

Introduction

FRANÇOIS RAFFOUL AND DAVID PETTIGREW

Heidegger often has been reproached for his alleged neglect of practical issues, specifically his “inability” to propose or articulate an ethics or a politics. The reasons offered in support of such a claim vary. They include, for example, his supposed privileging of “the Same” as opposed to an authentic thought of “the Other”; his “contempt” for ontic or concrete affairs due to some Platonic essentialism; his “dismissal” of the intersubjective or collective dimension of human experience; and last but not least, his troubled relation to Nazism. Others have argued that Heidegger’s thought of being suffers from a certain theoreticism. Whatever the reasons advanced, Heidegger’s thought of Being, it has been concluded, cannot contribute to ethics or politics, or to practical philosophy broadly conceived as a domain of action and collective existence.

This charge, however, might ultimately rest on a radical misunderstanding: one seeks to find in his work a classical problematic, does not find it, and concludes from this that Heidegger ignored the practical dimension of existence. For instance, where Heidegger takes issue with traditional conceptions of ethics, or where he actually rejects ethics as a discipline in the metaphysical tradition, it is concluded that his thought is an-ethical, if not unethical. In fact, however, his “rejection” of the tradition of ethics is done in the name of a rethinking of a more “originary” ethics that he attempts to pursue. This is why, in contrast to these traditional interpretations, this book, *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, will instead investigate the extent to which Heidegger’s thought can be read as an important and indeed a crucial resource for practical philosophy and for the possible articulation of an ethos for our time. For the issue, as Françoise Dastur reminds us, is not to enframe Heidegger’s thought of the other, for instance, in preestablished schemas, but rather to approach and question his thought “with respect to the way in which [it] encountered and posed the question of the other.”¹ The purpose of *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* is to demonstrate that Heidegger did not neglect the practical dimension of existence but instead radically transformed the way it is to be thought.

In fact, recent publications of his early lecture courses in the *Gesamtausgabe* have made manifest that Heidegger developed his *own* thought through an appropriative reading of practical philosophy and its fundamental categories. For instance, his 1924–1925 course on the *Sophist* offers a detailed reading of key passages from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Other courses from that period also testify to the influence of practical-ethical categories in the genesis of Heidegger’s thought and vocabulary. The reappropriation of Kant’s practical philosophy, the object of several chapters in this book, also figures prominently in this respect. Besides the crucial issue of tracing the genesis of Heidegger’s ontological categories in the tradition of practical philosophy, there is also, in *Sein und Zeit* particularly, an entire rethinking of praxis: the emphasis on “concern”; the analyses of everyday being-in-the-world; the rethinking of entities in terms of the “πράγματα”; the reevaluation of the “pragmatic”; the genealogy of “theoretical comportment,” and so on. All of these motifs testify not so much to a simple priority of the practical over the theoretical, as we read sometimes,² but rather to an attempt to rethink the very status of the practical, which no longer would be situated within the traditional theory/praxis dichotomy. In a word, they testify to an attempt at thinking praxis in its *ontological* sense, and no longer within a metaphysical structure. One also could note here other factors that demand a new focus on Heidegger and practical philosophy. Recent works, for instance, Jean-Luc Nancy’s, have drawn their own rethinking of community, of “being-in-common,” from an avowed radicalization of Heidegger’s thought of Being and of existence. It then becomes unavoidable and necessary to revisit those texts in order to retrieve in them a sense of community that perhaps was not noticed sufficiently in previous commentaries. Another important aspect of Heidegger’s relation to practical philosophy, besides his drawing from that tradition and his own rethinking of the practical, is the way in which his celebrated texts on technology, nihilism, the atomic age, and so on represent an important resource for reflecting on our times, and our contemporary ethos. All of these motifs constitute the *raison d’être* of this book, and its *foci*.

This book will endeavor to explore, then, the practical dimension of Heidegger’s thought. By this we do not mean, it should be stressed from the outset, a mere “application” of Heidegger’s thought to various practical concerns, as though his thought—or thought in general, for that matter—could be used as a tool, following a consequentialist or utilitarian model. The current and growing development of so-called “applied ethics” in the curriculum conceals a peculiar and paradoxical neglect of a genuine philosophical questioning concerning the meaning of ethics, at the same moment that it betrays an almost desperate need for ethics in our age. But this need arises out of the fact that ethics is left groundless. It is then ethics itself that is in need of a philosophical foundation. It is to such a foundation that this book would like to contribute. Further, its working hypothesis is that Heidegger’s thought transforms the way in which the very realm of practice is to be conceived and calls for a radical rethinking of what is meant by the “ethical,” the “political,” or the “practical” as

such. The “practical,” “ethical,” and “political” are to be thought from the thought of Being, because such a thought includes them eminently. As Dastur explains, “For Heidegger, ‘ontology’ thus understood is always ‘practical,’ always ‘engaged,’ and thus bears an intrinsically ethical dimension. This is doubtless the reason why Heidegger has not written on ethics: because he surely does not need ‘to add’ it on to an ontology that would then itself be conceived only as a part of philosophy.”³ It is in this sense that this book is concerned with fleshing out the practical senses of ontology, and the ontological senses of praxis. In a striking formulation, Dastur writes: “Thus, for Heidegger, ethics is ontology itself” (HPP, 87).

Various specialists from several countries explore here how Heidegger has positioned, in his own way, the question of ethics and politics, as well as the practical scope of his thought. This does not mean so much investigating how his thinking can be included within preestablished practical categories, or even how Heidegger has “ontologized” practical categories. Heidegger *did not* “ontologize” practical philosophy, even when he found his own thought through a destructive/appropriative reading of this very tradition. Instead, he has circumscribed or delimited the traditional and derivative opposition of theory and praxis (as well as the “poietical”) and has begun to think anew the “practical” itself. In “Letter on Humanism,” for instance, Heidegger makes the striking remark that “the deed of thinking (*das Tun des Denkens*) is neither theoretical nor practical” (BW, 263). In one sentence, he has at once stepped out of the theory/praxis opposition and reinscribed another sense of praxis (“deed of thinking”) at the heart of thinking as the “adventure” into Being. “Thus thinking is a deed. But a deed that also surpasses all praxis” (BW, 262). This is why he is able to also state in that essay that “such thinking has no result. It has no effect” (BW, 259). It has no effect, not because it is solely theoretical or contemplative (in fact, it “exceeds all contemplation” [BW, 262]), but because the praxis here evoked is no longer understood as the production of effects on the basis of a theory, within the end/means operatus. The essence of action, he reminds us in the very first lines of “Letter on Humanism,” is not that which causes an effect, nor that which is governed by the value of utility. What is at stake in the critique of the theory/praxis opposition, as well as the instrumental conception of action, is an attempt at freeing praxis itself as the action of being itself. What is praxis when no longer the act of mastering beings? When it is freed from the tyrannical imperative to produce effects, that is, results, from the tyrannical imperative that all beings *have a use*? When it is freed from the manic, frenetic, or frantic race to exploit all resources, including the “human” resources? What does Heidegger mean when he speaks of such a deed in terms of the “humbleness of its inconsequential accomplishment” (BW, 262)? What is thinking when no longer understood as the contemplative *theoria* on the basis of which effects can take place? In fact, thinking does not need to be put into action, as it were, for when action is defined as the “accomplishment” of man’s relation to Being, then thinking becomes itself an act (“Thinking acts insofar as it thinks” [BW, 217]). It is in that sense that this book speaks of “practical philosophy”: in the sense

that Heidegger advances when he states that thinking is “*l’engagement par l’Etre pour l’Etre* (engagement by Being for Being)” (BW, 218). It is therefore not simply a matter here of stating that Heidegger’s thought has a practical and an ethical dimension, but above all, of beginning a search into the *ontological* senses of what has been called, in the tradition, “practical philosophy,” “ethics,” and its fundamental categories. *The ethical, the practical, take place at the ontological level*, and it is at that level that the following contributions situate themselves.

This book attempts to elucidate the full scope and significance—as well as certain limits—of Heidegger’s thought for practical philosophy in five parts: Heidegger and Practical Philosophy; Heidegger and Ethics; The Question of the Political; Responsibility, Being-With, and Community; Heidegger and the Contemporary Ethos.

In Part I, the focus is placed on Heidegger’s relation to the *tradition* of practical philosophy, in particular, his interpretive reading and appropriation of Aristotle and Kant. It is perhaps not emphasized enough that Heidegger has an important thought of freedom, approached in positive terms. It is true that *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit, On the Essence of Human Freedom*, volume 31 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, is not yet available in English, which is why the properly Heideggerian understanding of freedom is taken up with profit in this part in three of its four chapters. If it is the case, as John Sallis states, that “freedom is the very origin or non-origin of action, its condition of possibility, its wellspring” (HPP, 3), it then becomes crucial to an elucidation of Heidegger’s practical philosophy to reflect further on the ontological senses of freedom. However, freedom is approached outside of the theory/praxis opposition, outside of the metaphysical constructs of free will, subjectivity, and causality. Let us think here of that passage, among many others, from *The Question Concerning Technology*, in which Heidegger asserts firmly that, “The essence of freedom is originally not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing.”⁴ As Dennis Schmidt writes: “This sense of freedom is one not grounded in any ontology of the subject, not governed by any sense of agency or the will, indeed it does not even coincide with anything which we might call a subject” (HPP, 169). What, therefore, would a nonmetaphysical account of freedom be? What sort of action is freed when substracted from those categories? What does it mean to say, as John Sallis reminds us, that Dasein is characterized as “being free [*Freisein*] for its ownmost potentiality-for-being” (SZ, 191), or that Dasein’s “being toward a potentiality-for-being is itself determined by freedom” (SZ, 193)? It appears that the issue, in the end, is to think of freedom as being originary to Dasein’s Being, and in a sense to Being itself. Schmidt remarks that the essence of freedom is the essence of being itself (HPP, 169). The metaphysical ways of enframing freedom (in subjectivity, in the Will, in causality, etc.) prove inadequate to an authentic thought of freedom, of the “free-ing” in freedom, what is freeing in our being, what makes us free. This is why the encounter with Kant is so crucial. The turning point in the thought of freedom takes place in Heidegger’s reading of Kant’s moral philosophy. As Frank Schalow shows: “In his 1930 lectures on Kant, Heidegger summarizes his destructive-retrieval of the con-

cept of freedom in this way. 'Freedom ceases to be a property of human being,' and instead 'man becomes a possibility of freedom'" (HPP, 33). This transformation is followed in careful analyses and demonstrations. The relationship to Kant's moral philosophy also is addressed in Jacob Rogozinski's chapter, although in a more critical light. Rogozinski argues that in the ontological reduction of the moral Law, Heidegger runs the risk of not being able to account for the "radicality of evil." The chapter then draws the limits of the Heideggerian deconstruction of metaphysics by wondering whether Heidegger has really broken with the tradition of ontodicy, whether he has not substracted Being from the possibility of Evil. He asks: "Would not this persistence of an undeconstructed configuration mark the limit of Heideggerian deconstruction—of *any* deconstruction?—the irreducible abutment of the logical reduction that it cannot break up, because it has not taken the step toward ethics?" (HPP, 59). Another central figure in this confrontation of Heidegger with the tradition of practical philosophy is of course Aristotle. In his chapter on Heidegger's interpretation of *aretê*, Jacques Taminiaux continues a work begun several years ago on this issue, developed in several essays and books. As Taminiaux puts it, in relation to the problematics of *aretê* in Heidegger's text, "the manner in which Heidegger approached this thematic in his first courses at Freiburg and then at Marburg, engages a cluster of closely related questions which are pertinent to practical philosophy" (HPP, 13). More specifically, it informs questions and debates pertaining to the development of ethical theories in contemporary continental thought. Through a close reading of the 1924–25 winter semester course on *Plato's Sophist*,⁵ as well as the 1922 essay, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation,"⁶ Taminiaux shows how the Heideggerian reading of Aristotle, although said to be founded on the phenomenology of Dasein, in turn is founded on a *certain reading* of Aristotle, a certain reappropriation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

In Part II, the difficult issue of Heidegger and ethics is taken up. For if Heidegger rejects traditional understandings of ethics, and even ethics itself as a discipline, one might argue that his thought allows us to envisage ethics in a different way. In fact, one could argue that the thought of Being itself is to be approached in ethical terms, that Being exhibits its own "ethicality." In a rich chapter, Jean-Luc Nancy attempts to understand further Heidegger's claim in "Letter on Humanism," that the thinking of Being is an "originary ethics," at the very moment Heidegger rejects ethics as a discipline. To account for this difficulty, Nancy proposes the following hypothesis: "There is no 'morality' in Heidegger if what is meant by that is a body of principles and aims for conduct, fixed by authority or by choice, whether collective or individual. But no philosophy either provides or is by itself a 'morality' in this sense. Philosophy is not charged with prescribing norms or values: instead it must think the essence or the sense of what makes *action* [*l'agir*] as such, in other words of what puts action in the position of having to choose norms or values" (HPP, 66). Nancy then unfolds what we could call the ethicality of Being, which would allow him to justify that the thought of Being has an ethical dimension. From another perspective, this is also

what Françoise Dastur attempts to show through a reflection on the phenomenon of conscience. Refusing to choose between Lévinas, who asks us to contemplate “otherwise than Being,” and Heidegger, who leads us to another way of thinking about Being, Dastur insists that ontology, for Heidegger, is an ontology of finitude, that is, an ontology that pays attention to “the fact that we have to welcome the at once frightening and marvelous alterity of a being at the origin of which we are not and which is also among other things—ourselves” (HPP, 89). In contrast to Levinas’ interpretation, and in resonance with Paul Ricoeur, Dastur argues that the other is present in Dasein’s very being, and that the relation to the other is intrinsic to Dasein’s Being. Focusing on Heidegger’s 1928–29 winter semester lecture course, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Jean Greisch proposes “to pursue the question concerning his relation to the problem of grounding a philosophical ethics” (HPP, 99). Greisch recognizes that Heidegger’s contribution to ethics is miles away “from the questions of a content-based ethics.” In a sense, it must be so if what is at stake is a reflection on the very *possibility* of ethics, what constitutes the ethicality of ethics. In that perspective, Greisch begins by emphasizing that being-with others belongs to the very being of human Dasein, so that the relation to the other—definition of ethics for Levinas—is constitutive of Dasein. Addressing several objections traditionally directed at Heidegger (on the issue of Dasein’s “indifference,” for instance, or on the value of the “with” in Being-with, contrasted to Levinas’ “for,” in being-for-the-other), Greisch argues that on the question of indifference, “the very experience of being-alone (of growing isolation in all material and psychical forms) shows just how little indifferent the other actually is for Dasein”; further, he stresses that in that 1928–29 course, unconcealment signifies “necessarily and essentially a sharing [*Sichteilen*] in truth” (GA 27, 118), so that Heidegger, as Greisch remarks, does not need to trouble himself “over the concept of a so-called ‘communicative reason’” (HPP, 103)! Finally, in response to Levinas’ charges that Heidegger’s “philosophy” is a philosophy of power and domination, Greisch is careful to insist on Dasein’s finite and factual *powerlessness*, its abandonment to the other entity, and to the other as such. “In abandonment (which obviously also includes being delivered over to the other!) the constitutive powerlessness of factual Dasein expresses itself” (HPP, 111). It is that very finitude and facticity which come to constitute the “philosophical basis” for ethics, as Heidegger approaches it. In “*Homo prudens*,” Chapter 8, Miguel de Beistegui reflects on the thought of “man” in Heidegger’s work and on its nonanthropological scope. De Beistegui shows that in this nonanthropological definition of the human, Heidegger reveals an “originary openness” in the human that exposes it to “a constitutive and non-human otherness” (HPP, 117). De Beistegui then attempts to understand this openness and excess in ethical terms: “This particular opening to that which always and from the very start has begun to open itself in [man] . . . is also, I would like to suggest, ethical” (HPP, 118). He develops that project through a detailed analysis of “anticipation” (*Vorlaufen*) in *Sein und Zeit*, of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*), and *Augenblick*. Once thought outside of the metaphysical representations of ethics (in the

theory/praxis opposition, etc.), “resoluteness could come to designate the origin of proper action, and thus to delimit the sphere of ethics itself” (HPP, 126).

Part III is concerned with the philosophical implications of Heidegger’s political choices and his thinking with respect to a possible politics. Theodore Kisiel enters Heidegger’s “text” via the Rectoral Address as well. He develops the historical context of the address by identifying three distinct levels of the political in Heidegger’s analytic of the *Dasein* of the German people—the phenomenological, metaphysical, and *seynsgeschichtliche*—levels that he subsequently unfolds as phases in Heidegger’s thinking of the political (HPP, 137). Kisiel finds in the Rectoral Address and in Heidegger’s lectures of the time a “resistance” “to the increasingly absolutist regime’s campaign of total coordination” (HPP, 138). He interprets this resistance in light of Heidegger’s political thought in 1923—a thought he characterizes as fundamentally Aristotelian (i.e., the phenomenological one). He then discusses what he calls a Platonic “metaphysical” concept of the political (e.g., in the 1933–34 winter semester course), where Heidegger focuses on the “relationship between a *people* and its *state*, which constitutes the essence of the political” (HPP, 145). Finally, Kisiel describes the third concept of the political, born of a “regress to German-Greek *Da-sein* that generates the third concept of the political, the archaic (poietic, *seynsgeschichtlicher*) concept,” one “facilitated especially by Hölderlin’s poetic German translations of Greek tragedy” (HPP, 152). Kisiel asserts that this return (undertaken, for example, in the 1935 summer semester course, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and in the 1942 summer semester course, *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”*) involves nothing less than “a matter of restoring the originative power of one of the most influential words in the Greek language, *πόλις*, the root of the political” (HPP, 153). This is a perspective on the basis of which Kisiel makes the striking comment that Heidegger “criticizes the Nazi claim of the totalitarian character of the political” (HPP, 154). By distinguishing three concepts of the political operative in Heidegger’s thought, Kisiel not only complexifies an issue that can be too often caricatured, but he also sheds light on all future debates on this difficult question. In his chapter, Dennis Schmidt focuses on the Rectoral Address. “In the end,” he writes, “any reflection on the topic of Heidegger and political life must begin by confronting the Rectoral Address” (HPP, 161). Significantly, Schmidt reads the Rectoral Address “Self-Assertion of the German University” in relation to Plato’s 7th Letter, stating, “No greater parallel can be found in the history of philosophy to serve as a sort of model for understanding Heidegger’s astonishing political naiveté than the case of Plato” (HPP, 162). Schmidt argues that Heidegger’s address was principally related not to politics or community but to the place of the university amidst the politics of the time. Here Schmidt emphasizes that Heidegger’s effort to renew the university through philosophy is plagued by a naiveté concerning the limits of theory in the political arena. While the Rectoral Address may have marked Heidegger’s political failure, Schmidt advances the idea that it is, in contrast, Heidegger’s *Beiträge* that “might prove to be the entry into Heidegger’s real contribution to a possible politics” (HPP, 167). In this text, he argues, Heidegger opens our

thinking to the “full force of freedom in such matters” (HPP, 169). Charles Scott attempts as well to situate Heidegger’s engagement with politics in relation to the period associated with the Rectoral Address. Scott proceeds with extreme caution to situate his discourse in such a way as to wrestle “the positive and practical implications of Heidegger’s thought for our lives” from the debacle of his political failure. Scott asserts early on that what especially “strikes” him as “having the most practical value in his thought is found in its movement that overturns any possible, final authority that a person might give to his specific claims” (HPP, 178). And he finds this movement “even in his Rector’s Address of 1933” (HPP, 178). Scott elaborates on what we might call this “deconstructive” move in Heidegger’s thought by interrogating the 1942 lectures on Hölderlin’s poem *Der Ister*. Here Scott finds within Heidegger’s thought the theme of an attunement to the “questionableness” of being, an attunement with deconstructive potentialities with respect to concepts of authority or violence. Scott argues that Heidegger “finds in Hölderlin’s poetry a way of speaking that provides that opening,” an opening to attunement and destiny. Scott suggests finally that the opening attunement has the potential to bring about, as Heidegger apparently wished, a “revolutionary transformation of German language, understanding, values, and practices” (HPP, 181). Peg Birmingham’s chapter traces Hannah Arendt’s debt to Martin Heidegger in several respects. Specifically, Birmingham suggests that Arendt adopts Heidegger’s critique of the modern stance toward the world, namely, the *Gestell*, “a technological enframing in which everyone and everything is understood in terms of a worldless functionality” (HPP, 194). Arendt agrees with Heidegger, that the modern world of enframing takes place through a stifling technological language. Birmingham asserts that Arendt’s notion of “natality” allows for the “unexpected word” that is perhaps the only possible response, in its “vulnerability and infelicity,” to this very *Gestell*. Birmingham rejects, however, Arendt’s opposition of her theme of “natality” to Heidegger’s themes of Being-towards-death, or finitude. Birmingham shows that Heidegger’s thinking of finitude implies a radical opening—a radical possibility—that already harbors any thinking of natality and launches an authentic thinking of freedom. This thought of freedom is related to nothing other than life.

In Part IV, several contributions engage the issues of community, of our being-in-common, and responsibility in Heidegger’s thought. François Raffoul’s chapter engages the question of responsibility in Heidegger and attempts to address it in terms of Heidegger’s thought of Being, that is, outside of the traditional enframing of responsibility in a subject-based thinking (i.e., as accountability). Further, Raffoul considers that Heidegger’s understanding of responsibility sheds light on many debates raging today around the question of ethics. The focus is placed on the connection between responsibility, facticity, and otherness in Heidegger. Several questions lead this reflection: How does the concept of Dasein involve responsibility? What are the ontological senses of responsibility? Does it exceed an egocentric and subjectivistic enclosure? To what extent does it manifest an essential exposure to otherness?

Raffoul begins to show that the very concept of Dasein means to be a responsibility for itself, as the term *care* clearly indicates. Dasein is a concern for Being, for its being, and for the being of other entities. Raffoul further elaborates on that sense of responsibility in terms of the finite constitution of Dasein, through analyses of Dasein's facticity, "guilt," or Being-guilty (*Schuldigsein*). The origins of responsibility: Dasein is called to appropriate the inappropriable of its own "existence," its birth, its death, its whole being. However, this inappropriability reveals the otherness at the heart of Dasein. Raffoul unfolds the presence of this otherness in an analysis of the call of conscience in *Being and Time*, echoing what Dastur also says in this book about "the most intimate alterity." Stressing the irreducible place of otherness in the being of Dasein, Raffoul concludes by arguing that "it is in such a nexus of responsibility, facticity, and otherness that the site of ethics, of an "originary ethics," is to be situated in Heidegger's work" (HPP, 218). David Wood's self-confessed "experimental" chapter attempts to "show that Heidegger's problematic can be effectively developed through a consideration of the complex temporality of human maturation and development" (HPP, 219). Beginning with a reflection on what reading, and reading responsibly, can mean, Wood stresses that Heidegger "distinguishes two kinds of interpretation: recapitulation and real explication, and emphasizes the need for the risk, violence, daring needed for the latter" (HPP, 221). In light of this distinction, Wood himself engages in that risk and raises a question that would challenge any assumption regarding the strictly "adult" status of Dasein. As Wood puts it, "Dasein, for the most part, seems to mean adult Dasein" (HPP, 225). He then proceeds to reflect on possible analogies or proximities between child development (if we understand that "the whole issue of human development is like a courtyard opening onto, and opened onto by, the most pressing concerns of our time—historical, political, educational, and environmental") and various features of historical Dasein, on the basis of the claim that "the truth about Dasein's temporality lies in its developmental incompleteness" (HPP, 227). It is our "continuing responsibility," David Wood believes, to keep "exploring these passages, opening these doors" (HPP, 232). From the outset, Walter Brogan, in his chapter, states clearly his goal: "I will argue in this chapter that *Being and Time* provides, in several essential respects, the appropriate philosophical basis for a contemporary, postmodern understanding of ethical relationships and political community" (HPP, 237). Further, Brogan insists that this understanding of "post-metaphysical" community—one "that does not erase the singularity and alterity of those who participate" (HPP, 237) in it—is further pursued by Heidegger and developed in the later *Contributions to Philosophy*. Brogan first attempts to show that death, as understood in Heidegger's analysis, is "the precondition for a philosophy of community that remains faithful to the utter singularity and finitude of each of the members of the human community" (HPP, 237). Although this claim may seem paradoxical, it only appears so if one begins with an understanding of being-with as a negation of singularities. But Brogan argues that being-towards-death is "the limit condition that prevents the co-optation and appropriation

of the being of another” (HPP, 237). He develops in several analyses the features of what he thus calls a “mortal community.” Moving to the recently published *Contributions to Philosophy*, Brogan fleshes out Heidegger’s sense of community in this last work. The central insight is that community in Heidegger’s later thought is “the community of those to come, is a community of singular beings” (HPP, 244). This demonstration is done through analyses of several passages from the *Beiträge*. Lawrence Hatab reflects on empathy as a crucial ethical motif and how it figures in Heidegger’s thought. The following themes are considered: the ecstatic nature of Dasein’s finite being-in-the-world; the ecstatic conjunction of being-in and being-with; the primacy of *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmung*; and Heidegger’s remarks on empathy (*Einfühlung*). Hatab insists on Heidegger’s overcoming of the modern, isolated, individual subject. He writes that “in *Being and Time* Heidegger undermines the subject-object bifurcation and the notion of an isolated, unencumbered self by showing how human Dasein is being-in-the-world” (HPP, 250). Emphasizing the ecstatic nature of Dasein, as well as the place of moods, in this overcoming of subjectivity, Hatab proceeds by reflecting on empathy as a “moral mood.” He clarifies that in Heidegger’s critique of empathy, “It is not the phenomenon of shared feeling that is rejected, but rather the theoretical model that presumes isolated selves that somehow must venture ‘out’ to each other” (HPP, 255). In fact, Heidegger’s critique lies in the argument that empathy presupposes isolated subjects, which he wants to dispute by insisting on the *originary* being-with of Dasein (therefore not needing empathy to “step in” in order to relate to the other). As Hatab writes in a striking formulation: “No, the shared affect just *happens*” (HPP, 256). Heidegger’s critique can then help us challenge the subjectivistic assumptions that prevail in the social sciences. Hatab illustrates this Heideggerian contribution in the domain of child development. The author then develops several analyses that reveal both the value and the limits of empathy for ethics.

Part V considers Heidegger’s relation to a number of questions that define our epoch. Thomas Sheehan focuses on Heidegger’s reflections on nihilism, reflections that lie at the heart of his thought and inform his relation to practical philosophy throughout his career. In this vein, Sheehan writes: “The task of Heidegger’s philosophy would be to ‘annihilate nihilism,’ to overcome it by drastically limiting the power and reach of technology and making room again for nature” (HPP, 276). Accordingly, Heidegger’s thought would lead us to “turn our backs on industrialization, techno-science, the exploitation of the earth” (HPP, 276). It was this philosophical motivation that led Heidegger to be aligned with National Socialism. However, in his chapter, Sheehan takes a remarkable step in opposing Heidegger’s critique of *technē*, writing: “Entities are endlessly available to human engagement and manipulation. The technological domination of the globe is the *gift* of the finite open. Far from having a philosophically negative valence, *die Technik* is the positive outcome of *Ereignis*” (HPP, 295). Indeed, Sheehan’s chapter suggests “that what Heidegger has to say about the essence of nihilism—important though it might be—cannot realistically serve as a philosophical platform for grounding political op-

tions" (HPP, 297). More telling is his assertion that "Heidegger's ideas on historical-cultural nihilism—for whatever light they may shed on the question of essential nihilism—will not help one bit with changing the real powers that drive τέχνη today (HPP, 297). Pierre Jacerme, in contrast, asks in Chapter 18, "Is There an Ethics for the 'Atomic Age'?" Ethics for Aristotle, Jacerme asserts, is concerned with habit: "Its name *ethike* is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ethos* (habit)," and "moral virtue comes about as a result of habit."⁷ But, with Hiroshima, Jacerme asks, do we not see the appearance of the *inhabitual*; the *strangest* and most *uncanny*? Jacerme reads Heidegger's work in 1949—in the Bremen lectures on technology (*The Thing, The Ge-Stell, The Danger, The Turning*)—as an attempt to configure an *ethos* of man that would correspond to the uncanny "danger" that "concerns" his being. Jacerme's reflections on Heidegger's engagement with the "atomic age" are interwoven with notes from Hiroshima by Kenzaburo Oe and Hersey's *Hiroshima*. Jacerme asserts that after Hiroshima the uncanny undermines any possibility of a normative ethics, thus the uncanny becomes what must be thought in a "positive" way in order to delineate an originary ethics. "Man" has abrogated his position as the measure of all things, and it is Being—in its very uncanny event—that emerges as the measure of an originary ethics. Andrew Mitchell engages Heidegger's thinking with respect to praxis in relation to Nietzsche. Mitchell suggests that "the thought of life, the ground of both art and knowledge for Nietzsche, is ultimately what is at stake in the Heidegger-Nietzsche confrontation." Life likewise provides the context for Heidegger's considerations of practice in *The Will to Power As Knowledge*. Life is that embodiment which opens out onto chaos, inseparably joined to a surrounding world of will to power (HPP, 318). For Mitchell, the "traditional view of praxis as a 'deed' or 'activity' by which goals are realized and intentions carried out" misses the necessity of praxis for life. Mitchell states that, for Heidegger, "praxis first means neither 'deed' nor 'activity,' but rather the sheer 'performance of life' (*Lebensvollzug*)" (HPP, 321). Further, Mitchell insists that with Heidegger, the performance of this life is always at the limit of finitude. But the limit that praxis encounters is always only to be transgressed—it must be, for life is nothing more than this transgression. Life is born of such overstepping that first begins from the limit. "Life begins at the limit, this is the fruit of Heidegger's Nietzsche confrontation," writes Mitchell, and it is through the confrontation of these two thinkers that he engages Heidegger's thought of the character of a praxis for our time—in Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*, or release-ment. Release-ment is the practice of life at its limit, a practice that no longer oversteps that limit but rather first lets it be. This letting be, Mitchell suggests, is Heidegger's renewed conception of praxis, thus echoing what Heidegger had already said of letting-be in the 1928–29 course as the "originary practice [*Urhandlung*] of Dasein" (GA 27, 112, 183, 199). William Richardson gives thought to the relation between Heidegger and Lacan and in turn to the truth of psychoanalytic praxis. He asks what happens to the truth of psychoanalysis when the positivist

ideal of classical science is rejected, as is the case with Lacan. “The truth of the subject,” he writes, “comes about, then, through the speaking that constitutes the psychoanalytic process” (HPP, 345). This is a “revelatory” truth born from a “historicizing process.” “Founded thus in language itself, truth has an inexhaustible resilience” (HPP, 345). Yet Richardson points out that with this inexhaustibility, there is no “truth of this truth—no final standard. There is only the momentary event of the enunciation.” In order to interrogate this psychoanalytic proxis, Richardson, in his contribution to this book, draws from Heidegger’s own treatment of the Greek *alêtheia*.

After years of sterile polemics regarding Heidegger’s relation to ethics and politics, it is our hope that this book—through the contributions of its authors—will open the way to a genuine philosophical engagement with the practical dimension of Heidegger’s thought.

Notes

1. Françoise Dastur, “Le Temps et l’autre chez Husserl et Heidegger,” *Alter*, no. 1 (1993) (Fontenay-aux-Roses: Editions Alter), p. 386.

2. We do not follow here the otherwise illuminating analyses of Franco Volpi, who accounts for the Heideggerian critique of reflection as an *inspecto sui* by the hypothesis of a priority given to the “practical” over the “theoretical.” “Being and Time: A ‘Translation’ of the Nicomachean Ethics?,” in *Reading Heidegger from the Start* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 195–211.

3. Françoise Dastur, “The Call of Conscience: The Most Intimate Alterity,” *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* eds. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 87. Hereafter cited as *HPP*, followed by page number.

4. Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” *BW*, p. 330.

5. Martin Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997).

6. Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle (Indications of a Hermeneutical Situation),” trans. Michael Baur, *Man and World XXV* (1992): 355–393.

7. Richard McKeon, *Introduction to Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 331.