Heidegger, Luther, and Aristotle: A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics

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Abstract: This paper examines Heidegger’s concept of “facticity” in his writings from the 1920s. Heidegger’s focus on this concept, the author suggests, is keyed to Heidegger’s own rethinking of existence in terms of Luther’s and Paul’s interpretations of early Christianity. In this context, then, we gain new insight into Heidegger’s notions of temporality, of Jeweiligkeit, and also his critical appropriation of Aristotle.

This paper examines Heidegger’s concept of “facticity” in his writings from the 1920s. Heidegger’s fascination with facticity in these writings and his subsequent engagement with Aristotle are related to a decision to rethink existence in terms of Luther’s and Paul’s interpretations of early Christianity. Central to this interpretation is the experience of the καιρός and the awaiting of the παρουσία. Heidegger argues that this primordial Christian experience (urchristliche Erfahrung) constitutes a fundamental experience (Grunderfahrung) of factical life and undertakes a destruction of Scholastic theology and the ancient (especially Aristotelian) ontology upon which it is based. Heidegger’s philosophical project thus aims at the recovery of this fundamental experience of facticity through a destructive appropriation of the tradition. In this paper, I argue that one of Heidegger’s key motivations for turning to Aristotle is to exclude cyclical temporality—whether thought of as transmigration of the soul (Plato) or as eternal recurrence (Nietzsche)—which is incompatible with this Christian experience.
I. The Experience of Time in Early Christianity

Heidegger’s interest in Christianity is well researched. Recent scholarship demonstrates that Heidegger’s philosophical project emerges from his intensive engagement with Luther in the early twenties. As Yfantis, in a recent study on Heidegger’s relation to Aristotle, notes:

The turn to liberal Protestantism is of decisive significance for the direction and basic tendency of Heidegger’s thought during his early lectureship in Freiburg (1919–1923) since the lectures of Schleiermacher and Dilthey have undoubtedly contributed essentially to the hermeneutic-historical turn in his thought. However, above all one must point to the intensive study of Luther’s writings, which diverse biographic sources document and which several passages in the early Freiburg lectures let us intuit. How powerful the influence in particular of the young Luther and his understanding of early Christianity was on the thought of the young Heidegger lets itself, however, only be assessed through a direct comparison of the central termini, concepts, and intellectual motivations of both thinkers, which provides detailed testimony that the conceptuality and use of language in the early Freiburg lectures . . . arose, to a great extent, out of translations and reinterpretations of concepts and termini that Heidegger already found in Luther’s writings. (Yfantis 2009: 72)

Further, in the last few decades, scholarship has significantly revised its judgment on Heidegger as Aristotle’s great successor. Thus, one now knows that Heidegger’s Aristotle interpretation grows out of a deeply critical attitude toward the content of ancient ontology and especially, toward the process of Hellenization that early Christianity undergoes via Greek thought. Ken Hiltner, for example, situates Heidegger within a triadic order of ‘deconstructivist’ thinkers beginning with Luther and Kierkegaard. Hiltner argues that the central motivation of Heidegger’s thought is to retrieve an experience of early Christianity which, according to Heidegger, is lost to the tradition through the infiltration of Greek concepts into Christianity:

What Luther and Heidegger each envisioned was a deconstruction which could reclaim Christianity’s original revolutionary spirit from the Greek philosophical thinking co-opting it. The irony here is that the Greek tradition threatening Christianity was, in part, the very tradition that these thinkers argued Christianity itself was designed to deconstruct. As the young Heidegger progressively put it in lecture notes that have recently come to light, “the great revolution [of Christianity] against ancient science, against Aristotle above all,” not only failed, but turned on itself as he became “the Philosopher of official Christianity—in such a manner that the inner experiences and new attitude of [Christian] life were pressed into the forms of expression in ancient science.” (Hiltner 2003: 78)
Since the infiltration of Greek conceptuality into factical life makes a simple historical return or restitution impossible, Heidegger evolves a complex account of a “hermeneutics of facticity” that turns philosophical texts against themselves or back onto themselves in order to clarify what is “unsaid” in them. The complex historical relation of the Greeks to us subjects us to the necessity of going back to them in a doubly-deconstructive move, where we turn texts against themselves in order to: a. retrieve what is genuinely “factual” in them, and b. reject the implicit (Greek) ontology in them. Because the turn to Greek conceptuality inaugurates a fall in Christendom, we ourselves are now placed under the imperative of going back to the ancients in order to project factical (Christian) life far back enough in history, i.e., back onto the Greeks. What Luther does for Catholic theology, Heidegger seeks to do for Greek ontology.

In the 1922 Natorp Bericht, Heidegger for the first time outlines his project of a comprehensive historical destruction in order to recover the meaning of facticity. He takes Aristotle to be the key figure through whom the history of Western thought becomes a history of a fall away from factical life’s original being. Heidegger thus proposes a hermeneutic and destructive appropriation of Aristotle in order to recover this being. He justifies this choice of Aristotle, above all, through the influence of his ontology on subsequent theology.

An examination of the historical context of Heidegger’s interest in Aristotle, however, presents a more complex picture. Heidegger focuses on Aristotle because Aristotle, in rejecting Plato’s doctrine of transmigration, prepares the way for a different kind of eschatology by defining time as linear. Thus, in SZ, Heidegger claims that Aristotle’s “treatise on time” “can be taken as a way of discerning the basis and limits of the ancient science of being.” “The Aristotelian treatise on time is the first detailed interpretation of this phenomenon that has come down to us” (26/23). But while Heidegger draws upon the Aristotelian analysis of time as linear, he also critiques Aristotle for thinking of time as infinite. Further, Aristotle does not allow for personal salvation as he rejects an individual soul that would be more than the structural principle of a particular body; consequently, Aristotle’s interpretation of the soul would disallow the possibility of an immortal, transmigrating, or cyclically reincarnating soul.

Heidegger draws upon a concept of “uniqueness” (Jeweiligkeit) in order to critique Aristotle’s conception of time as based upon a series of identical and interchangeable “nows.” Heidegger’s ambiguous relation to Aristotle as well as his turn to facticity in the 1920s must be understood out of this two-fold project, namely, the desire to exclude the thought of circular time and the desire to retrieve an understanding of human existence as radically jeweilig and finite and thus in need of salvation.

Heidegger’s own emphasis upon the Jeweiligkeit of human existence and its finitude, however, is drawn dogmatically from his interest in a Lutheran interpre-
tation of time as open to the arrival of Christ, i.e., as the time of awaiting.\textsuperscript{23} Even when the theological notion of arrival is replaced by the “phenomenological” event of death, the basic motif remains the same: Heidegger’s time is eschatological.\textsuperscript{24} This turn to eschatological time is most evident in the lecture course and the public lecture from 1924 (both titled Der Begriff der Zeit and published together in vol. 64 of the Gesamtausgabe) where he articulates a three-stage argument for such an “eschatological” notion of time:\textsuperscript{25}

1. He identifies human existence or Dasein with time.\textsuperscript{26}

2. As such, there is a specific directionality to time: the primary phenomenon of time (once understood existentially rather than as a feature of the world) is the future.\textsuperscript{27} Interestingly, this futurality has an intrinsic relation to human finitude, or, more accurately, to the manner in which the human relates to its own finitude. Heidegger writes, “The basic character of being temporal lies in being futural. Therefore, the distinction between authentic being temporal (running-toward) and inauthentic being temporal (falling) must become visible in relation to the manner of being futural. Calculative concern [gewärtigende Besorgen] asks about death in the sense of ‘when will it come?’ The fact that the when is factically indeterminable does not change anything in the manner of questioning and the answer with which the Dasein that is lost in the world attempts to comfort itself: ‘there is still time.’”\textsuperscript{28}

3. Of these two modes of being futural, one clearly has priority since it individualizes Dasein and, in fact, comes to constitute the possibility of existing qua authentic.\textsuperscript{29}

It is this last aspect that I wish to emphasize here, as it is central to Heidegger’s theological project. I therefore turn in the next section to the key concept in Heidegger’s interpretation of time: that of Jeweiligkeit.\textsuperscript{30}

II. JEWELIGKEIT

The concept of “uniqueness” (Jeweiligkeit, literally “awhileness” or “at-the-while”)\textsuperscript{31} plays a key role in Heidegger’s interpretation. Especially in the twenties, Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes the character of existence’s Jeweiligkeit. Thus, references to Jeweiligkeit occur in GA 63 at pages 7, 29–33, 48, and 87, in GA 17 at 250 and 289, and in GA 20 at 205–7, 207–10, and 325–6. Although, in SZ, Jemeinigkeit replaces Jeweiligkeit with a slight displacement of accent, the idea continues to permeate Heidegger’s work. In fact, Jeweiligkeit constitutes the single most important term that defines Heidegger’s concept of “facticity.” Thus, in GA 63, Heidegger writes:

“Facticity” is the designation we will use for the character of the being of “our” “own” Dasein. More precisely, this expression means: in each case “this” Dasein in its being-there for a while at a particular time (the phenomenon of the “awhileness” of temporal particularity, cf. “whiling,” tarrying for a while,
not running away, being-there-at-home-in . . . , being-there-involved-in . . . , the being-there of Dasein) insofar as it is, in the manner of its being, “there” in the manner of be-ing. (GA 63, 7)\footnote{32}

Further, Heidegger also uses the related je and jeweils and plays on the resonance of these terms throughout the text.\footnote{33} **Jeweiligkeit** is not limited to defining factical life in a narrow sense; it is also a character of the factical world in which life is lived.\footnote{34} Further, Heidegger already links the concept of **Jeweiligkeit** to the idea that human existence is always one’s own, my own (je meines),\footnote{35} so that **Jeweiligkeit** expresses not only a temporal uniqueness but is also the foundation for one’s identity, individuality, and ultimately, as is made explicit in **SZ**, for the possibility of existing as either authentic (eigentlich) or inauthentic (uneigentlich).

In the language of **SZ**, **Jeweiligkeit** is a “definite existential”\footnote{36} and, as such, a key constituent of existence’s average mode of being, its **Alltäglichkeit** (everydayness).\footnote{37} In a sense, when Heidegger accuses the philosophical tradition of overlooking **Alltäglichkeit** as a positive phenomenon and thus misunderstanding human existence’s genuine kind of being,\footnote{38} he implicitly also accuses it of failing to recognize the jeweilig character of human existence.

In the 1922 essay, Heidegger does not use **Jeweiligkeit** but the related je and jeweilig appear often. Thus, Heidegger refers to the “jeweilige hermeneutische Situation” (346) and the “jeweilige Hermeneutik der Situation” (347) and to the “je mögliche Existenz” (361) and to the “jeweiligen konkreten Destrucktion der Faktizität” (361). Heidegger also makes use of eigene in the sense of “one’s own time” (“der eigenen Zeit”),\footnote{39} while the related einmalig and Einmaligkeit occur in a hand-written note to the text.\footnote{40}

The temporality that is disclosed by **Jeweiligkeit** is thus essentially unique, personal, and makes the task of salvation existentially urgent.\footnote{41} Having understood the linearity of time disclosed in **Jeweiligkeit**, let us see how this concept relates to Heidegger’s wider philosophical project.

### III. Eschatology and Salvation

The concept of **Jeweiligkeit** plays a decisive role in Heidegger’s thought in two ways: a. it lets him relate his concept of facticity back to the Lutheran/Pauline experience of time as eschatological (as we have seen), while also b. founding the possibility of personal salvation through its emphasis upon existence’s finitude and individuality.

Although Heidegger does not explicitly pose the question of salvation, a number of references can be identified. In the **Sophist** lecture of 1922, for example, Heidegger, after introducing the Aristotelian conception of φρόνεσις, writes that “[a] person can be concerned with things of minor significance; he can be so wrapped up in himself that he does not genuinely see himself. Therefore he is
ever in need of the salvation of φρόνεσις.” In later works, we find two explicit references: one in the technology essay to “dort wächst das Rettende auch” and one in the Der Spiegel interview to “Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten.” Clearly, Heidegger is quite reticent on the subject of salvation, even though, as I have argued here, it is a latent theme in all his thought. Can one account for this reticence? I suggest that Heidegger’s caution in formulating a definite notion of salvation is a direct function of his unwillingness to provide a positive content to theology. Not only would this run counter to a Lutheran emphasis upon the lack inherent to human nature and its incapacity to attain salvation through its own means, but it would repeat the very error of the Greeks, whose arrogance (according to Luther) lay in thinking they could attain god through rational knowledge. In contrast, Luther emphasizes the knowledge of one’s finitude and individuality as a kind of propaedeutic to salvation—a path, I argue, Heidegger follows in his philosophy. Thus, even where he does not explicitly invoke salvation, the concern with some form of authentic existence, a form of life that runs counter to the despair and fallenness of factual existence, informs all of Heidegger (cf. especially his definition of philosophy as a “gegenruinante Bewegtheit.” It would thus appear that salvation is actually present thematically in Heidegger in a negative form: witness the entire gamut of terms in early Heidegger such as Reluzenz, Prästruktion, Ruinanz, Verfallenheit, Verfallensgeneigtheit.

In the previous section, we saw that Jeweiligkeit subtends Jemeinigkeit; that is, we saw the possibility of existence being one’s own or being something one can personally take over. In SZ, Jemeinigkeit becomes the foundation for the possibility that existence takes itself over or the negative possibility of losing itself. Thus, Heidegger writes:

Da-sein is my own [je meines], to be always in this or that way. It has somehow always already decided in which way Da-sein is always my own [je meines]. The being which is concerned in its being about its being is related to its being as its purest possibility. Da-sein is always its possibility. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it can ‘have’ that possibility only as a mere attribute of something objectively present. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it can ‘choose’ itself in its being, it can win itself. It can only have lost itself, or it can never and only ‘apparently’ win itself. It can only have lost itself and it can only have not yet gained itself because it is essentially possible as authentic, that is, it belongs to itself. The two kinds of being of authenticity [Eigentlichkeit] and inauthenticity [Uneigentlichkeit]—these expressions are terminologically chosen in the strict sense of the word—are based on the fact that Da-sein is in general determined by always being-mine [Jemeinigkeit]. (SZ 42–3/40)

Eigentlichkeit and Uneigentlichkeit are terms that emerge from Heidegger’s philosophical appropriation of the dogmatic content of Christian theology.
Although defined as “modes of being” (Seinsmodi) in SZ, these two terms refer to their theological antecedents insofar as they represent exceptional modes of being in time or relating to time. Crucially, in Paul’s Letter to the Thessalonians, the distinction between the σωζόμενοι and the ἀπολλύμενοι is expressed as two distinct ways of relating to time: the σωζόμενοι experience time as the time of awaiting in which, although the arrival of Christ is uncertain, they are ecstatically open to this event. Yfantis writes:

The second fundamental character of the primordial Christian experience of life accentuated by Heidegger is the situation of decision, which implies a sharp either-or and lays out two fundamental ways of existence to choice. At first and preliminarily, the two ways are characterized as ‘faith’ (πίστις) and “law” (νόμος), while in the further course of the explication the saved (σωζόμενοι) and the damned (ἀπολλύμενοι) are contrasted with each other. The former have, on the basis of an original [experience of] having-become (γενηθῆναι) completed a radical conversion within the unfolding of life [Lebensvollzug] and, through this, have entered into a relationship [Wirkungszusammenhang] with god. They will be saved, when they in the unfolding of life [Vollzug des Lebens] endure in a genuine and radical concern [Bekümmerung], i.e., await the second coming of the lord in hope and faith and, through this, pass the test and the highest need in the time of the Anti-Christ before the second coming.

The ἀπολλύμενοι, in contrast, do not endure, but fall away from the experience [Vollzug] of Christian life and let themselves be deluded in their awaiting, which thereby becomes an expectation according to representations which relates itself to the παρουσία as to an objective outcome. They are immersed in their worldly affairs and try to calculate the arrival of the παρουσία in a fallen concern [Bekümmerung], i.e., to determine it objectively. That is why they do not pass the test through the Anti-Christ and are destroyed. (Yfantis 2009: 78) ⁴⁶

Scholars have already noted that this urchristliche Erfahrung of awaiting the παρουσία informs Heidegger’s discussions of death in Division Two of SZ. Rather than tracing the parallels between Heidegger’s early religious writings and his later work, I wish to emphasize that the concept of Jeweiligkeit in Heidegger, when seen against the background of its full theological resonances, plays a key role in preserving space for a form of personal salvation. Eigentlichkeit/Uneigentlichkeit or, as we can now say, σωζόμενοι/ἀπολλύμενοi ground in Jeweiligkeit/Jemeinigkeit so that Jeweiligkeit becomes the key term that enables Heidegger to retain a dethelogized form of salvation. Nonetheless, we must exercise caution here, since Heidegger, on the one hand, rejects Catholic theology and wants to “dismantle” (cf. “im abbaunden Rückgang,” GA 62, 368) the Aristotelian and Scholastic ontology on which it is based and, on the other hand, imports a theological notion of salvation into philosophy, as I have shown. ⁴⁷ Hence, we should speak more correctly of an
alternative theology or of a different model of salvation (a philosophically clarified Lutheran ideal of salvation as based on faith rather than a Catholic/Neoplatonic ideal of salvation as based on knowing) rather than referring to Heidegger’s project as simply a “detheologized form of salvation.” In other words, what is at stake here is essentially the replacement of one form of theology by another: compare Luther’s replacement of the theologia gloriae by a theologia crucis.

The distinction between the theologia gloriae and the theologia crucis is clarified by Hiltner as follows:

[Because the Church represented Christianity as a monadic structure characterized by power and glory, Luther deconstructed this representation to reveal it to be a binary structure in opposition, with one half so completely marginalized as to have been obfuscated. So, because the Church sees only glory, Luther’s deconstruction offers the scene of humiliation on the cross. Similarly, Luther exchanges an infinitely powerful God, for an utterly powerless one on the cross. Beauty is exchanged for horror; the elevated for the diminished; a radiance for darkness; the extraordinary for the ordinary; a kingdom here for [a] kingdom not here; and, on a more philosophical note, a meta-physical God for a manifestly physical one; a God out of time for one trapped in time; an omni-present God for an absent God—indeed in Greek “being” is of course ousia, but in the New Testament comes an emphasis on the par-ousia, the second coming—the waited for presence of the God who is absent. The young Heidegger took this to be a remarkable deconstruction of medieval theology brought about by Luther, cracking wide open an apparently monadic structure; and in so doing moving out of the margin something precious and forgotten.

For Luther, the Church had, in adopting a theologia gloriae, completely reversed the import of the scene on the cross, “re-constructing” Greek thinking after the spectacle on the cross attempted to deconstruct it. In Van Buren’s words, to “Luther, ‘glory’ means the Greek onto-etio-theo-logical experience of the being of beings as presence: radiant light, splendor, beauty; the wondrous and extraordinary, the elevated and exalted; and power, majesty and dominion”—quite the opposite of Earthly existence which to Plato was “deficiency, lack, absence, darkness, pollution, ugliness, falsity, and evil in relation to the heavenly topos.” But as the scene on the cross is precisely one of “deficiency, lack, absence, darkness, pollution, ugliness, falsity, and evil,” it deconstructs the theologia gloriae.

In essence, Luther’s theologia crucis was an antidote, so to speak, for Christians who were enthusiastically climbing Plato’s ladder away from the earth towards a “higher” realm. Luther hoped that he could cause these glory-seeking spirits to look back for a moment at the image of their Savior on the cross and, seeing their folly, turn back down towards their meta-physical God who had, as these
theologians apparently forgot, come down to Earth. However, as one might imagine, this was a rather hard sell for Luther. (Hiltner 2003: 81)

In *SZ*, Heidegger implicitly takes up this Lutheran project when he proposes a destructive appropriation of the history of ontology. Scholars have read this destructive project as aiming at a conception of the being of human existence, an existential analytic, or *Daseinsanalytik* as Heidegger terms it, that would be based upon a radically clarified understanding of being and thus transcend the supposed naiveté of the Greek definition of man (*Lebensauslegung*). Yet, as I have argued in this paper, we cannot simply accept Heidegger’s claim to a scientific and universal definition of human existence, as he has most often been read. Heidegger’s project is:

1. Theological in that it introduces a new conception of salvation,
2. Destructive in that it aims to undo an alternative understanding of salvation, and
3. Ultimately, only heuristic in the sense that the destruction of ontology is only carried out in order to retrieve a specific understanding of salvation *existentially significant* to Heidegger. That is to say, it cannot and should not be read as objective ontology; rather, it is the way Heidegger seeks to secure his understanding of what it means for him *qua* existent individual to be.\(^{50}\)

How is this conception of salvation to be understood, if it is not posed in terms of the traditional Christian understanding? What constitutes *Eigentlichkeit*, according to Heidegger, is its specific mode of relating to one’s finitude or death, where this relation to death gives one’s life a specific quality. In other words, authentic existence is *lived* as other than inauthentic existence. In Heidegger’s ‘detheologized’ conception, *it is not the arrival of Christ itself or one’s representations of life beyond but the way or the “how” in which life is lived that constitutes salvation*. However, from Heidegger’s perspective, this emphasis upon the mode of temporalization of authentic existence is not a detheologization but a retrieval of the original and genuine meaning of the Christian experience itself.\(^{51}\)

Yfantis writes:

Primordial Christian religiosity—according to Heidegger—*lives temporality* [*Zeitlichkeit*] (the verb understood in an intransitive sense), which is fundamentally different from the fallen objective concept of time insofar as it does not signify a definite schematism, but is rooted in the context of unfolding [*Vollzugszusammenhang*] itself and constitutes the meaning of its facticity. This unfolding itself is carried by the awaiting of the second coming of Christ, so that every moment of such original experience of life attains its signification through the reference to the event of the end of days. The original meaning of the primordial Christian temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*], however, has been falsified through the covering over of the eschatological problem and the penetration of Greek philosophy into Christianity, and this has led to specific theological
problems, e.g., that of the eternity of god, [which] were no longer appropriately understood in the Middle Ages. (Yfantis 2009: 89–90)\textsuperscript{52}

The “fall” in interpretation lies in the fact that this original dogmatic meaning was not understood in its reference to the mode of temporalization of life, a moment Heidegger calls the “Vollzugssinn des Lebens” but understood in terms of its specific doctrinal content (Gehaltssinn).\textsuperscript{53} The “fall,” interpreted philosophically rather than dogmatically, consists not in the fall from a paradise, but falling to an interpretation that reifies itself. Such an interpretation no longer understands that life is its “to be,” as Heidegger formulates it in \textit{SZ}, but presents a definite ideal of life so that life now deficiently relates to itself as to an objectively present content. Specifically, in the case of theology, it is the turn to a \textit{jenseitigen} god or a \textit{Jenseits} in general that Heidegger finds problematic.

For Heidegger, Christianity is neither grounded upon a specific dogmatic content nor upon a specific historical experience. Rather, it centers in the eschatological problem. Christianity, i.e., genuine lived Christianity, gains the unique quality of its existence from the eschatological experience of awaiting the \textit{παρουσία}. This experience, Heidegger argues, can be universalized because it does not refer to the historical experience of Christianity.\textsuperscript{54} Instead, it ought lead us to rethink the problem of time.

\textbf{IV. Heidegger’s Critique of Aristotle}

An examination of Heidegger’s central determinations of the being of human existence such as \textit{Jeweiligkeit}, \textit{Faktizität}, \textit{Sein-in-der-Welt}, \textit{In-sein} shows how the desire to preserve an experience of immanence of \textit{Diesseitigkeit}\textsuperscript{56} is the guiding motivation for Heidegger’s thought. Heidegger’s central insight into the \textit{diesseitig} or \textit{diesmalig}\textsuperscript{57} character of existence is key to understanding the further steps of his philosophy. We can express these steps as follows:

1. Desire to preserve immanence, being-in-the-world \\
\hspace{1cm} ↓
2. Emphasis upon facticity \\
\hspace{1cm} ↓
3. Emphasis upon \textit{Jeweiligkeit} \\
\hspace{1cm} ↓
4. Critical appropriation of Aristotle \\
\hspace{1cm} ↓
5. Positive interpretation of time as finite and eschatologically open

Especially from \textit{SZ} onward, the problem of human existence essentially relates to the problem of time for Heidegger.\textsuperscript{58} But while this emphasis upon time as finite allows Heidegger to preserve facticity and the this-worldly salvation of authentic
existence, he also closes off any transcendence. It is here that we must seek the reasons for Heidegger’s critique of Aristotle as Heidegger claims that Aristotle misunderstands the nature of transcendence by locating it in the θεῖον.  

Let us return to the thesis of Jeweiligkeit. So far, we have seen that Heidegger’s interest in Aristotle emerges out of his interest in dismantling the content of traditional Scholastic theology as a way of retrieving the original Christian, although not only Christian, experience of facticity. However, this historical approach still leaves central questions unanswered. For example, why Aristotle rather than Plato or Parmenides? What specifically about Aristotle proves so fruitful for Heidegger’s own project? Is there an intrinsic connection between Aristotle’s thought and Heidegger’s project or can the turn to Aristotle be explained purely in terms of Aristotle’s historical role in the formation of Scholastic theology?

In the 1924 lecture course Der Begriff der Zeit, we find a key passage that links the concept of Jeweiligkeit to that of being underway. Heidegger writes:

Dasein is as In-the-world either explicitly or not, authentically or inauthentically, always mine [jeweils das meinige]. As little as its In-being can (the definiteness thereof) this uniqueness [Jeweiligkeit] of Dasein’s be crossed out. This being, which one is in one’s being at any time [jeweilig], remains as care constantly underway to—[unterwegs zu—]. (GA 64, 45–6; my translation)

If Jeweiligkeit refers to a mode of being underway, then it necessarily presupposes an understanding of movement as being underway. In order to think Jeweiligkeit, two things must be given: a. an understanding of movement as such, and b. an understanding of movement as a movement out of something toward something. In other words, Heidegger’s understanding of Jeweiligkeit originally becomes conceivable on the basis of the Aristotelian understanding of movement insofar as Aristotle, for the first time, expresses movement as being underway through the concept pair δύναμις and ἐνέργεια/ἐντελέχεια. In his discussion of Aristotle’s analysis of movement in the Physics (esp. books Α and Γ) in GA 18, Heidegger claims that Aristotle has to begin with a critique because Parmenides, although he sees “a fundamental determination of being” with his determination ἕν τὸ ὄν, he nonetheless comes to “a standstill.” Heidegger further claims that Aristotle’s determination that κίνησις is not something beside (παρά) movement is “directed against Plato, who even in the Sophist says that a thing moved is characterized in its being by the fact that we apprehend it as taking part in κίνησις; κίνησις itself is an idea like all others—it is παρά and, through the μέθεξις in it, the moved thing must be made intelligible in its being.” Heidegger therefore concludes that “[t]he determination of the ὑν as κινούμενον was always noticed, but not in the sense of being considered as the more proximate character of a being. The possibility of discussing movement was not such that movement itself would be recognized as the distinctive mode of the being-there of a definite being.” For Heidegger, the fundamental significance of Aristotle’s
discovery for all subsequent investigations into movement, including modern physics, lies in the fact that “[p]recisely, the fundamental determinations that are not discussed [in modern physics] proceeded from Aristotle. They make it possible to see ahead in the direction of a genuine consideration of being: change as a mode of being—there itself.” The chapter (and the lecture course as a whole) ends with the observation that “This Aristotelian investigation into movement has a fundamental significance for the whole ontology: basic determinations of beings as ἐνέργεια, ἐντελέχεια, and δύναμις.” Most tellingly for his own project, Heidegger claims that “The discovery of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια takes seriously what Plato and Parmenides wanted.”

V. From Aristotle to Parmenides

The foregoing analysis raises some critical questions concerning Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle. Both in SZ and in earlier texts, Aristotle is declared to be the highest stage of Greek thought, the first and most radically scientific philosopher, the fulfillment of Greek philosophy, and the seminal thinker for the destiny of the West. These claims now need to be relativized, since we have seen that Heidegger’s approach is in many respects tendentious. I will do so by examining two points: a. The Parmenidean Thesis of Being, b. The Priority of νοεῖν over λεγεῖν.

1. Overturning the Parmenidean Thesis of Being:

In his interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger focuses overwhelmingly on his Physics, as Gadamer has already noted. Heidegger himself justifies this turn to the Physics on the basis of the central role the κίνησις problem has in his thought.

As we have seen, the turn to Aristotle is linked to Heidegger’s interest in thinking movement in a highly specific manner, i.e., as being underway. According to the Parmenidean doctrine of being, as articulated in the philosophical poem Peri Phuseōs, being is one and immovable. Heidegger thus first needs to overcome the Parmenidean challenge in order for his form of eschatological salvation to make sense. Heidegger’s interest in the Aristotelian Physics can thus be understood out of his need to unseat the Parmenidean thesis.

In his Physics, Aristotle challenges Parmenides, arguing that, phenomenologically, being is both plural and in motion. Aristotle takes up a critique of Parmenides in Physics 1.7–8 and 3.1–8. In Phys. 1.8, 191a24–31, Aristotle claims that

[i]n seeking the truth and the nature of things from the philosophical point of view, the first thinkers, as if led astray by inexperience, were misled into another way of thinking by maintaining the following: No thing can be generated or destroyed because a thing must be generated either from being or from nonbeing; but both of these are impossible, for being cannot become
something since it already exists, and a thing generated cannot come to be from nonbeing since there must be some underlying subject [from which it is to be generated].

In fact, the assertion of motion is key to Aristotle’s rejection of the Parmenidean thesis: Aristotle does not so much argue for the plurality of being as defer to the experience of κίνησις in dismantling the Parmenidean account of being. Thus, Aristotle’s account of φύσις is specifically oriented toward the problem of movement, as Heidegger himself observes. Κίνησις is the key concept Aristotle uses in order to disprove Parmenides’s thesis that being is one. Heidegger’s valorization of Aristotle and of the κίνησις problem derives from his need to think human finitude and Jeweiligkeit as necessary preconditions of salvation. Indeed, whereas the problem of movement is secondary to the problem of the multiplicity of being for Aristotle, Heidegger focuses purely on κίνησις as it permits him to think time.

2. Heidegger’s Reduction of νοῦς to λόγος

Although I have focused overwhelmingly on Heidegger’s “ontology” here, a second component, his engagement with “logic,” must also be mentioned. There is a second reason for Heidegger’s turn to Aristotle. Heidegger argues that whereas the Eleatics lost themselves in arbitrary and speculative theses on being, Aristotle pays close attention to factical life’s own ways of speaking about itself. This turn to ordinary speaking or ordinary understanding has two key functions in Heidegger:

a. It prefigures his own turn to die faktische Rede as well as die Selbstausgelegtheit des Daseins as the ultimate sources to be interrogated.

b. It lets him take back the talk of νοῦς (as well as of σοφώτερον and σοφία) into faktische Rede.

The latter point constitutes the core of his method of a hermeneutic destruction of the history of ontology insofar as it is based, since Parmenides, upon the priority of pure intuition and, correlatedly, of being as presence. Thus, at the end of the section §31 Das Da-sein als Verstehen in SZ, where he argues that all understanding is rooted in existence’s being as “being-possible” (Seinkönnen), Heidegger claims:

By showing how sight is primarily based on understanding—the circumspection of taking care of things is understanding as common sense [Verständigkeit]—we have taken away from pure intuition its priority which noetically corresponds to the traditional ontological priority of objective presence. “Intuition” and “thought” are both already remote derivatives of understanding. Even the phenomenological “intuition of essences” is based upon existential understanding. (SZ 147/138)
Heidegger’s famous rejection of the ontology of pure presence (Vorhandenheit) has a clear theological precursor in Luther’s attacks upon the prestige of things present, as Schürmann has incisively shown:

Luther qualifies this prestige of things present as ‘pure madness.’ One will have difficulty accusing him of not knowing what he is doing. He knows, and he says, that he is reorienting an entire mode of thinking; he does so by directing the axis of inquiry elsewhere, thus rendering the old problems problematic in a different way; and he is no less explicit about the old orientation, hereafter senseless, than he is about the new, henceforth the only sensible one: to think no longer according to ‘things’ but according to ‘consciousness.’ Why such anger against the theologians? Because they understand nothing about sin. They treat it as a task which you set for yourself (or with which you are born) and which is lifted from you. They count it amongst the entia, beings, claiming that sin can be removed as long as man lives . . . as if sinful deeds were removed, in the metaphysical sense, just as one removes a layer of paint from a wall” (sch. 7,1 cor.). It is the ‘havingness’ (habance) (habitus) which, according to the Aristotelians, sticks to the soul like paint to a wall’ (sch. 7,18). In this polemic against the logic of things, self-consciousness is instituted as the focal point of another logic: transcendental logic. (Schürmann 2003: 373)

Moreover, the rejection of pure νοεῖν in Heidegger is not an innocent move: because νοῦς, for the Greeks, is divine, in overturning the priority of νοεῖν (as he claims in the citation above), Heidegger effectively completes Luther’s iconoclastic destruction of Greek philosophical religion.

In order to complete this destruction, Heidegger evolves, as we have seen, a complex account of the “hermeneutics of facticity,” whereby he attempts to show the origins of νοεῖν in common sense or Verständigung. Yet, in order to do so, Heidegger must turn to an Aristotelian account of νόησις/νοεῖν in place of the Platonic/Parmenidean conception. In his Sophist lectures of 1922, Heidegger follows Aristotle in making the εἰδός of the house (which is to be built) the ἀρχή of the activity (i.e., κίνησις) of building. He writes:

Hence the εἰδός is the very ἀρχή; it initiates the κίνησις. This κίνησις is first of all that of νόησις, or deliberation, and then the one of ποίησις, of the action which issues from the deliberation. (GA 19, 44)

This analysis, whereby νόησις is situated within an eminently practical context, allows Heidegger to later discover the origins of both pure νοεῖν as well as σοφία within existence’s “Being-in-the-World,” i.e., its factual and jeweilig existence within the world in which it lives. Heidegger uses this hermeneutic of the origins of the positing of pure νοεῖν in order to deconstruct the Greek (i.e., Parmenidean) understanding of being from a second aspect.
Further, insofar as νοεῖν is associated with the θεῖον in Aristotle, demonstrating the diesseitig origins of νοεῖν (within factical life) also enables him to dismantle Aristotle’s “theology.” This opposition to Aristotle’s theology is seen most clearly in his discussion of the five modes of ἀλεθευεῖν, where he hints that φρόνησις, which has the being of human life as its intentional correlate, rather than σοφία, ought to be the highest mode of revealing possible for humans—before finally taking back the claim.⁸¹ Although a higher form of ἀλεθευεῖν, the problem with σοφία for Heidegger is that it ultimately relates to divine movement (i.e., to the movement of the νόησις νοήσεως) and thereby leads into theology.

This theology is untenable for Heidegger, because it represents the forgetting of facticity. Only φρόνησις, for him, genuinely preserves human characteristics such as thrownness, finitude, and temporality. Φρόνησις, however, ultimately cannot serve as a model,⁸² because, like factical life, it too embodies a tendency to fallenness.⁸³ For Heidegger, it is not a question of going back to the Greeks and learning what models they used that we could adopt, but an attitude of “wakefulness” that is decisive.⁸⁴

In dismantling the Parmenidean thesis of being as one and unmoved and as separate from becoming, Heidegger is able to foreground the passion of existence, while undoing the priority of νοῦς over understanding lets him emphasize the diesseitig and pragmatic situation of existence.⁸⁵ These moves effectively undercut the ontological foundations of the Greek praxis of salvation,⁸⁶ while making a renewed experience of salvation necessary.⁸⁷ Thus, what is ultimately at stake in Heidegger’s philosophical project is the rejection of one kind of soteriology, the noetic salvation of Parmenides and Plato,⁸⁸ and its replacement by another: the eschatological awaiting of the end of days specific to Christianity. Although Heidegger insists upon a philosophical clarification of this experience, its confessional origins are unmistakable.⁸⁹ From Heidegger’s perspective, the Parmenidean and Platonic conception of time as cyclical⁹⁰ (especially, their separation of time into two temporalities: the eternity of being and the cyclical temporality of becoming)⁹¹ disallows the experience of Jeweiligkeit and finitude and thus makes the existential urgency of personal salvation impossible.⁹² The “destruction of the history of ontology using the problem of temporality as its guiding line”⁹³ proclaimed in SZ turns out to be the clarification of a quite different experience of salvation from the rational soteriology of the Greeks.⁹⁴

Notes
1. For an overview of the term “facticity” in Heidegger’s early writings, see Kisiel, “Das Entstehen des Begriffsfeldes ‘Faktizität’ im Frühwerk Heideggers.” A more recent account can be found in Kisiel, “On the Genesis of Heidegger’s Formally Indicative Hermeneutics of Facticity.”
2. Although I use the terms “Lutheran” and “Pauline” interchangeably in this paper, it is important to bear in mind that Heidegger does not so much go back to Paul as to Luther’s interpretation of Paul.


4. See GA 60, esp. part 2; cf. also GA 64, 81 where the claim that fallen existence comforts itself with the thought “there is still time” has obvious Christian and theological resonances.

5. This project is announced in his Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles and carried out in several texts from the 1920s. A good overview of this period in Heidegger’s thought is provided in Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles (Yfantis 2009).

6. See, for example, Kisiel’s The Genesis of Being and Time, which provides a masterful reconstruction of the early history of this text. Another, more specific discussion can be found in the same author’s “War der frühe Heidegger tatsächlich ein ‘christlicher Theologe’?” See also van Buren’s The Young Heidegger: Rumors of a Hidden King, which provides an excellent overview of Heidegger’s early theological motivation.

7. For the presence of Luther in Heidegger’s thought, see GA 56/57, 18, GA 60, 67f. und 97, GA 60, 237 und 281f., GA 61, 7 and 182, GA 62, 329 and 336, GA 63, 5. Also see van Buren, The Young Heidegger: Rumors of a Hidden King, 157–203. Yfantis’s recent book, Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles, provides a provocative and insightful analysis of Heidegger’s Lutheran background—see esp. sections 1.1.5.1 and 1.1.5.2. Also see Jaspers’s autobiography for first-hand testimony of the young Heidegger’s intense preoccupation with Luther.

8. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

9. See, for example, the work of Volpi who claims that Heidegger’s work is essentially an appropriation of Aristotle’s thought (see the bibliography for a list of citations where this claim is made). In his earlier period, Gadamer also falls prey to the same misunderstanding, but corrects himself following the rediscovery of the Natorp Bericht; cf. his essay “Heideggers ‘theologische’ Jugendschrift,” 83–4; see n. 10 below. At the recent Heidegger Circle meeting (May 2010), Steven Crowell decisively rejected what he referred (in his presentation) to as “Volpi’s reading,” although in his published paper I do not find a reference to Volpi; cf. “Agency, Morality, and the Essential Connectedness of Action,” 89.

10. In fact, Gadamer, on re-reading Heidegger’s Natorp Bericht after it was rediscovered in the 1980s, writes that he is “surprised” to see how critical Heidegger is of Aristotle in contrast to his earlier recollections, “Aristoteles [stellt] für Heidegger mehr eine verdeckende Traditionsfigure … [dar], die das eigene okzidentale Denken nicht zu sich selbst kommen und nicht den Weg ins Freie finden ließ.” “Heideggers ‘theologische’ Jugendschrift,” 83–4.

11. “In the writings of Luther, Kierkegaard, and most surprisingly in the writings of the young Martin Heidegger, a distinction emerges between apostolic and apostate
Christianity. This distinction, perhaps most famous in Kierkegaard as a [distinction] between “Christianity” and “Christendom,” holds that the institutionalization of Christianity so thoroughly co-opts what the young Heidegger calls primal-Christianity (\textit{Urchristentum}) with a profound Greek philosophic influence that it turns into its very opposite. Hence the need for deconstruction” (Hiltner 2003: 77–8).

12. The importance of this 1922 essay is highlighted by Walter Brogan in his insightful and comprehensive commentary of Heidegger’s relationship to Aristotle. Brogan writes, “One of the most powerful aspects of this essay is Heidegger’s cogent characterization of the nature of philosophy. One could argue that the entire essay is about this. Philosophical research is taking up and carrying out the movement of interpretation that belongs to factual life itself. Philosophy is radical, concernful questioning because it positions itself decisively at the moment wherein the threatening and troubled character of life—\textit{die Bekümmerung der Existenz}—unfolds, and holds itself steadfastly out towards the questionability of life. Thus, Heidegger describes philosophy as letting the difficulty, the \textit{aporia}, of life gain articulation by engaging in an original, unreduplicatable, and unrepresentable moment of repetition. For Aristotle, the focus of this aporetic, philosophical thinking is, of course, the \textit{arche}.” \textit{Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being}, 20.

13. As van Buren usefully points out, the term “destruction” (Latin \textit{destruere}) is also used by Luther in his \textit{Heidelberg Disputation}. “Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther,” 167. The entire article is highly recommended for its careful presentation of Heidegger’s interest in Luther.


17. P. F. Conen’s analysis of Aristotle’s views on time in \textit{Die Zeittheorie des Aristoteles} remains the best account here.

18. Cf. also the remark made in the same paragraph that Aristotle represents the “scientifically highest and purest stage” of ancient ontology.

19. In a response to my paper, Prof. Kisiel pointed out that “Heidegger’s retrieval of Aristotle’s \textit{καιρός} (full moment) and \textit{φρόνησις} (holistic insight) is directed toward, not a linear time, but the holistic time of a finite one-time-only lifetime, the ‘how’ of our being-underway in it decided in the existential moment of holistic insight into the concrete situation of action in which we (each of us) find ourselves thrown.” Personal communication; email from May 12, 2010. I thank Prof. Kisiel for this useful clarification.

20. In \textit{De Anima}, Aristotle defines the soul as “substance in the sense that it is the form of a natural body having in it the capacity of life.” Aristotle continues, “[s]uch substance is actuality. The soul, therefore, is the actuality of the body above described” (2.1 412a19; Hicks trans.). Further, at 412b5, the soul is defined as “the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life.” As the form of the body, the soul cannot have an existence separate from the body—a conclusion Aristotle explicitly affirms when he writes, “[n]ow it needs no proof that the soul—or if it is divisible into parts, certain of its parts—cannot be separated from the body, for there are cases
where the actuality belongs to the parts themselves” (413a2–5). Contrasting Aristotle’s conception of the soul with Plato’s, Sorabji writes, “[t]he resulting conception of the soul makes it coextensive with life, that is, with all life. The conception of the soul is a biological one, and it encourages Aristotle to stress the continuity, rather than the differences, between processes in plants and processes in humans.” “Body and Soul in Aristotle,” 165. While distinguishing Aristotle’s “biologism” from contemporary forms of biologism, I wish to underscore here that Aristotle links the soul to a specific βίος, i.e., to a specific form of life.

21. See GA 24, 330–61, for his explication of the Aristotelian doctrine of time and 362–88 for the ‘derivation’ of “vulgar time” out of “original time.”

22. Gadamer, too, notes Heidegger’s complicated relationship to Aristotle, but is unable to fully appreciate the complexity of this relationship when he writes, “Offenbar hatte Heidegger zwei Antriebe, die sein Verhältnis zu Aristoteles bestimmten. Der eine Antrieb war seine Kritik an dem Seinsbegriff des Aristoteles und dem Begriff des Göttlichen als des Seienden, das sich ganz in der Gegenwart eines beständigen Vollzuges hält, in dem nichts aussteht und nichts nur gemeint und nur angestrebt ist, sondern das eben göttliches Sein ist und nicht menschliches. Der andere Antrieb, dem er folgt und der damals sogleich, vor allem von der protestantischen Theologie, aufgenommen wurde, war der Appell an die Eigentlichkeit des Daseins, die es galt, in der Faktizität des Daseins bei Aristoteles wiederzufinden.” Heideggers ‘theologische’ Jugendschrift, 84. As I have argued in this paper, in his critique of Aristotle (esp. his “Seinsbegriff”), Heidegger nonetheless wants to retain the thought of time as linear because only it originally lets the thought of “facticity” appear (even though it then almost immediately and necessarily covers it over). This is the meaning of Heidegger’s famous claim in the Natorp Bericht of a “Doppelung der Hinsicht” in which human existence is placed in Aristotle’s explication of φρόνησις (cf. GA 62, 385).

23. For an excellent summary of Luther’s replacement of the theologia gloriae by a theologia crucis and its impact on Heidegger, see Crowe’s essay “On the Track of the Fugitive Gods: Heidegger, Luther, Hölderlin.” Crowe correctly emphasizes the turn to historicity and to radical finitude as a condition of being “incapable of ever ‘having’ God except by continuously seeking after him” (190) in Luther’s thought as key moments in Heidegger’s own philosophy. The distinction between having/seeking god is, in my view, operative in the distinction between Vollzugs- and Gehaltssinn (see below). I thank Benjamin Crowe for providing me a manuscript version of the text.

24. This paper emphasizes but one aspect of Heidegger’s thought. I am aware that Heidegger’s theological thought is much more complex and indeed, grows increasingly more complex as he matures. For example, although the notion of awaiting is retained in the later writings, he moves away from this notion of radical individuality. His interest in Aristotle gives way partially to an interest in Eckhart’s mysticism and Hölderlin’s neo-Paganism. Although it came to my notice too late to incorporate its views here, Benjamin Crowe’s recent paper “Heidegger’s Gods” has some interesting reflections on the late Heidegger’s relation to religion; my gratitude to Benjamin Crowe for directing my attention to this work.

25. The expression “eschatological” is my own here; Heidegger refers to this conception of time as either “existential” or as “ecstatic” time.
26. See, for example, GA 64, 57 and *passim*. “And what is the way that now leads from the Dasein that has been explicated in the authenticity of its being-possible to time? There is no need of a way anymore. The investigation already has time constantly in view. The ontological characteristic of the being of disclosive running-toward [Vorlaufens] was already the laying-bare of the phenomenon of time in its genuine [eigentlichen] being. *The individual [jeweilige] Dasein is itself (the) time.*” My translation, Heidegger’s emphasis.

27. In his paper “Die Frage nach der Zeit in Heideggers Aristoteles-Interpretationen. Auf dem Weg zu *Sein und Zeit*,” Walter Brogan makes a convincing case that Heidegger’s interest in the futural character of time probably also has Aristotelian roots. (My gratitude to Walter Brogan for providing me a manuscript version of his paper.) This provides us a further way to approach the Heidegger/Aristotle question: what is the relation of Aristotle’s emphasis on the future to the Christian experience of time as open to the arrival of Christ and to Heidegger’s privileging of the “ecstasis” of the future?

28. GA 64, 81; my translation.

29. “In the being futural of running-toward in its utmost possibility, Dasein enters into the authenticity of its own being. In this being, it is brought back out of the ‘one’ and placed into the sole uniqueness [Diesmaligkeit] which can be grasped by it itself and thus becomes utterly unsubstitutable [unvertretbar] through another.” GA 64, 82; my translation.

30. The most detailed textual study of *Jeweiligkeit* to date is Romolo Perrotta’s work *Heideggers Jeweiligkeit: Versuch einer Analyse der Seinsfrage anhand der veröffentlichten Texte*. Perrotta traces the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* from the earliest writings all the way down to Heidegger’s 1955/56 lecture *Der Satz vom Grund*.

31. Cf. Kisiel’s note on his translation of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. Kisiel translates *Jeweiligkeit* with either “the particular while” or “temporal particularity.” (153) In his view, *Jeweiligkeit* constitutes the “most central of the characters of Dasein.” Ibid.

32. Cf. also the similar definition in GA 20. “‘The fundamental character of the being of Dasein is therefore at first adequately grasped in the determination, *an entity which is in the to-be-at-its time*. This ‘in each particular instance’ [je], ‘at the [its] time’ [jeweilig], or the structure of the ‘particular while’ [Jeweiligkeit] is constitutive for every character of being of this entity. That is, there is simply no Dasein which would be as Dasein that would not in its very sense be ‘at its time’, temporally particular [jeweiliges].’” GA 20, 205–6.

33. “The being-there of our own Dasein is what it is precisely and only in its *temporally particular *‘there,*’ its being “there” for a while. A defining feature of the awhileness of temporal particularity is the *today*—in each case whiling, tarrying for a while, in the present, in each case our own present.” GA 63, 29. “There for a while at the particular time, Dasein is there in the awhileness of temporal particularity. This awhileness is co-defined by the particular today of Dasein, its being today for a while.” GA 63, 48.

34. Cf. GA 63, 87.

35. Cf. GA 20, 207. “The *particular while* as such belongs to the structure of the being of this Dasein. With this fundamental character of Dasein, that I am it in the ‘to be it in
each particular instance,' the initial determination for Dasein is secured.” Prof. Kisiel points out that “je meines in SZ is not ‘always my own’ but rather ‘in each instantiation my own.’ Accordingly, Jeweiligkeit is ‘to each its whileness,’ its one-time-only lifetime. The existentials are not common generic universals of the all but proper distributive universals of the each (e.g., not ‘All men are mortal’ but ‘Each of us dies our own death’).” Personal communication; email from May 12, 2010. Prof. Kisiel’s corrected translation of je meines better underscores how important the notion of personhood or of individuality is to Heidegger; cf. also n. 30 on the translation of Jeweiligkeit.


37. Cf. GA 20, 208. “The Dasein is not be taken by setting some sort of aim and purpose for it, neither as ‘homo’ nor even in the light of some idea of ‘humanity.’ Instead, its way to be must be brought out of its nearest everydayness, the factic Dasein in the how of its factic ‘to be it.’ But this does not mean that we now give a kind of biographical account of a particular Dasein as this individual Dasein is in its everyday life. We are reporting no particular everyday life but we are seeking the everydayness of everyday life, the fact in its facticity, not the everyday of the temporally particular Dasein but to be the everydayness for its particular while as Dasein is what matters to us.”

38. See SZ, §5 Die ontologische Analytik des Daseins als Freilegung des Horizontes für eine Interpretation des Sinnes von Seins überhaupt, where Heidegger introduces Dasein’s Alltäglichkeit; see also SZ, §9. “Und weil nun die durchschnittliche Alltäglichkeit das ontische Zunächst dieses Seienden ausmacht, wurde sie und wird sie immer wieder in der Explikation des Daseins übersprungen” (p. 44). Of course, my interpretation here suggests a different reason for emphasizing Alltäglichkeit than that advanced by Heidegger.


41. The emphasis on facticity and its temporality are clearly underscored by theologians deeply influenced by Heidegger. For example, Bultmann writes: “Thus, theological thinking—the theology of the New Testament—begins with the kerygma of the earliest Church and not before. But the fact that Jesus had appeared and the message which had proclaimed were, of course, among its historical presuppositions; and for this reason Jesus’s message cannot be omitted from the delineation of New
The Testament theology.” *Theology of the New Testament*, 3. Thus Bultmann stresses the *kerygma* even in relation to the appearance of Jesus. What is this *kerygma*? “That the earliest Church regarded itself as the Congregation of the end of days.” Ibid., 37. The Heideggerian analysis of *Jeweiligkeit* is transparent in Bultmann's statements about Jesus: “Basically, therefore, he in his own person is the 'sign of the time.' . . . He in his own person signifies the demand for decision.” Ibid., 9.

42. GA 19, 51–2. Obviously, one would have to say a lot more about Heidegger’s understanding of *φρόνεσις* and how we are to take “salvation” here—a task beyond the scope of this paper.

43. In his response to my paper, Bagchee usefully pointed out that this motif is “not unique to Luther.” Thus, as Flash points out “[s]ein Paulus davor gewarnt hatte, sich von der Weisheit dieser Welt verführen zu lassen, gab es im Christentum generelle Vorbehalte gegen den 'Hochmut' der Philosophen . . . 1231 schrieb Papst Gregor IX den Professoren von Paris, sie sollten sich nicht als Philosophen generieren, sondern Gottbelehrte, *theodocti*, sein; er schärfte das Verbot der *libri naturales* von 1201 ein, fügte aber hinzu, es solle solange kein Gebrauch von ihnen gemacht werden, bis sie von allen Irrtümern gereinigt wären, *quousque examinati fuerint et ab omni errorum suspicione purgati* (Chartularium I Nr. 79, pp. 136–9, bes. p. 138). . . . Spätestens seitdem koexistieren Aristotelesbenutzung und Aristoteleskorrektur, die, auch wenn sie theologischen Ziele dienen sollten, philosophisch argumentativ ausgeführt wurden, zum Beispiel von Johannes Eriugena, von Anselm von Canterbury, von Meister Eckhart, der eine neue Metaphysik, und Raimundus Luullus, der eine neue Logik und Ontologie forderte. Man müsste die gesamte Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Denkens darstellen, wollte man diese mächtige Strömung der Aristoteles-Überwindung bei gleichzeitiger Aristotelesbenutzung in ihrem philosophischen Gewicht sichtbar machen.” “Aristoteleskritik im Mittelalter,” 65–6. Bagchee resumes, “[i]n particular, Heidegger stands in a tradition beginning with Scotus of showing through 'textual scholarship' that previous Aristotle interpretations had not understood the thinker, and that one’s own interpretation therefore is truer to Aristotle; cf. Flash, p. 70” In his oral presentation, Bagchee notes that “Heidegger’s own Aristotle reception closely follows the contours of this medieval debate in that the Scholastic tradition never debates the value of Aristotle's *Organon* or his *Metaphysics*—it is always the *Physics* which present this tradition with a problem and hence must be ‘kosherized.’ This ambiguity is clearly manifest in Heidegger’s own work inasmuch as he always focuses narrowly, even exclusively, on the *Physics.*” (I thank Bagchee both for the Flash references and for providing me an unpublished draft of his response.)

44. GA 61, 153; Heidegger’s emphasis.

45. As Yfantis notes, “The contrast between concerned enduring in hope and faith in the time of being tested and of need, on the one hand, and that of tranquilized and self-forgetful immersion in worldly activity, on the other hand, constitutes a sharp *either-or* between two fundamental modi of existence—characterized in WS 1920/21 by spirit (*πνεῦμα*) and flesh (*σάρξ*), in SS 1921 with holding together (*continentia*) and dissolution (*defluxus*)—that anticipates the contrast between *Eigentlichkeit* und *Uneigentlichkeit* in *Sein und Zeit*” (Yfantis 2009: 87). To Yfantis’s list one can add
several other binary oppositions: Verfallen/Gegenbewegung (in GA 62) and Ruinanz/Gegen-ruinante Bewegung (in GA 61).


47. I therefore disagree with Catriona Hanley’s claim of a “famous shift from Aristotle’s ontotheology to the Heideggerian ontology from which god is absent.” Uncritically accepting Heidegger’s claim of purging ontology of theology at face-value, Hanley continues: “Heidegger is perhaps the first to reopen the question of being in a radical way that excludes an explanatory God.” Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger: The Role of Method in Thinking the Infinite, xvii. Hanley seems to me to be unclear about Heidegger’s theological background or even about her own implicit theological commitments.

48. The complexity of Heidegger’s relation to faith is illustrated by his letters to Father Krebs and K. Löwith in 1919 and 1921. In a letter to Krebs justifying his decision to leave the Catholic faith, Heidegger asserts that the “system of Catholicism” has become “problematic and unacceptable” to him, but not “Christianity and metaphysics” now understood, however, “in a new sense.” “Letter to Engelbert Krebs on his Philosophical Conversion,” 96; Sheehan trans. At this time, Heidegger believes his faith is incompatible with his vocation as a philosopher, but roughly two years later, in a letter to Löwith, it is philosophy that is downplayed in relation to his vocation as a “christlicher Theologe.” The full sentence reads: “aber dann ist zu sagen, daß ich kein Philosoph bin. Ich bilde mir nicht ein, auch nur etwas Vergleichbares zu machen….Ich arbeite konkret faktisch aus meinem ‘ich bin’—aus meiner geistigen überhaupt faktischen Herkunft…Zu dieser meiner Faktizität gehört—was ich kurz nenne—, daß ich ein ‘christlicher Theologe’ bin.” “Drei Briefe Martin Heideggers an Karl Löwith,” 28f. For a discussion, see Theodor Kisiel, “War der frühe Heidegger tatsächlich ein ‘christlicher Theologe’?”


50. I owe this point to a question raised by Lawrence Hatab at the recent Heidegger Circle meeting (May 2010). While Hatab would prefer to see in SZ an objective account of the being of human existence, thus upholding Heidegger’s claim to “rigorous science” (Husserl), the analysis presented here suggests that this claim is highly questionable. A destructive and critical reading of SZ as a theological text remains one of the most pressing outstanding tasks in philosophy.

51. Cf. Barash, Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning. Barash notes, “As Heidegger saw it, this eschatological sense of original Christian experience was falsified by later Christian tradition. Most fateful in this process was the interjection
of neo-Platonic ideas into the interpretation of original Christian experience. With this act, the primordial character of early Christian faith was abandoned, as God became the object of speculation with the aid of Platonic-Aristotelian ideas. In contrast, Luther’s distrust of Aristotle and Aristotelian scholasticism gives testimony to the Reformation attempt to return to an authentic Christian experience. Nonetheless, the sense of this attempt has been lost in the morass of more modern ideas [by ‘more modern ideas’ Heidegger means Kant and the neo-Kantians], seeking to integrate the phenomenon of religion within the objectifiable sphere of human meaning” (142).

52. As Yfantis further notes, “Heidegger sees the specific character of primordial Christian temporality [Zeitlichkeit] unmistakeably expressed in the passage where Paul expresses himself concerning the question of the time of the second coming of Christ (παρουσία). In his interpretation, he emphasizes that the Apostle not only does not make any statements as to the time and keeps the Thessalonians from indulging themselves in brooding and speculating about it, but rather, he sharply contrasts two fundamental attitudes to the event of the end of days: on the one hand, the fallen flight of the damned in the face of the constant insecurity of facticity into calculation and expectation according to one’s feelings and, on the other, the sober awaiting of the saved in the unfolding of Christian life. The day of the lord will not surprise them; in contrast, it will suddenly befall the others. Heidegger concludes from this that the question of the time of the παρουσία for Paul neither points to an objective time nor to objective outcomes, but rather, points to the individual unfolding of the life of the Christian and to the way he relates to the παρουσία. Therein lies the fundamental character of Christian temporality [Zeitlichkeit]” (Yfantis 2009: 90).

53. Cf. GA 61, 52. For a good overview of the distinction between Bezugs-, Gehalts-, and Vollzugssinn, see C. F. Gethmann’s “Philosophie als Vollzug und als Begriff. Die Indentitätsphilosophie des Lebens in der Vorlesung vom Wintersemester 1921/22 und ihr Verhältnis zu Sein und Zeit.”

54. Thus, what Heidegger wants to retrieve is, ultimately, not even a specifically Christian experience, even though he sees the life of the early Christians as paradigmatic for this experience. Rather, his project, although rooted in his interest in Luther and Paul, becomes genuinely philosophical at the moment when he disengages himself from all existentiell ideals and insists purely upon the Vollzugscharakter of life. But where theology was unable to live up to the truth of this experience, philosophy must undertake a destructive return to the original motivating sources: philosophy is essentially conceived of as retrieval, return, repetition.

55. Yfantis thus speaks of the way the “eschatological problem” as “the true center of primordial Christian life” necessarily leads to and together with “the accompanying problem of temporality [Zeitlichkeit]” constitutes “the genuine object of the Heideggerian interpretation” (Yfantis 2009: 90).

56. Literally, this-sideness or this-worldliness.

57. Both diesmalig and the nominal form Diesmaligkeit are Heideggerian neologisms. Heidegger seems to prefer them to the more traditional Diesseitigkeit because they so pregnantly express the temporal meaning of being ‘on this side.’ But it is also not insignificant that while Diesseitigkeit permits an opposite in the form of Jenseitigkeit (literally, “other-worldly”), there is no parallel opposite to Diesmaligkeit. For Diesmaligkeit, see
GA 64, 82 and 124. Also see SZ 248/230, where Heidegger underscores his emphatic commitment to a philosophy of *Diesseitigkeit*. Heidegger writes, “Nor is anything decided ontically about the ‘other worldly’ [*Jenseits*] and its possibility any more than about the ‘this-worldly’ [*Diesseits*]; as if norms and rules for behavior toward death should be proposed for ‘edification.’ But our analysis of death remains purely ‘this-worldly’ [*diesseitig*] in that it interprets the phenomenon solely with respect to the question of how it *enters into* actual [*jeweilig*] Da-sein as its possibility-of-being.”

58. Cf. SZ 18/16, where Heidegger claims that “on the basis of the question of the meaning of being which shall have been worked out, that—and in what way—the central range of problems of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly explained.

59. Heidegger’s critique of Aristotle is two-fold: a. Aristotle draws the interpretation of the θεῖον not from “the explication of an object that has become accessible in a religious fundamental experience [Grunderfahrung],” but rather, his θεῖον “is the expression for the highest character of being that results from an ontological radicalization of the idea of being moved.” GA 62, 389. b. The Aristotelian interpretation of a detached νοῦς as the θεῖον results in the popular understanding of transcendence, where “the transcendent … is the other-worldly being [das jenseitige Seiende]. Often one describes God as the transcendent.” GA 24, 424. Heidegger criticizes this understanding, arguing that, according to the “genuine ontological meaning of transcendence,” (GA 24, 425) it is human existence rather than some thing that is transcendent. When correctly understood, claims Heidegger, transcendence manifests as a characterization of the human’s own kind of being and not as a property of some divine entity.

60. “Dasin ist als In=der=Welt=sein ausdrücklich oder nicht, eigentlich bzw. uneigentlich, jeweils das meinige. Sowenig wie das Insein kann (die Bestimmtheit dieser) diese Jeweiligkeit am Dasein durchgestrichen werden. Dieses Seiende, das man selbst in seinem Sein jeweilig ist, bleibt als Sorgen beständig unterwegs zu -?”

61. GA 18, 285; cf. also 282–329.

62. Ibid., 287.

63. Ibid., 290.

64. Ibid., 294.

65. Ibid., 329.

66. Ibid.

67. See fn. 41, cf. also the remarks at SZ 3, 25, and 26 and in GA 19, 11.

68. See Gadamer’s introductory essay to the *Natorp Bericht*, “Heideggers ‘theologische’ Jugendschrift.” Besides the *Physics*, Heidegger mainly focuses on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, of which he says that “metaphysics is no less physics than the *Physics*.” On this, see n. 43.


71. Also see Phys. 8.3, 253a32–b2 (on the importance of κίνησις) and Phys. 2.1, 193a3–6 for his ridicule of Parmenides.

72. The Physics opens with the question of the principles (archai) and whether these are “one or more than one.” (Phys. 1.2, 184a15; Barnes trans.) Aristotle considers the views of Parmenides and Melissus from 184a15–185a12, which he criticizes. From 185a13 onward, he makes a new beginning, setting out from the premise: “We, on the other hand, must take for granted that the things that exist by nature are, either all or some of them, in motion—which is indeed made plain by induction.” The rest of book 1 is devoted to establishing that being is plural and the necessity of there being more than one principle. With Book 2, Aristotle finally leaves behind the Parmenidean thesis and focuses entirely on motion.

73. However, this interest in movement is also highly specific. For example, Aristotle is not interested in the movement of the soul but specifically in two kinds of movements associated with two regions of beings: those that are self-moving and those that whose principle of movement lies in something outside themselves. The distinction between φύσει ὄντα and τέχνει ὄντα is determinative for Aristotle’s inquiry. Accordingly, movement (κίνησις) is itself analysed according to two paradigmatic forms of change (μεταβολή): the becoming of living beings (γένεσις) and the being made of artifacts (ποίησις).


75. Heidegger ignores the specific kinds of natural motions Aristotle discusses (μεταβολή, γένεσις, φθορά, and so on) and focuses instead purely on the ontological and logical interpretation of κίνησις. This one-sided focus can be understood out of his interest in human finitude: whereas the problem of the multiplicity of being points to spatial finitude, the problem of movement points to temporal finitude. Indeed, the κίνησις problem only appears there where the problem of a finite movement (or, more specifically, the possibility of finite movement) appears in it. Put in another way, the entire κίνησις problem first becomes pressing for Heidegger once the finitude has been seen in its relation to temporality as a kind of “movement of human life.” Here is where his engagement with Aristotle begins—to show that this possibility both discloses itself and then closes itself off in Aristotle. This places us
under the double necessity of having to return to Aristotle but precisely in an “ab-
bauenden Rückgang.” GA 62, 368.

76. Cf. GA 62, 387. “Gefragt wird: wie ist das, was Aristoteles als Forschung charakterisiert, ausgänglich da? Wo wird es und als was vorfindlich? Wie geht Aristoteles darauf zu, und wie geht er damit um? Aristoteles nimmt aus dem faktischen Leben, aus der Weise seines eigenen umganglichen Sprechens die Rede von σοφώτερον —verstehender sein als—auf; d.h. er hält sich an die faktischen Dafürnahmen, in denen das Leben seine eigenen Umgangsweisen εμπειρία, τέχνη auslegt: οἴδαμεθα, ὑπολαμβάνομεν, νομίζομεν, ἠγούμεθα.”

77. However, λόγος itself can become a problem for personal salvation if understood as referring to the letter of the text (as is the case in Lutheranism and in the philology that develops out of it) than to a living λόγος. For issues relating to textuality, interpretation, and mortal singularity, see my article “Derrida, Textuality, and Sacrifice.”

78. I thank Joydeep Bagchee for directing my attention to this citation.

79. See Menn, Plato on God as Nous.

80. But νοεῖν is never deliberative reason in Parmenides and it is never pragmatic. In following Aristotle and thinking him to have correctly understood his predecessors Plato and Parmenides, Heidegger makes the same erroneous turn as Aristotle. Heidegger’s hermeneutic reading of the origins of the θεῖον as the highest being may apply to Aristotle, whose θεῖον as νόησις νοήσεως does indeed represent a radicalization of a specific logic rooted in praxis, but it is hard to see how it can apply to Parmenides or Plato, who radically separate νοεῖν from being that is characterized by κίνησις.


82. Gadamer is therefore mistaken when he argues contra Heidegger for a philosophical hermeneutics explicitly modeled upon φρόνησις.

83. In my view, Heidegger would be just as critical of neo-Heideggerian appropriations of φρόνησις as he was of existentialism since both make the mistake of not experiencing this twofoldness of being out of existence. For Heidegger, the philosophical task is radically opposed to all speculative and theoretical pronouncements about the being of human life; it is radically limited to the task of interpreting existence out of existence. He thus critiques existential thinkers for not thematizing this task, i.e., for not developing an adequate “hermeneutics of facticity” (or, as in SZ, an adequate “analytic of Dasein”) as the proper methodological approach to the task. Only this hermeneutic approach will give one proper access to human being’s finitude because hermeneutics is itself an index of finitude. That is why Heidegger insists that what existence is can never be inquired into directly and generally, as the inquiry itself must share in the essentially finite nature of this being. In contrast, existentialist philosophy tries to talk straightforward and improperly about existence, but this approach is shortcircuited inasmuch as all ways of speaking about existence are already historically governed.

84. For references to Wachse in, see GA 63, 7, 15, 18. The Christian resonances of the term are unmistakeable (cf. “der Tag des Herrn kommt wie ein Dieb in der Nacht”).

85. The notion of the uniqueness of human existence in Heidegger is ultimately also tied to one’s specific historical (and thus, implicitly, political) situation. Thus, whereas
singularization leads Oedipus out of society (he is unfit as husband, father, king). Heidegger draws particularity from culture, history, Volk. This is the political problem with Heidegger. This personal, existential, individuality, cut off from a νοῦς higher than the practical, is what forces Heidegger to participate in the Volk. On this one point, Schürmann provides an antidote. See his Heidegger on Being and Acting; cf. especially his remark “[My philosophy of] Anarchic Praxis: this is the topos where the man Martin Heidegger undoubtedly would not so much have liked to see himself led.” Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy, 293.

86. Recent scholarship in the Classics provides evidence of the existence of a sophisticated soteriological doctrine in Greek philosophical religion; for an overview of these issues as they pertain to Plato, see my article “Initiation into the Mysteries: Experience of the Irrational in Plato.” A forthcoming volume titled Greek Religion: Philosophy and Salvation features several articles on the topic.

87. Cf., for example, GA 60, where Heidegger rejects the interpretation of Paul’s Letter to the Romans as suggesting an ascent from the sensual to the transcendental. Citing Luther’s Heidelberger Disputation, Heidegger points out that this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Paul’s meaning, who in the first Letter to the Corinthians explicitly and unmistakably points out that the wisdom of the Greeks was destroyed through the cross.

88. Yfantis too notes Heidegger’s rejection of Greek rational soteriology, but he tends to accept Heidegger’s reason, namely, the covering up of existence’s Vollzugscharakter. In contrast, I have applied a “hermeneutics of suspicion” to Heidegger to think more radically about the reasons for this rejection. “In his interpretation, Heidegger discusses above all the fundamental existential characteristics of burden (molestia) and temptation (tentatio) in more detail. These do not represent an objective property of human life, which it could rid itself of through purification and askesis, for example. This was precisely the Greek view/the Christian view [insofar as it was] influenced by Greek [thought].” Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heideggers mit Aristoteles, 83.

89. Especially illuminating here is Heidegger’s engagement with Nietzsche, since Nietzsche already articulates a critique of Christianity before Heidegger. For Nietzsche, since everything repeats eternally, there is no individual being here in need of personal salvation. But in spite of his stinging critique of Christianity, Nietzsche holds on to the thought of Jeweiligkeit in the doctrine of the “eternal recurrence of the same.” Indeed, his critique of Christianity is precisely that it devalues existence here and now in favor of an afterlife. Heidegger, however, rejects Nietzsche’s solution. Indeed, when he turns to Nietzsche in the thirties, he insists upon the “will to power” as Nietzsche’s central thought, downplaying the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger tries to assimilate Nietzsche to a grander history of philosophy and, more specifically, to reinterpret his doctrines of “will to power” and “eternal recurrence of the same” as bespeaking the essentia and existentia of beings respectively. That is to say, Heidegger tries to shoehorn the Nietzschean determinations backward into the Aristotelian framework.

90. For reasons of space, I cannot present a full articulation of the Parmenidean/Platonic conception of time as cyclical here. Plato himself makes a distinction between the cyclicality of νοῦς and the linear time implied in διάνοια (my thanks to Arbogast
Schmitt for the hint); this aspect requires further consideration in a longer paper. See Konrad Gaiser, *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre* for a clarification of the issue. Proclus’s commentary on Plato’s *Parmenides* is a useful resource for understanding cyclical time in Plato, see esp. 1226.38–1227.14. An excellent and influential analysis of the concept of time in Plato and Aristotle down to Plotinus can be found in Werner Beierwaltes, *Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit.*

91. For an analysis of two temporalities in Parmenides (embodied by the speech on true being and on cosmology), see my book *Parmenides, Plato, and Mortal Philosophy: Return From Transcendence.*

92. The analysis of *Jeweiligkeit* in this paper demonstrates that the notion of life as *jeweilig* has been used to define philosophy dogmatically. My aim, however, is not to critique Heidegger but rather, to show that implicit in his notion of *Jeweiligkeit* is a notion of hidden transcendence: this unthought incipient transcendence is the insistence upon the *Jeweiligkeit* of the interpreter who is supposed to master his finitude through hermeneutics. In fact, to decide whether existence is *jeweilig* or not itself requires a transcendental perspective.


94. Although I cannot enter into a longer discussion here, it seems to me that Heidegger misunderstands Greek thought when he claims it covers over *Diesmaligkeit/Jeweiligkeit.* There are three ways to thematize *Diesmaligkeit:* a. As *erōs,* where I understand and value the other *qua* singular, b. In myth where the unique life of an individual acquires paradigmatic status (e.g., Achilles in Homer or Socrates in the Platonic dialogues), c. As a soteriological moment, where this individual being bound for death is concerned with its salvation. Since Heidegger does not have *erōs* and rejects myth, he can only thematize *Diesmaligkeit* as a soteriological moment. For a fuller discussion, see my forthcoming book *Parmenides, Plato, and Mortal Philosophy: Return from Transcendence.*

**Bibliography**

A note on translations: I have used the *Gesamtausgabe* editions almost throughout, but have relied on the Stambaugh edition of *Sein und Zeit* (cited as *SZ* followed by German and English pagination), the Rojcewicz/Schuwer edition of *Platon. Sophistes* (cited as *GA* 19 followed by German pagination), the Kisiel edition of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (cited as *GA* 20 followed by German pagination), the Rojcewicz edition of *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* (cited as *GA* 61 followed by German pagination), the Metcalf/Tanzer edition of *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* (cited as *GA* 18 followed by German pagination), and the van Buren edition of *Ontologie. Die Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (cited as *GA* 63 followed by German pagination). All other translations are mine. All references to the *Natorp Bericht* are to the text in *GA* 62 (also cited as such).
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