way of being" (*Wiessein*).⁶⁷ The term helps to convey Aristotle's understanding of nature as movement,⁶⁸ and it is also closer to commonsense and prephilosophic speech. Thus, to recall the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, no philosophy is needed to confirm that to the human way of being belongs a desire to see, as well as openness to the world. And yet, knowing in the strict sense—or "know[ing] the explanation [or cause] because of which the thing is so...and knowing that it does not admit of being otherwise"⁶⁹—seems hardly "natural." In Heidegger's view, only one civilization, the ancient Greek (and within it, only a few men) desired to know in this sense. What is natural, and what we seek to know "by nature," remains a puzzle.

Rather than positing a (presumably) "natural" object of wisdom, such as the good or the divine, Aristotle follows the self-interpretation of life, and specifically what people say or believe about wisdom. In the everyday speech Aristotle follows, the quest for wisdom is understood in comparative terms as a striving towards "seeing more."⁷⁰ Thus, art "sees" what mere experience cannot. And even though (to continue with the case of medicine) a doctor could be *less* effective in curing a patient than a nurse—since "men of experience [succeed] more than those who have theory without experience"—nevertheless "we suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience."⁷¹ This indicates that "wisdom depends in all cases...on knowledge" (rather than experience), or, literally translated, it depends on the wise person's capacity for "seeing more" (*eidenai mallon*).⁷² For artists "know the cause but [men of experience] do not."⁷³ There is thus a hierarchy of forms of insight in Aristotle's inquiry into the nature of wisdom. This hierarchy begins with sensations, grows through experience to craft knowledge, thence to science, and finally to the supreme science which (approximating wisdom) seeks to know "the good" or final cause, namely, "that for the sake of which" each thing must be done.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ GA 62:17, 19.

⁶⁸ Or "movedness" (*kinēsis*), described by Heidegger in the 1930s as "emerging into presencing" or "self-unfolding emergence" ("On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*," 191, 195).

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Post. An.* 71b10–14, trans. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995), 39.

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Met.* 981a26 (*eidenai mallon*), 981b.

⁷¹ *Met.* 981a15.

⁷² *Met.* 981a24–28.

⁷³ *Met.* 981a25.

⁷⁴ *Met.* 982b5ff.

On the basis of Aristotle's phenomenological account of the movement of life, Heidegger suggests that, by nature, the human is a being that is open to the world, and that—because of that constitutive openness—has an essential stake in knowing or seeing. In the words of Werner Bröcker, who attended the lecture together with Strauss, “it is of the essence of the human to strive for insight”; gaining insight is “what it comes down to for man as man.”⁷⁵

In a highly idiosyncratic but revealing translation, Heidegger suggests that this striving, which becomes manifest in Aristotle's insistence on “more” and “more” seeing, expresses the ancient Greek understanding of life as moved by the quest for *aretē*.⁷⁶ Indeed, life, Heidegger suggests, just *is* this striving to become what we are—more precisely, to become (ever) “more” of what we are, qua open-ended possibility—such that *aretē* is constitutive of the “ontological structure of being human.”⁷⁷ Yet what we are is always also a movement, a “to be”—a movement that stretches out to see the world. Hence the possibility of understanding human nature depends on the capacity to grasp the peculiar fusion of being and becoming contained in Aristotle's understanding of *phusis* as kinetic. To do this, Heidegger suggests that *phusis* be translated as a way of being for which something is at stake in its own being.⁷⁸ “What it comes down to” for natural beings is their own being; this is “the good..., the meaningful.”⁷⁹

Drawing on an Aristotle neglected by the tradition—but well understood by Martin Luther—Heidegger continues as follows. The movement of life responds to a constitutive lack, what Aristotle called “a factor in becoming,”

⁷⁵ GA 62:72–73; Walter Bröcker, *Aristoteles* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1964), 23; Strauss, “A Giving of Accounts,” 461: “I attended [Heidegger's] lecture course from time to time without understanding a word, but sensed that he dealt with something of the utmost importance to man as man.”

⁷⁶ GA 62:71–72. Normally translated as “virtue” or “excellence,” Heidegger glosses *aretē* as follows: “the way of being [Wiessein]...that fulfills the tendency to actualization of factual life in its full investment” (ibid., 71). As critics have noted, this abstracts (to say the least) from ethical virtues such as generosity, magnanimity, and justice. *Aretē*, or the “excellence” of the human, is for Heidegger essentially world-disclosure, or bringing the world to light—notably, qua beings possessing speech (*logon echon*), through discourse. However, the core of *aretē* is self-disclosure, or constantly bringing forth “more” of ourselves (“das Sorgen um das ‘mehr’ seiner selbst”) (ibid.). For analysis and critique, see Jacques Taminiaux, “The Interpretation of Aristotle's Notion of *Aretē* in Heidegger's First Courses,” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 13–27, and Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 139–43.

⁷⁷ GA 62:386.

⁷⁸ GA 62:305.

⁷⁹ GA 62:36.

namely, *sterēsis*: a “lack of form” known to Luther as *privatio*, and described by Heidegger as the “not yet”—“not quite” of life.⁸⁰

This is arguably the culminating point in the interpretation where Heidegger seeks to overturn the Western philosophical tradition on its own hidden premises. He draws on a subterranean stream—including, notably, Luther and Hobbes—that is harshly critical of Aristotle while nevertheless relying heavily on Aristotle’s human or political philosophy. In simple terms, the simultaneous *Destruktion* and retrieval of Aristotle consists in this. Whereas for the tradition from Parmenides to Hegel, Being in the “highest” and ground-laying sense is universal, permanent, intelligible, and “present” to the mind, Aristotle understands that Being is *also* particular, temporal, mysterious, and suffused with an “absence” or “lack.”⁸¹ Now, in Heidegger’s reading, these are not just accidental features: they are the essence of what it means to be—as preserved, notably, in Aristotle’s understanding of *phusis*.

There is, indeed, according to Aristotle, something that subsists (and remains eternally the same) in every coming into being, namely the “substrate” and the “species-form” towards which a being tends.⁸² Yet Heidegger argues that these features that bestow permanence, stability, self-sameness, and intelligibility to beings are ultimately derived from the ancient Greek onto-theological prejudice, according to which there is a most “beingly being” (*ontōs on*) that is God, or thought thinking itself.⁸³

Phusis is rather (in Heidegger’s reading) the way of being that is a constant becoming from out of itself, and in particular out of a lack—what it is “‘not yet’ and ‘not quite.’”⁸⁴ Thus, Heidegger’s attention to the phenomenon of movement (or *kinēsis*) in Aristotle retrieves a sense of potentiality that is not annulled in actuality but is rather preserved in it. The “complete” human being, for example, is paradoxically such only insofar as he can still be *other*

⁸⁰ GA 62:38, 41; Aristotle, *Phys.* 191b15, 193b19–20; *Met.* 1050b10. According to Luther’s interpretation of Aristotle, “human being is always in non-being,” “always in privation, always in becoming and potentiality,” “seeking God,” on the “way to God.” Like Heidegger, Luther insisted that he is *not* reading his theology into Aristotle: “Aristotle philosophizes about such matters, and he does it well, but he is not understood in this sense.” See John Van Buren, “Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther,” in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed. Theodore J. Kisiel and John Van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 169.

⁸¹ See Walter Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 112.

⁸² Aristotle, *Phys.* 190b3ff., 191b15ff.

⁸³ Aristotle, *Met.* 1074b34–35; Heidegger, GA 62:109, 96–97, 108, 389.

⁸⁴ GA 62:38, 41 (“‘noch nicht’ und ‘nicht recht’”).

than he is.⁸⁵ Without attention to “lack”—or to what is pure possibility—as the key to becoming, we could not understand the emergence of anything really new, such as a great work of art that “gives to things their look and to humanity their outlook.”⁸⁶

STRAUSS’S DEBT TO HEIDEGGER RECONSIDERED

Strauss has long been read as one of the foremost critics of Heidegger and as having provided an alternative to his thought. Against Heidegger’s quest to overcome the philosophic tradition, Strauss recovered its roots. Against Heidegger’s historicist rejection of timeless standards, Strauss restored the horizon of natural right. Whereas for Heidegger access to Being could be gained only through an “analytic of existence,” Strauss found the key to “all things” in the human or political things. Most fundamentally perhaps, whereas Heidegger remained beholden to a Christian-Lutheran “ideal of existence,” Strauss made the philosophical confrontation of *every* theological or political “ideal” the central theme of his studies.⁸⁷ Yet, to conclude, I want to argue that reading Strauss as an alternative to Heidegger—as superseding Heidegger’s thought—is ultimately misleading.⁸⁸ It is true that Strauss cancels out, or at least calls into question, key premises of Heidegger’s reading of the ancients sketched above. Thus, Strauss read the ancients in a way that is (largely) immune to Heidegger’s objections. Yet Strauss also made clear that there is no access to Plato and Aristotle that does not go through Heidegger.⁸⁹ Indeed, Heidegger’s impact was such that there remains, after him, no philosophic position: *if* philosophy was to exist again, it would have to respond to the “fundamental problems” Heidegger rediscovered.⁹⁰ And that is indeed what we find throughout Strauss’s work. Strauss presents perhaps

⁸⁵ See Jussi Backman, “Divine and Mortal Motivation: On the Movement of Life in Aristotle and Heidegger,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 38, no. 3/4 (2006): 241–61.

⁸⁶ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 43.

⁸⁷ See Strauss, “The Problem of Socrates,” 328, and Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-political Problem*, 18, 48–49, 97, 102n22, 105.

⁸⁸ For the (implied) claim that Strauss supersedes Heidegger by showing that the “Socratic turn” is “superior” to Heidegger’s “historicist turn,” see Arthur M. Melzer, “Esotericism and the Critique of Historicism,” *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 2 (May 2006): 288. For the view that Strauss’s “recovery” provides a fundamentally different alternative to Heidegger’s *Destruktion* of the ancients, see Steven B. Smith, “Destruktion or Recovery? Leo Strauss’s Critique of Heidegger,” *Review of Metaphysics* 51, no. 2 (December 1997): 345–77.

⁸⁹ Strauss, “Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy,” 134; “An Unspoken Prologue,” 450.

⁹⁰ Strauss, “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism,” 29: “There is no longer in existence a philosophic position, apart from neo-Thomism and Marxism crude or refined.”

the most formidable challenge to Heidegger's blindness to human affairs in twentieth-century thought. Yet he also remained forever indebted to the "entirely different plane" on which Heidegger thought—the zetetic plane of the problems he first found in Aristotle.⁹¹

The first part of Strauss's response to Heidegger, which calls into question the premises of his reading of the ancients, can be described briefly as follows. Heidegger is a poor guide (to say the least) for understanding the ethical-political horizon of ancient thought. He not only neglected the interhuman or political matrix of human life—particularly, ordinary speech on the just and unjust—as the source of any possible understanding of the right or the good.⁹² He also seems to have misunderstood the basic motivation behind the ancient quest for the eternally present, including the eternally right or good. This was not an onto-theological prejudice, but rather a response to the fundamental problem of the origins of all things, including Being and man. Against Heidegger's claim that Being is abyssal or groundless, hence fundamentally unexplainable, the classical philosophers understood that knowledge in the strict sense *presupposes* a permanent ground, or the existence of "first things."⁹³ Far from blindly affirming such things—that is, divine beings—Plato and Aristotle demanded a demonstration of them.⁹⁴ Thus, Strauss made possible a return to ancient thought by, in effect, suspending Heidegger's most fundamental objection, according to which ancient thought remained dogmatically beholden to an understanding of Being as eternal presence.

Yet the second part of Strauss's response to Heidegger, which transcends the ethical-political motivations and presuppositions of ancient thought to reach the plane of philosophy understood as knowledge of the whole, proceeds rather differently. Far from attempting to supersede Heidegger's objections, Strauss directs them against Heidegger himself, in a dialectical

⁹¹ Ibid., 38. This claim, that modern philosophy culminates, with Heidegger, in a return to the fundamental problems of ancient philosophy—particularly, the question of Being—can be found throughout Strauss's work. See Strauss's letter to Gerhard Krüger of December 12, 1932, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften—Briefe*, ed. Heinrich Meier (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), 415; Strauss, "Living Issues," 136; Leo Strauss, "Correspondence with Hans-Georg Gadamer concerning *Wahrheit und Methode*," *Independent Journal of Philosophy*, no. 2 (1978): 7.

⁹² Cf. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 142, 153.

⁹³ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, trans. David F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 4:193 and Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 88–89.

⁹⁴ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 89.

movement of self-critique. Indeed, for every fundamental problem discussed in this article, Strauss provided two answers: the first opposing Heidegger, the second vindicating the kernel of truth contained in Heidegger's thought.

Consider, first, the problem of access. Prior to knowing beings or phenomena, how do we become aware of them? Strauss and Heidegger share the view that knowledge or understanding presupposes a horizon that first allows us to "see" things, and to make sense of them.⁹⁵ For Heidegger, as we saw, that horizon is partly constituted through human action, in particular through world-disclosing practices and speech. In the example above, the doctor immersed in the art of healing suddenly "sees" the "look" of a previously unknown kind of illness (its *eidōs*); that illness henceforth becomes part of the historical "world" that constitutes the horizon for further discoveries in a way that can be compared to a Kuhnian paradigm shift. Strauss's answer to this historicist approach is the classical view that "all understanding presupposes a fundamental awareness of the whole"—a whole that is natural and "permanently given."⁹⁶ Understanding illness, or lack of health, in particular, would seem to presuppose awareness of the "idea" (*eidōs*) of a healthy or well-ordered soul. A well-ordered soul, in turn, reflects the "eternal order" of the whole: it is a transhistorical phenomenon.⁹⁷

Yet Strauss also affirms, echoing Heidegger, that "the whole is not a whole without man."⁹⁸ In particular, he seems to imply that nature, that is, the natural whole, presupposes man, or that it "is" only insofar as it is "seen" by beings like us.⁹⁹ If this is true, then the principle of health could no longer be understood as eternal or permanently given: it could be only as permanent as there are human beings who articulate it. Strauss's "whole" thus approximates Heidegger's "Being." It is a horizon of intelligibility given to man as man, yet it somehow *needs* man in order to "be."

On the second problem discussed in this paper—What is access into? or, What is the subject matter of philosophical insight?—Heidegger holds that philosophy seeks to know "the essence" of things, and ultimately "the whole

⁹⁵ This thesis is shared *both* by "radical historicism" (i.e., Heidegger) and Socratic political philosophy. See Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 26–27 and 125.

⁹⁶ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 125; Leo Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," in *JPCM*, 361.

⁹⁷ Strauss, *On Tyranny*, 200–201.

⁹⁸ Leo Strauss, "Plato," in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 77.

⁹⁹ Bruell, "Question of Nature," 98.

with regard to its origins.”¹⁰⁰ These are also Strauss’s terms, but the phenomena they point to seem starkly different. Heidegger describes the essence of phenomena—for example, “house-ness, tree-ness, bird-ness, humanness”—as that “which we know and yet do not know” about them.¹⁰¹ Essence (*Wesen*) is a way of being, originally a verb (*wesen*), that escapes modern categories of subject and object: it is that which “concerns and moves us”; and yet it is also an aspect of beings of a certain “character” that, once “seen,” may become binding for generations.¹⁰² (Consider the Aristotelian determination of man as rational animal.) As to “the whole with regard to its origins,” it is revealed to us only as an awe-inspiring experience and a question. What this experience points to is addressed variously in Heidegger’s thought as “Being,” “*phusis*,” “the clearing,” “*Ereignis*,” and the “it” that “gives” and withdraws in a manner reminiscent of the biblical god.¹⁰³ From Strauss’s classical perspective, by contrast, strictly philosophical insight is into nature understood as “unchangeable and knowable necessity.”¹⁰⁴ Philosophy begins, as in Aristotle and Heidegger, from the *eidē*, understood as the “look” or the “surface of things.” But *eidōs*, in Strauss’s reading, is not simply an intelligible appearance; it is the “goal of aspiration” towards which a natural being always tends—indeed erotically longs—as well as the “power or the...nature” that moves it.¹⁰⁵

Yet again, Strauss casts doubt on this classical answer. If “the whole is not a whole without man” and man is not eternal, the quest for intelligible *necessity*, or for eternal causes, becomes radically questionable. Similar considerations famously led Heidegger to abandon the principle of reason (namely, that no being emerges without a cause).¹⁰⁶ Perhaps unsurprisingly, in light of the rea-

¹⁰⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “Logic,”* trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 29; Martin Heidegger, *Plato’s “Sophist,”* trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 146.

¹⁰¹ Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, 73.

¹⁰² Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 95; *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, 112.

¹⁰³ See Marlène Zarader, *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 115–38.

¹⁰⁴ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 90.

¹⁰⁵ Leo Strauss, *On Plato’s Symposium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 235; Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 119, cf. 19. See also Strauss’s letter to Ernst Manasse of December 7, 1961, cited in Svetozar Y. Minkov, *Leo Strauss on Science: Thoughts on the Relation between Natural Science and Political Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 178.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, vol. 10 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main:

soning sketched above, Strauss regarded Heidegger's conclusion that there is no possible proof of the principle of reason as "sensible."¹⁰⁷ That principle is a *presupposition* of philosophy in the strict sense, but that does not mean that it can be proved.

Finally, on the question of human nature, Heidegger holds out the hope that an opening to the mystery of Being will change the human essence in unforeseeable ways. Rather than understanding man as, say, rational animal or fallen creature or free agent, Heidegger famously transcends the framework of anthropology to "set free" what he calls "the *Dasein* in man," that is, our finitude and openness to the whole of Being.¹⁰⁸ Strauss, by contrast, affirms the classical view that there is a universally valid (and unchanging) hierarchy of human ends or ways of life.¹⁰⁹ Contra Heidegger, possibility is not higher than actuality: there are "unchangeable standards founded in the nature of man and the nature of things."¹¹⁰

As the discussion above suggests, however, Strauss understood the "nature of man" as unintelligible apart from the human openness to the whole of Being. This is not to deny that Strauss's understanding of man is, in perhaps the decisive respect, the polar opposite to Heidegger's—namely, insofar as for Strauss "man as man" is unthinkable "as a being that lacks awareness of sacred restraints."¹¹¹ Yet Strauss seems to call even this view before "the tribunal of human life," as he calls it, as "it is known prior to philosophy." For one cannot dogmatically exclude the possibility that our only human need or obligation, as Strauss seems to have learned from Heidegger and his Aristotle, is "to philosophize, to see."¹¹²

Klostermann, 1957).

¹⁰⁷ Strauss, "Problem of Socrates," 329.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Rémi Brague, "Radical Modernity and the Roots of Ancient Thought," *Independent Journal of Philosophy*, no. 4 (1983): 67.

¹⁰⁹ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 162–63.

¹¹⁰ Leo Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 63.

¹¹¹ Strauss, *On Tyranny*, 192.

¹¹² Leo Strauss, note from March 27, 1946, cited in Minkov, *Leo Strauss on Science*, 154.