

Introduction

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Phenomenology and ancient Greek philosophy. The title of this book could give the impression that two separate topics are merely conjoined by the “and.” The title would then indicate a juxtaposition of phenomenology with another topic, ancient Greek philosophy, in the way titles such as *Art and Phenomenology*, *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*, *Phenomenology and Virtue Ethics* do.

This impression would be wrong. First, ancient Greek philosophers take pride of place in the dialogues initiated by many phenomenologists with various figures from the history of philosophy. Second, this is not just because phenomenological philosophers have tended to regard ancient Greek philosophy as the revered beginning of Western thought, reflection upon which may help illuminate any topic modern human beings wish to inquire into or give it a kind of historical dignity. It is first and foremost because, in the phenomenological tradition, ancient Greek philosophy, understood as the scientific attempt to understand the world, ourselves, and our place in the world, is regarded as one important origin of contemporary Western philosophy and science, although contemporary philosophy and science is also determined by a new ideal of philosophy that emerges in early modernity. Indeed, for most phenomenologists, Greek philosophy can be regarded as the roots supporting this new ideal—even if these roots are sometimes hidden from sight or forgotten.

The main rationale for confronting ancient Greek philosophy phenomenologically is accordingly the attempt to bring to light in its full radicality the phenomenon “philosophy.” Unearthing philosophy as it was originally understood by Greek thinkers may, according to many phenomenologists at least, help us understand what philosophy in the full sense of the word was, has been, and may be again, but also what it has become or even degenerated into in modern times, for instance positivism.

It is this way of approaching ancient Greek philosophy on which we concentrate in this book, in order that the volume may prove instructive both to people who have an interest in ancient Greek philosophy and wish to know more about the phenomenological approach to it as well as to those who work within phenomenology and wish to know more about the various approaches to ancient Greek philosophy characterizing the phenomenological movement. We have accordingly sought to make the introduction and the individual chapters accessible to non-experts, for instance by transliterating all Greek text, and confining quotations in languages other than English to footnotes and glosses. The reader can still expect to notice differences in emphasis across the different chapters. The first five of these concentrate on particular aspects of Husserl’s and Heidegger’s approach to ancient philosophy, topics of considerable debate within the scholarly community, and they tend to be more specialized and technical and to engage directly with current debates; the subsequent eight chapters concentrate on later phenomenologists, the particular approaches to ancient philosophy of whom are presumably less well known; many of these chapters serve as introductions to their respective approaches. The combined result is intended both to provide a general overview and to offer insights into the current state of research in the field. Cross-references allow the reader to follow up on elements that are touched upon in one part and more fully discussed in another, or in the introduction.

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The aim of the introduction is to give a brief overview of the way in which the phenomenological movement has attempted to bring the Greek roots of Western philosophy to light and to establish some basic themes of phenomenological approaches to ancient Greek philosophy. To that end, we have naturally given priority to Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976).

Husserl's main questions—how we should understand the correlation between our experience of the world and the world itself, and how we may overcome problems in modern philosophy resulting from naturalism, scientism, and positivism—remain central to the approach to ancient philosophy characteristic of most of the later thinkers who have called themselves phenomenologists. At the same time, all of these thinkers have been influenced, in one way or another, by Heidegger's lifelong engagement with ancient Greek philosophy, an engagement that remained indebted to Husserl even after Heidegger had stopped describing his own thinking as phenomenological. In short, the interpretations of ancient Greek philosophy characteristic of thinkers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Derrida, to mention just a few, would not have been possible without Husserl and Heidegger.

While the impact phenomenological approaches to various aspects of ancient thought have had on contemporary philosophy and culture would be difficult to overestimate, very few explorations of the connection between phenomenology and ancient thought exist that target the phenomenological tradition more generally. Numerous studies focus on a single author's relation to Plato, Aristotle, or the Greeks,¹ or on the relation between Heidegger and one of his heirs in their various appraisals of ancient thought,² but a more comprehensive account that looks at the connection between various phenomenological approaches to ancient philosophy has been lacking.³ This volume seeks to address this scholarly lacuna.

Individual chapters will offer detailed discussions of the various phenomenological approaches to ancient philosophy as well as elaborate on the themes set out in the introduction. The book's first chapter investigates Husserl's interpretation of the Stoic concept *lekton*. There follow four chapters on Heidegger's engagement with ancient thought that concentrate on important stages in the development of this engagement, from his earliest lectures on Aristotle to his late engagement with Presocratic philosophy and his entanglement with the Nazi regime. The remaining eight chapters then widen the perspective by tracing the interpretations of ancient Greek philosophy developed by both famous and less well-known phenomenologists, namely Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), Leo Strauss (1899–1973), Jakob Klein (1899–1978), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), Eugen Fink (1905–1975), Jan Patočka (1907–1977), Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004).

Husserl: The Origin of Scientific Philosophy and the Crisis of the European Sciences

The main impetus behind many phenomenologists' engagement with Greek philosophy is undoubtedly the thought of Martin Heidegger, in particular his early conception of a "destruction" or "de-construction" (*Destruktion*) of the history of ontology. With some right

¹ See, e.g., Partenie and Rockmore (2005), Hyland and Manoussakis (2006); Gonzalez (2009); Staehler (2010).

² See, e.g., Fuyarchuk (2010); Velkley (2011).

³ A partial exception is Zuckert (1996), who discusses the different interpretations of Plato developed by Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, and Derrida.

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Heidegger's conception of the Western philosophical tradition may be said to have dominated the reflections on tradition and history of later phenomenological thinkers. More particularly, his suggestion that the basic concepts of Western philosophy are derived from the way the Greeks experienced the world, but derived in such a way that our conceptuality tends to hide the experiences in which they were originally grounded (see, *SZ*, § 1 and § 6), came to exert a profound influence on thinkers as diverse as Leo Strauss, Eugen Fink, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Derrida. Greek philosophy is, according to this perspective, the half-hidden origin of our own tradition that, if unearthed in its original form, may help us diagnose ailments from which contemporary thought suffers—ailments that may even reveal themselves as stemming from Greek philosophy itself.

Edmund Husserl—the “founding father of phenomenology”—shared some of Heidegger's intuitions about the importance of Greek thought for contemporary philosophy, but he had a significantly different understanding of the way contemporary thought could be regarded as dependent on Greek philosophy. Husserl has commonly been regarded as a thoroughly ahistorical thinker. This, however, is in part because his more profound reflections on history and tradition are contained primarily in lectures and so-called *Forschungsmanuskripte* (research manuscripts) that were only published posthumously (see Ströcker 1992, 71). It is therefore hardly surprising that his understanding of ancient Greek thought and its significance for modern philosophy has had little direct impact so far on the phenomenological movement.⁴ Husserl's understanding of the connection between the Greek and the early modern conception of philosophy nevertheless constitutes an important background for his analysis of the breakdown of so-called Western rationality in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936/1954), an analysis that came to exercise a profound influence on later phenomenological interpretations of ancient Greek thought. A brief sketch of Husserl's view of ancient Greek philosophy is therefore in order.

For Husserl, as for the early Heidegger, Plato can be regarded as the founder of both Western philosophy and Western (or European) science. In a lecture course from 1923/4, published as *Erste Philosophie* in 1956, Husserl states that “Plato, or rather the incomparable twin-star *Socrates-Plato*,” are first among the “greatest beginners, path-breakers [*Wegeröffner*]” of philosophy (Hua VII, 7–8/7–8). Husserl saw Plato as the greatest beginner or path-breaker because he, on Husserl's view, laid the foundations for a rigorous ideal of science and philosophy while confronting what may be regarded as a first crisis in Western philosophy, initiated by the advent of sophistry. While the earliest Greek philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, being “directed naively toward the outer world,” had conducted their ontological speculations under the assumption that what is true in itself—beings, the beautiful, the good—can be grasped adequately by human reason, the sophists denied the legitimacy of this basic assumption (Hua VII, 8/8). In effect, Husserl claims, this meant denying an objective basis for practical life—both ethical and political—as well as the possibility of real cognition.

According to Husserl, Socrates reacted against the sophists' assault on the naïve faith in reason and rationality as a “practical reformer” (Hua VII, 9/9), a role he fulfilled by

⁴ In general, this subject has so far received little attention in the scholarly literature. A reader wishing to explore the subject in greater detail will find Husserl's *Erste Philosophie* a good starting point (see especially pages 3–63). In addition, one may wish to consult Hua-Mat IX (7–215), as well as the so-called “Vienna lecture” (Hua VI, 314–48/269–99). For a recent and detailed discussion of Husserl's interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy, see Majolino (2017). Contributions on more specific aspects are: Arnold (2017) on Husserl and Plato and De Santis (2019) on Husserl and Socrates.

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emphasizing the need for self-reflection and for arriving at “apodictic evidence” concerning pure and general essences (*Wesenheiten*) through the act of giving accounts (see Hua VII, 11/11)—in particular apodictic evidence concerning essences central to our ethical and political life. Socrates thereby emphasized that a rational method or, “in modern terms, ... an intuitive and a priori critique of Reason” is called for if sophistry is to be countered (Hua VII, 11/11), even if he was primarily concerned with practical matters. Plato in turn, building on this Socratic impulse, emphasized science in particular—Husserl seems to be thinking especially of *epistēmē* and of the famous distinction between *epistēmē* and *doxa* discussed for instance in Book Five of Plato’s *Republic* (see Hua VI, 10–11, 66/12–13, 65)—and thereby became a “reformer of the theory of science [*wissenschaftstheoretischen Reformator*]” (Hua VII, 9/9).

Important for Husserl’s understanding of Plato and of the ideal of science and scientific philosophy that Plato in Husserl’s eyes bequeathed to all of posterity is precisely Husserl’s view that Plato’s ideal of science remained Socratic at its core. Husserl thus regarded this ideal of science as grounded in a demand for self-knowledge and for giving rational accounts, both of what one claims to know and, perhaps most importantly, for one’s entire way of living (Hua VII, 11/11; for the demand that one must give an account of the way one lives, see Pl. *Lach.*, 187e6–188a2). Due to this Socratic orientation, Plato’s reform of science both helped science acquire a solid foundation and paved the way for the autonomous development of humanity (Hua VII, 9/9).

To Husserl, Plato, the “father of all genuine science” (Hua VII, 12/12),⁵ was therefore also the herald of “the idea of a new humanity and human culture” (Hua VII, 16/17). Indeed, by developing the motif of caring for the soul central to Socratic ethics into the ideal of caring for “the human being writ large,” that is, society, Plato also, according to Husserl, laid the ground for a “social ethics,” that is “the full and true ethics,” in so far as he was the founder of the “doctrine of social reason, of a truly rational human community [*wahrhaft vernünftigen Menschengemeinschaft*]” (Hua VII, 16/16).

But while Husserl regarded Plato, or Socrates and Plato, as first among the great originators of Western science and philosophy, they are not the only “great beginners” and “path-openers” in his view. He accords second place to Descartes (Hua VII, 7–8/8), whom he thereby comes to regard as a second founder of European (or Western) philosophy. Science and philosophy as we know it thus have a kind of double origin on Husserl’s account, one ancient Greek, the other distinctly modern, and Husserl accords Descartes second place among the pathbreakers and beginners precisely because he, according to Husserl, is the founder of modern philosophy proper (see Hua VII, 60–1/63–4; Hua VI, 18/21, 74–6/73–4).

Husserl’s account of modernity is highly complex, and he offers several reasons for regarding Descartes as its main founder; the most important of these in the present connection is Descartes’s response to the challenge of skepticism, a response that, in Husserl’s eyes, sets modern philosophy apart from its ancient forebears. As we have seen, Husserl regarded the fight against skepticism initiated by Socrates and Plato as the original impetus behind the ideal of scientific philosophy to which Husserl also subscribed. This fight invigorated the long tradition of ancient and medieval philosophy, from Aristotle onward (Hua VII, 12–4/13–5). But even though Plato confronted skepticism with rigor and in earnest,

⁵ In the “Introduction” to his *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl likewise claims that what we today, in an emphatic sense, call science first developed on the basis of “Plato’s establishing of logic” (Hua XVII, 5/1) and, more precisely, on the basis of his conception of a “pure” and “norm-formative” dialectic that made factual science possible and guided its practice (Hua XVII, 6/2).

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he was unable to defeat it once and for all and on its own territory, so to say, a fact to which the long tradition of ancient skepticism bears witness (Hua VII, 57/59).

This territory was the realm of subjectivity,⁶ a realm that ancient philosophy according to Husserl never properly investigated. The Socratic ideal of self-knowledge may of course be said to point in this direction, as Husserl also acknowledges (see Hua VII, 11/11), even if “know thyself” in the ancient sense, it may be argued, does not mean what it means to us—seek to understand yourself—but first and foremost “know that you are mortal,” that is, a human being, limited and fallible when compared to the gods (see Snell 1955, 245). Moreover, as Husserl correctly emphasizes, ancient philosophy was, by and large, directed at objectivity, at essences, and at the natural world (see Hua VII, 56/58 and Hua VI, 83/81)—if we disregard the tradition of ancient skepticism. What Husserl sees as a distinguishing mark setting Descartes’s conception of philosophy apart from earlier conceptions thereof is that Descartes, as the first philosopher, included subjectivity as a realm to be explored by scientific philosophy—for the same purpose that Plato initially developed his conception of philosophical and scientific method, to defeat radical skepticism (see Hua VII, 58–60/60–2). By pursuing to its end the *motif* of subjectivity, already latent in the skepticism associated with the sophists, Descartes sought an “apodictic ground” for all knowledge that could not be overturned by any skepticism; he thereby arrived at the *ego* that, while doubting the validity of everything it hitherto took for granted, discovers that it cannot doubt its own being (Hua VI, 78–80/76–8). Descartes thus initiated a new ideal of philosophy by discovering the realm of subjectivity and by bringing this realm into the heartland of philosophy (Hua VII, 60–1/63)—a discovery that according to Husserl’s teleological interpretation of the history of philosophy would eventually lead to a transcendental turn in philosophy, culminating in phenomenology.

From another perspective, however, Descartes’s ideal of philosophy may be regarded as a reinterpretation of the Platonic ideal of philosophy and, more generally, of the ancient ideal of science. As Husserl emphasizes, modern philosophy and modernity as such is initiated through a transformative revival of ancient philosophy and science, beginning in the renaissance, the goal of which is to ground human existence in reason and to make human life and the institutions supporting it truly rational (Hua VI, 5–6, 12/8, 14). This revival is guided by the ideas that humanity should “shape itself anew in freedom,” imitating its “admired model ... ancient humanity,” and that what is essential to ancient man (*das Wesentliche des antiken Menschen*) is the philosophical existence (Hua VI, 5/8). On Husserl’s account, Descartes, the founder of modern philosophy proper, is therefore both a radical new beginner and an invigorator of the tradition preceding him (see Hua VI, 18–19/21–22).

Finally, and crucially, Husserl argues that Descartes’s radical new beginning as he actually carried it out is far less radical and well-founded than Descartes thought (Hua VI, 80/79). For Descartes dogmatically accepted an ideal of science inherited from the ancients and reinterpreted by Galilei, that of geometry, which, through Galilei, came to be understood as the foundation of mathematical natural science (Hua I, 9, 25–6/7–8, 23–5; Hua VI, 18–19/21–22). To Husserl, the ideal of an axiomatically deduced science, as we find it expressed in Euclid, led Descartes to a misguided understanding of evidence and of subjectivity;⁷ the *ego* with its *cogitationes*, central to both Descartes and Husserl, is interpreted by Descartes

⁶ Cf. Protagoras’ claim that “man is the measure of all things” (DK 80 B1) and, especially, Gorgias’ claim that cognition of what is (*to on*), is impossible (DK 82 B3.77–82).

⁷ Husserl also suggests that Descartes’s reliance on the scholastic tradition is part of the explanation for his alleged misinterpretation of his own project (Hua I, 25/23–4).

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as a thinking substance, a bodiless soul, that for Descartes serves as a first secure axiom from which the rest of our knowledge concerning “the world” may be deduced, thereby securing true, evident knowledge (Hua VI, 80–3/78–81). But by interpreting the *ego*—or subjectivity as it reveals itself through the methodical doubt employed by Descartes—as a thinking substance, as a soul, Husserl argues, Descartes fails to see and explore the full enigma that subjectivity is and comes to limit the concepts of truth and knowledge dogmatically.

Moreover, and directly connected herewith, Descartes dogmatically accepts a specific interpretation of “the world,” of physical reality, namely the interpretation advanced by Galilei (Hua VI, 81/79). According to this interpretation, nature is not what we encounter through our senses, that is, living beings and natural objects revealing themselves to us in an environing world as possessing colors, tactile qualities, specific scents and so forth on their own—all of these are now regarded as mere secondary qualities. Nature is instead regarded simply as extended matter to whose true properties or primary qualities we have access only through mathematics (for Husserl’s discussion of Galilei, see Hua VI, § 9). Thus, Husserl argues, while the radical skepticism employed by Descartes to provide philosophy with a secure foundation potentially opened the way to the idealistic transcendental philosophy that Husserl endorsed, it served a wholly different goal for Descartes, that of supplying the new mathematical physics advanced by Galilei with a secure foundation (Hua VI, 81–82/79–80).

According to Husserl, the dogmatic and naïve assumptions guiding Descartes in his philosophical reinterpretation of ancient philosophy and science ultimately terminates in the modern, positivistic ideal of science, an ideal that leads to a radical crisis in our faith in reason, as well as in our faith in humanity and in the ability of philosophy to answer the most fundamental questions human beings pose to themselves as rational beings (see Hua VI, 3–5/5–7). For these important questions, central to what in modernity came to be called metaphysics, are excluded from the realm of science on account of the specific ideal of objectivity and scientific rigor guiding Descartes. Reason, hailed at the beginning of modernity as the light that would lead us to true humanity, therefore finally degenerates into mere instrumental reason. Modern philosophy, initiated as a grand rebirth of the ancient ideal of philosophy as mankind’s highest vocation, thus paradoxically ends in the view that science cannot tell us anything about the meaning of our existence and that philosophy is no more than a non-scientific expression of subjective world-views. In fact, the questions concerning meaning with which traditional philosophy was concerned are senseless from the viewpoint of positivism, or from that of “merely fact-minded sciences” (*bloße Tatsachenwissenschaften*) that generate “merely fact-minded people” (*bloße Tatsachenmenschen*) (Hua VI, 4/6).

It is the emergence of this fundamental crisis in science and in our lives, and the motifs latent in the founding act of modern philosophy that generates it, that Husserl undertakes to analyze in his last, unfinished work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. This analysis is carried out through a complex historical investigation that seeks to clarify the present situation of crisis and breakdown by moving back and forth (*im “Zickzack” vor- und zurückgehen*) (Hua VI, 59/58), between the present situation of breakdown and the earlier origins of modern philosophy. While alluding to the ancient ideal of philosophy on several occasions, Husserl’s analysis is on the whole devoted to modern philosophy; yet his general claims about the problems latent in the thought of Descartes, the “founding genius of all modern philosophy” (Hua VI, 75/73), came to have a profound

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influence on later phenomenologists who attempted to come to grips with the difference between the ancient and the modern conception of philosophy. At the same time, these attempts were also fundamentally shaped by Heidegger's radical reinterpretation of ancient Greek philosophy.

Heidegger: Greek Origins and the Destruction of the History of Ontology

While it is true to say that Husserl from the beginning of his philosophical career was interested in, and studied, ancient Greek philosophy, his preoccupation with Greek philosophy cannot be said to form an essential part of his thought as such. However, when it comes to the thought of his one-time assistant Martin Heidegger and the question concerning "the meaning of being" central to it, it is no exaggeration to claim that it was, from beginning to end, explicitly, albeit not exclusively, focused on Greek philosophy and its significance for the way we understand ourselves and the world in which we live. Moreover, Heidegger's life-long engagement with Greek philosophy and what he regarded as the average conception of being guiding it (see GA 24, 30/22), that is, being as "presence" (*Anwesenheit*), have influenced the manner in which most later phenomenologists have approached Greek philosophy in one way or another.

In *Being and Time*, his *magnum opus*, Heidegger argues that a reawakening of the question concerning being, that is, the question what it means for something, anything, to be, calls for two things: an analysis of ourselves, as questioning beings, and a destruction of the history of ontology, in particular of the "traditional [*überlieferte*] content of ancient ontology" (SZ, 22/44).

Heidegger undertakes to analyze human beings, or our mode of being, under the heading of an "ontological" or "existential analytic of Dasein," a project that occupies the part of *Being and Time* that saw publication (Part One, Division One and Two).⁸ The destruction of the history of ontology, however, was mainly to be carried out in the second, and never completed, part of that work (see SZ, 39–40/63–4). Still, various aspects of Heidegger's "destructive" approach to the history of ontology are contained in the published parts of the work (see, e.g., SZ, 89–101/123–34) and it also animates Heidegger's analysis of Dasein, a fact that becomes especially clear if one studies his lecture courses on Greek philosophy given in and around the time he worked on what eventually became *Being and Time*.

To approach Heidegger's dialogue with Greek thought, it is helpful to begin by noting that "being" (*Sein*) does not designate a being (*ein Seiendes*; often translated "entity" to avoid confusion with *Sein*), a "something" (SZ, 4/23). Instead Heidegger, in accordance with his phenomenological outlook, "verbalizes" being in the sense that the term "being" designates a *mode* or *way* of being (*Seinsweise*) of a particular being. This means that the being of an entity, to Heidegger, does not in and of itself stand in contrast with the way that entity appears to us, as we may be accustomed to think in accordance with the standard opposition between "appearance" and "reality" (see Heidegger's discussion of *phainomenon* in SZ, 28–31/51–5; it is worth comparing this discussion with Husserl's remarks on *phainomenon* in Hua II, 14). The being of something should rather be understood as a

⁸ "Dasein" was the term Heidegger used in this period to designate the human being with respect to its being, particularly in order to circumvent or bracket the content taken for granted in the traditional conception of "the human being," the *anthrōpos*. See below, as well as ch. 2 in this volume for further discussion of Heidegger and the question of "anthropology."

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manner of being where an entity reveals itself to us as it is in itself. A hammer, for instance, reveals itself to us as what it is, that is, its being comes to light, when we use it for hammering (for Heidegger's famous analysis of the hammer, see SZ, §§ 15–18).⁹

This manifestation of being, where an entity comes to light in its being and as what it is, or comes to light “in the very way it shows itself from itself” (*so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt*), as Heidegger puts it (SZ, 34/58), depends—at least according to the early Heidegger—on human beings' capacity to understand being, both the being of other entities, their own being, and being in general (see SZ, 12–13/33–4). To Heidegger, human beings are entities that are characterized by their ability to understand being, in so far as they are entities to whom the being of entities in general may come to light or reveal itself. It is this aspect of human beings that Heidegger wishes to highlight with the term *Dasein*,¹⁰ a mode of being characterizing a being or entity (me) whose being (*Sein*) can be characterized in terms of an open “there” (*Da*) in which the being of entities may come to light (SZ, 132/170–1).

This basic understanding of the being of entities that characterizes our manner of being is also what enables us to engage in ontology and science: if we did not somehow grasp that numbers have a mode of being different from that of plants, for instance, the scientific disciplines of mathematics and biology would not have been possible (SZ, 9–11, 13/29–31, 33). Our mode of being “open” (*erschlossen*) to being, of enabling entities to come to light in their being, entails the ability to raise questions concerning the being of the entities we encounter in the world; and as soon as we engage in such questions explicitly, we have begun, in a rudimentary form, to engage in ontology. This ability to raise questions about being, or to ask what different entities *are* in order to reach clarity about them—the central concern of philosophy at least since Socrates, one may argue—characterizes our mode being as such, according to Heidegger.

Nevertheless, we normally, or for the most part, understand the being of entities in an inexplicit manner only. When I open the door, for instance, I do not think about the way the door handle enables me to do so, although I have, in fact, already seen or interpreted the door handle as a “something,” the being of which consists in enabling me to open this door, so that I can enter this store and buy today's newspaper, in order to *read* it, which is what people do. Likewise, I do not need to ponder what nature is in order to understand or see a living animal as being somehow natural, although the fact that I see the animal as a living thing (and not, say, an inanimate object) presupposes that I in some way understand what nature is. It does not, however, presuppose my ability to give an explicit, and adequate, account of it, or my having ever inquired systematically into the concept of nature. Moreover, Heidegger regards the inherited *concepts* of both “nature” and “life” to be almost as problematic as that of the human being, which is not to say that he considers them worthless, or superfluous, either for the “unreflective” practical orientation or for the purpose of ontology. On the other hand, their inadequacy may precisely be an obstacle not only for the philosopher or scientist, but also for “non-theoretical” everyday existence.

⁹ This “verbal” account of being is what motivates Heidegger to use such locutions as “The world worlds” (*Die Welt weltet*) (GA 9, 164/126) and “Language speaks” (*Die Sprache spricht*) (GA 12, 10/190). In his later work, Heidegger also pinpoints this verbal character of being by using the verbal expression “*wes*” (formed from “*Wesen*”, and translated with as “to presence” in the English translation of *Die Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*) to describe the being of something, for instance a work of art (see, e.g., GA 5, 2/2).

¹⁰ *Dasein* is therefore not another name for human beings as such, for our subjectivity or the like, but a term designating us precisely as entities characterized by a structural relation to, or openness toward, being in general, see SZ (12–13/10–11).

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Heidegger emphasizes this implicit or unthematized understanding of being guiding our everyday life by claiming that Dasein is “pre-ontological” (SZ, 12/32); we “always already” live our lives in accordance with an implicit understanding of the modes of being characterizing different entities, an implicit understanding that we may make explicit both by pursuing ontological inquiries into entities different from ourselves and by investigating what it means to, or what enables us to, conduct such enquiries in the first place. This also means that raising the question concerning being has a performative aspect in Heidegger: by raising this question, explicitly, and *as a question for us*, Heidegger seeks to bring our own mode of being as Dasein to light for us, to help our own mode of being become present to us “in the very way it shows itself from itself.”

However, since the basic understanding of being characterizing our manner of being is implicit, something we do not ordinarily thematize, the way a pair of glasses is mostly “concealed” to, or unthematized by, its user (see SZ, 15–6, 107/36–7, 141), a phenomenological redirection of attention is called for if we are to reach a full understanding of our manner of being and, through this, an adequate understanding of being in general (SZ, 31, 35–7/54–5, 59–62). This state of affairs explains Heidegger’s claim that, in order to raise the question concerning being properly, an explicit ontological analysis of our own manner of being, of Da-sein, is called for.

This analysis, to which the greater part of *Being and Time* is devoted, could, with certain qualifications, be regarded as a critique of reason in the Kantian sense of the expression, or as a transcendental investigation of the conditions of possibility for ontology. For Heidegger, however, such an investigation cannot be carried out in isolation from an inquiry into the way the philosophical tradition has formed our general or everyday understanding of being. Put differently, Heidegger rejects a rigid distinction between systematic and historical inquiries that many philosophers now take for granted, and he does so for systematic reasons. For while human beings *qua* Dasein are “hermeneutical” beings, capable of interpreting the being of entities, Heidegger argues that certain prior interpretations of being carried out by previous Dasein come to determine interpretations carried out by later Dasein, namely those interpretations that are handed over to us as tradition. Heidegger pinpoints this state of affairs by describing Dasein as determined through and through by historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*). Heidegger’s concept of historicity is complex, and controversial, but for our purposes it may be reasonably indicated by the sufficiently enigmatic statement that Dasein is formed by its prior history in such a way that it “is as it already was, and it is ‘what’ it already was” (SZ, 19–20/41; see also div. II, ch. 5).¹¹

To understand the full significance of this claim, we need to look at another aspect of Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein as this is unfolded in *Being and Time*, namely the tendency of Dasein to “fall” or misinterpret its own being. While Heidegger claims that Dasein is basically open to, and may on the basis of this openness articulate an understanding of, the being of various beings or entities, he also argues that it has a basic tendency to understand its own mode of being, as well as the mode of being of all entities different from it, in accordance with *one* mode of being, the mode he terms “being present at hand” (*Vorhandensein*) (SZ, 42/67; Heidegger also uses the expressions *ein Vorhandenes* and *Vorhandenheit*). The expression “being present at hand” may be regarded as Heidegger’s somewhat rough,

¹¹ Heidegger’s claim about the basic historicity of Dasein has a clear parallel in the late Husserl’s discussions of history, tradition, and sedimentation, especially as these thoughts come to expression in the *Crisis* and manuscripts related to it.

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interpretative translation¹² of the traditional term substance (see *SZ*, 42/67 and 70–1/99–101), itself an interpretative translation of Aristotle’s term *ousia*. According to Heidegger, “the way the world is understood,” or perhaps more precisely, the way we are used to think of the entities we encounter in the world, as a sum of objectively present beings or substances, “is reflected back ontologically upon the way in which Dasein itself gets interpreted” (*SZ*, 15–6/36–7). In other words, we tend to think of the world as a totality of entities, characterized ontologically by the fact that they exist objectively, as realities or substances, and because we are first and foremost concerned with such “objectivities” when we are engaged in science, we also tend to understand ourselves (and indeed all entities that may be said to be) as objectivities among other objectivities, characterized by the same mode of being. Thus, while Dasein is “closest” to us in the sense that “we *are* it, each of us,” as Heidegger puts it, it is “in spite of this, or rather for just this reason, ... ontologically that which is farthest away” (*SZ*, 15/36; translation modified). Because our mode of being enables us to understand and inquire into the being of other entities, and because we tend to understand that being as “present at hand,” we tend to lose sight of ourselves while inquiring into them.

This problem, however, is aggravated by a closely related tendency we have of “lapsing” into the philosophical and scientific tradition in which we are brought up, a “tradition” that each of us may have grasped “more or less explicitly,” but which generally “deprives Dasein of its own leadership in questioning and choosing” (*SZ*, 21/42; translation modified). This point can be illustrated as follows: most of us, most of the time, take terms such as “substance,” “essence,” “subjective,” “potential,” “inner life” and the like for granted, without reflecting on the philosophical problems and inquires that gave rise to them, and without realizing that they are the result of such inquiries and of philosophical interpretation (which is not to say that they are figments of philosophical imagination). Moreover, in a sense almost all of us, no matter what culture we may come from, have been brought up in the Greek-Roman tradition of philosophy and science employing these terms, both because the entire technological edifice supporting modern mass societies depends on it and also, perhaps even more importantly, because the basic conceptuality of this tradition dominates all aspects of our social life, from global advertisement and pop-songs to newspaper articles and popular science programs. Dasein, while potentially free to interpret the being of entities that come to light for it, can never begin such interpretation from scratch, the interpretation is always guided, in one way or another, by the terminology it finds at its disposal, and by the corresponding understanding that this terminology articulates.

Thus, the general tendency to think of the world as a totality of objectively existing entities is not only a result of a “natural” tendency human beings have to interpret the world in this way, it is also because a philosophical and scientific tradition stretching back at least to Aristotle has taught us to, and continues to teach us to, think in this way. Through its basic conceptuality the philosophical-scientific tradition in which we are brought up pass on to us answers philosophers have given to questions they have posed about the world and ourselves; but in doing so, Heidegger argues, it generally conceals the questions and experiences that gave rise to this conceptuality (*SZ*, 21/42; see also *GA* 17, 10–11/7). The basic terms that we for the most part tend to take for granted become commonplaces, mere

¹² Many of the central terms used by Heidegger in *Being and Time* are perhaps best read as interpretive translations of various terms from the philosophical tradition, especially terms found in Aristotle. For a discussion of the way Heidegger translates philosophical terms through philosophical interpretation, and interprets them philosophically through translation, see ch. 3 in this volume, esp. pp. xxx.

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opinions floating about in public discourse (or, in Platonic terms, generally accepted *doxai*) that tend to determine in advance the way we understand ourselves and the world (see especially SZ, 167–80/211–24).

Our tendency to understand our own mode of being in accordance with the mode of being termed “presence at hand” and our tendency to “lapse” into our tradition are, then, two sides of the same coin. The tradition into which we tend to “lapse” has its origin in Greek ontology (in particular the Aristotelian version), and this ontology, according to Heidegger, is born out of a basic tendency to understand worldly beings, including ourselves, in accordance with presence and objectivity (SZ, 2–3, 21–2, 25, 44/22, 43, 46–7, 70). The Greek (or Aristotelian) ontology is, of course, reinterpreted and transformed many times in the course of the Western tradition, as Heidegger also emphasizes, most importantly perhaps in the middle ages and in early modernity (see, e.g., SZ, 23–6/44–9). But precisely because this ontology is reinterpreted and transformed in the middle ages, rather than rejected without exerting any influence, and because the ontology of the middle ages is, according to Heidegger, the hidden foundation of Descartes’s ontology (see, e.g., SZ, 25, 92–5/46–7, 125–7), the basic understanding of being characteristic of Greek thought is still “operational” in the later tradition building on it. Ancient ontology is thus the origin of the primacy of the mode of being called “presence at hand” and continues to cement this primacy because it constitutes the foundation upon which our later tradition is grounded, a tradition that at the same time “blocks our access to those primordial ‘sources’ from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn” (SZ, 21–2/43–4).¹³

Heidegger’s claims about the way Greek ontology determines our general attitude toward the “worldly” entities and ourselves, however, are not meant as one-sided criticism of Greek philosophy as such. According to Heidegger, the (Greek) conceptuality we mostly take for granted was originally, at least in part, drawn from experiences in a genuine manner (SZ, 21/44), that is, they express genuine experiences and contain legitimacy in their own right, if properly understood; the problem Heidegger is pointing to is that the tradition founded on Greek philosophy “uproots” the Greek ontology by hiding the sources from which it originally flowed and, in doing so, bars the way to a “positive return to the past,” a “productive appropriation” of it (SZ, 21; our translation). It is precisely in order to facilitate such a return that Heidegger calls for a destruction of the history of ontology, of our tradition. This destruction aims to bring to light “those primordial experiences in which the first, and still direction-giving, determinations of Being were achieved” (SZ, 22/44; translation modified) and its aim is, as Heidegger emphasizes, positive (SZ, 23/44). The destruction is meant to “destroy” the tradition in the sense of “dissolving the concealments” that the tradition produces (SZ, 22/44) in much the same way that one may demolish a house in order to investigate the foundation upon which it rests (the Latin verb *destruere* means primarily to “demolish”; uncompounded *struere* means “to spread” or “lay,” whence also “to build”; cf. “construct”; it is also this aspect of Heidegger’s thought on which Jacques Derrida later leans when introducing the term *de-construction*).

This means that, while it is in certain respects correct to characterize *Being and Time* as a transcendental inquiry that investigates the conditions of possibility of ontology by laying bare the openness to being that all ontology presupposes, it is necessary to emphasize that this inquiry is at the same time a genealogical inquiry, an inquiry that seeks to verify

¹³ For more information on how the notion of presence-at-hand can be traced back to Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle’s ontology, see ch. 2, pp. xxx, and ch. 3., pp. xxx, in this volume.

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(*nachweisen*) “the origin of our basic ontological concepts by an investigation in which their ‘birth certificate’ is displayed” (SZ, 22/44).

It was this genealogical project that guided Heidegger in the early twenties in a number of lectures on Aristotle in particular, which have had a profound impact on thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Jacob Klein, Eugen Fink, and Herbert Marcuse, to mention just a few; and it was this project that evolved into the later Heidegger’s reflections on the history of being, nihilism, and the “forgetting of being,” and that led him, in one sense at least, to abandon his earlier project of providing an analysis of Dasein in a quasi-transcendental style. ***

While there are significant differences between Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger’s “hermeneutical” phenomenology, there is also a deep connection between the late Husserl’s reflections on tradition and the crisis of European science and the later Heidegger’s concern with tradition, nihilism, and the so-called forgetting of being. Both philosophers share a view of so-called Western philosophy according to which certain foundational acts, or interpretations of the world and being, are regarded as having a decisive role for the way the later tradition unfolds, and according to which a return to, or a genealogical inquiry into, these decisive points in history is seen as a possible way of reaching clarity about our present situation, of understanding the problems we face, and, perhaps, of finding solutions to these problems in part by considering how things would be if certain aspects of these founding acts had been emphasized differently in the later tradition.

It is this general attitude to the history of philosophy, more than any particular interpretation of Greek philosophy provided by Husserl and Heidegger, that may be said to unite the various phenomenological approaches to Greek philosophy. It is this way of understanding the importance of the history of philosophy, and of continuing to reflect on the Greek origin of Western philosophy, on which the present volume will concentrate.

Overview of chapters

Following this guiding idea, it is natural that the book continues with a closer look at specific ways in which these two early phenomenologists engaged with the ancient tradition. The first five chapters of the book are accordingly devoted to Husserl and Heidegger.

Chapter **one** begins from the circumstance that Husserl, in contrast to most other phenomenologists, praises the Stoics for their acuity and originality, and that Jean-Paul Sartre and Gilles Deleuze, for different reasons and without specific reference to Husserl’s discussions of the Stoics, suggest that Husserl’s concept of *noema* parallels various aspects of Stoic philosophy, in particular its doctrine of the *lekton*. In the first part of the chapter, Claudio Majolino discusses to what extent Sartre and Deleuze manage to demonstrate that Husserl’s concept of *noema* reproduces central features of the Stoic *lekton* as well as the various assumptions underlying their interpretations. The second part discusses Husserl’s explicit account of the *lekton* and its real significance for the broad project of a formal, “apophantic” logic correlated to a formal ontology. The chapter sheds light on an often neglected aspect of the relationship between phenomenology and ancient philosophy, the extent of phenomenology’s Stoic lineage, and helps identify some still unexploited conceptual resources in Husserl’s phenomenology.

In chapter **two**, Thomas Schwarz Wentzer investigates the early Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle’s conception of human beings. The main aim of this interpretation, Wentzer argues, is to address a problem pertaining to philosophical anthropology, namely that the manner in which the central question of anthropology is

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posed—“What is man?”, “What are human beings?”—stands in the way of an adequate treatment of the object of anthropology, human beings. For if, when asking what it means to *be* for a human being, one asks about “the essence of man” or “human nature,” the *manner* of being characteristic of human beings is lost sight of before the inquiry is even begun. In contrast, Wentzer argues, Heidegger suggests that the central concern of philosophical anthropology has to be the “how” of human existence. This line of reasoning leads Heidegger to a conception of hermeneutics as the proper method for a philosophy whose concern is what it means to be human, a conception of philosophical method that Heidegger finds foreshadowed in Aristotle, as he links together Aristotle’s biological anthropology (in *De Anima*) and his political anthropology (in *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Politics*). Wentzer argues that this way of reading Aristotle explains why Heidegger’s initial engagement with Greek philosophy is mainly devoted to interpreting Aristotle and why this interpretation significantly influences the development of Heidegger’s own thought.

Heidegger’s early encounter with Aristotle is explored in further detail in chapter **three**, where Pål Rykkja Glibert inquires into Heidegger’s readings of central concepts in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in the 1920s, with a particular focus upon the question how the specifically “ethical content” of these concepts fares in the hands of Heidegger. *Phronēsis* (practical wisdom) and *prohairesis* (resolve) provide the guiding thread; Heidegger’s treatment of the former has been heavily debated by scholars of his thought, while his treatment of the latter, a concept that has been less discussed in Aristotelian scholarship as well, has received less attention. Gilbert contends that understanding Heidegger’s treatment of *prohairesis* is essential to a full appreciation of his interpretation of both *phronēsis* and of Aristotle’s concept of ethical virtue / virtue of character. Heidegger’s interpretation of the *Ethics* has been repeatedly charged with representing an “ontologisation” responsible for more or less sinister results. Gilbert argues that this is largely mistaken, while bringing into relief important ways in which Heidegger departs from traditional interpretations of specific points. xxx concludes that his reading constitutes both a rewarding perspective from which to view Aristotle’s ethical theory and a privileged path toward an understanding of Heidegger’s own conception of authenticity.

Chapter **four** reconsiders the hotly debated issue of Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s concept of truth, with particular emphasis on the lecture course *On the Essence of Truth* from 1931/2 and its detailed analysis of the Allegory of the Cave. Charlotta Weigelt argues that Heidegger’s interpretation of this aspect of Plato must be seen in the light of his own attempt to reconsider the conception of truth he had developed in *Being and Time*. This reconsideration ultimately challenges the very framework of transcendental phenomenology that Heidegger, on Weigelt’s reading, endorsed in that work. The problem of appearance and truth that Heidegger discerns at the center of the allegory is thus revealed as a problem for phenomenology as well: should the truth *in* appearance be subordinated to the truth *of* appearance, being as such the final objective for the philosopher’s intellectual struggle?

Chapter **five** takes as its point of departure Heidegger’s exploration of the Greek concept of *moira* in his lecture course on Parmenides from 1942/3. Hans Ruin argues that the lecture course forms an important stage in Heidegger’s life-long attempt to think about destiny, fate, and “the destinal,” and that it demonstrates that Heidegger’s thoughts on destiny also form part of his attempt to articulate what he also terms “the ontological difference.” Ruin further argues that Heidegger’s thoughts on “the destinal” help illuminate the way in which the Greeks become a topic in and for Heidegger himself. For *moira* is not simply a term taken from Parmenides and the Greek tradition. Translated as “the destinal,” it also designates the

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way in which Heidegger invites us to think of our relation to the Greek tradition, a tradition that is bequeathed to us as destiny and whose thinkers point to future possibilities in our own thinking. The chapter explores the problem of fate and destiny as a thread that may guide us to the center of Heidegger's way of articulating the mode in which the Greek origin of our tradition manifests itself to contemporary thought, a theme central for Heidegger beginning with *Being and Time* and extending into his late work. The concepts of fate and destiny, Ruin also argues, are intimately connected to Heidegger's political thought as expressed not least in his Rectoral Address from 1933. As such they concern the problem of politics and authority in Heidegger and have a bearing on his thoughts about origin and the way these thoughts develop in the course of his work. The chapter ends by asking whether Heidegger's thinking about fate is closely tied to his National Socialist sympathies, or whether it may have a broader significance relevant also to a modern, globalized world-view.

Chapters six to nine are devoted to Gadamer, Strauss, Klein, and Arendt, four thinkers who in various ways may be said to respond to Husserl's analysis of the crisis in Western science and to Heidegger's suggestion that a number of problems haunting contemporary philosophy result from the Greek interpretation of being.

In chapter **six**, Morten S. Thaning reads Gadamer's interpretation of Platonic dialectic as a double response aimed at answering the Aristotelian critique of Plato's conception of forms as well as the later Heidegger's claim that Plato's philosophy initiates the "forgetting of Being" allegedly characterizing the Western metaphysical tradition. The chapter sets out from Gadamer's central claim that Plato's dialogues must be read as dramatic depictions of the Socratic practice of philosophy and argues that a major aim of Gadamer is to demonstrate that this way of looking at Plato helps us see *responsibility* as the central concern in Plato's Socratic conception of philosophy. The main part of the chapter then seeks to clarify Gadamer's heterodox interpretation of dialectic. Thaning argues that taking the Socratic avowal of ignorance sincerely constitutes the core of Gadamer's interpretation and that this leads Gadamer to deny that dialectic can be understood in terms of expert (moral) knowledge. The chapter further seeks to illustrate how Gadamer's interpretation of a number of core descriptions of dialectic in Plato's dialogues, as well as the central description of the form or idea of the Good in Plato's *Republic*, convincingly and consistently points to a conception of dialectic according to which it is both the capacity to conduct a dialogue and an expression of human life as such.

Jacob Klein's philosophical reinterpretation of Platonic dialectic and his diagnosis of modernity as a second Platonic "cave," alienating us from ourselves and the world, is the focus of chapter **seven**. Here Jens Kristian Larsen seeks to circumscribe characteristic features of Klein's view of the difference between ancient and modern science and philosophy by comparing his understanding of modernity with those of Martin Heidegger and Leo Strauss. The "return to ancient philosophy" associated with Klein and Strauss, Larsen argues, must be seen as critical responses to Heidegger's "destructive" reading of Greek philosophy. Like Strauss, Klein agrees with Husserl and Heidegger that the modern conception of rationality is deeply flawed and that the twentieth century is a century of crisis revealing fundamental deficiencies in the foundations of modernity. And like Strauss and Heidegger, Klein argues that this crisis calls for a return to the Greek origins of the Western tradition. But in contrast to Heidegger, who came to see this crisis as the culmination of Western metaphysics, Klein argues that it results from a radical transformation in the way

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concepts are understood. This diagnosis suggests a close connection between Klein and Strauss, a connection that the chapter explores: from their perspective, ancient philosophy offers a vantage point from which we may achieve a perspective on modernity that can help us overcome central prejudices dominating modern capitalist societies.

Klein's analysis of ancient philosophy is explored in further detail in chapter **eight**. Here Burt Hopkins sets out from Husserl's conception of intentionality, in particular from the moment of "empty intentions" in intentionality's normative reference to intuitive fulfillment. The schema of pure concepts separated from intuition sedimented in this moment, Hopkins argues, is constitutive of symbolic cognition in Cartesian science. Fully developed, this schema originates the notion of a formal ontology, whose formal object—the "something in general"—is materially indeterminate in a way that no being in ancient Greek ontology ever was. Klein's interpretation of ancient science and philosophy, Hopkins argues, takes a cue from this difference between ancient Greek ontology and Cartesian science, and the awareness of this difference leads him to reject Heidegger's reliance on Husserlian intentionality when interpreting Plato and Aristotle. Three methodological protocols for interpreting ancient philosophy may be elicited from Klein's approach that may help us overcome the historical bias inseparable from Husserl's concept of intentionality. One, the privilege of the logical structure of the Aristotelian predication behind Husserl's concept of categorial intentionality must be rejected when it comes to interpreting the whole-part structures characterizing intelligible units in ancient Greek mathematical thought and Plato's ontology. Two, Husserlian intentionality should not be used as the guiding clue for interpreting ancient Greek ontology. Three, characterizing the formality of ancient Greek ontology in terms of formal ontology is illegitimate. A specimen of phenomenological interpretation, guided by these protocols, is presented: Plato's eidetic account of the intelligibility proper to the three kinds of eidetic unity and their opposites in *Sophist*, 253d.

In chapter **nine**, Jussi Backman approaches Hannah Arendt's readings of ancient philosophy by setting out from her perspective on the intellectual, political, and moral crisis characterizing Western societies in the twentieth century, a crisis to which the rise of totalitarianism bears witness. To Arendt, the political catastrophes haunting the twentieth century have roots in a tradition of political philosophy reaching back to the Greek beginnings of philosophy. Two principal features of Arendt's exchange with the ancients are highlighted. The first is her account, in *The Human Condition* (1958), of the profound transformation of the Greek perceptions of political life initiated by Plato, the founder of the Western tradition of political philosophy; this transformation, according to Arendt, leads to an instrumentalization of politics as a means toward a higher end. The second feature is Arendt's distinction, in her unfinished *Life of the Mind* (1977–8), between three different points of departure for thinking discovered by ancient philosophy—wonder, fear, and conscience—and three different outcomes of thinking—contemplation, willing, and judging. Backman argues that what connects these two interpretations of ancient philosophy is an attempt to rethink and rearticulate the complex relationship between thinking and action, between the reflective *vita contemplativa* and the world-oriented *vita activa*.

Chapter ten and eleven focus on Eugen Fink and Jan Patočka, respectively, both of whom developed original interpretations of central features of ancient philosophy in confrontation with Husserl and Heidegger.

In chapter **ten**, Vigdis Songe-Møller approaches Eugen Fink's interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy by examining the seminar on the fragments of Heraclitus that Fink

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conducted together with Martin Heidegger. The chapter pursues one question that permeates the dialogue between Eugen Fink and Martin Heidegger during this seminar: what is the relation between *hen*, one, and *ta panta*, all things, in Heraclitus' thinking? According to Fink, this relation belongs to Heraclitus' *cosmology*. Cosmology is also a concept central to Fink's own thought, which he had developed in critical confrontation with Husserl's and Heidegger's theories of "world." In order to bring central features of Fink's understanding of Heraclitus to light, his interpretation of *hen*, *ta panta*, and other key terms in Heraclitus' cosmology are critically analyzed, also on the basis of Fink's own cosmology, which at times is hard to distinguish from that of Heraclitus.

Patočka's interpretation of Plato's conception of the soul is central to chapter **eleven**. Here Filip Karfík explores Patočka's suggestions that the self-moving soul is key to understanding Plato's philosophy—a philosophy that, correctly understood, is nothing but a doctrine of the soul—and that dialectic is the science aimed at illuminating the essence of human life. In the first part of the chapter, Karfík sketches Patočka's overall interpretation of Plato's definition of the soul as self-motion and of a number of topics in Plato's philosophy that Patočka elucidates based on his views about the definition of the soul: ontology, the doctrine of the tripartite structure of the *psykhē* and its parallel to that of the *polis*, the doctrine of *erōs*, the program of *paideia*, the idea of immortality, and his physics and cosmology. In the second part, an apparent paradox in Patočka's interpretation is addressed, namely that Patočka interprets the doctrine of the self-moving soul, discussed explicitly only in Plato's supposedly late dialogues, on the basis of his so-called early- and middle-period dialogues, while he dismisses the discussions of this doctrine from the later dialogues as fantastic. In short, Patočka sees the genuine sense of Plato's idea of the soul's self-motion indicated in those contexts in which it is not expressed, while he considers the only explicit formulations of it as an aberrant elaboration on it. Despite this paradoxical character of Patočka's overall interpretation, Karfík argues, it nevertheless possesses an undeniable persuasive power due to its capacity for explaining so many fundamental tenets of Plato's thought from a single point of view.

Chapters twelve and thirteen, finally, explore the way Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, respectively, develop central motifs in their own thought in dialogue with the Presocratics and Plato.

In chapter **twelve**, Tanja Staehler and Alexander Kozin explore the connection between Emmanuel Levinas's thoughts on our embodied being, the Presocratics' understanding of elements, and Plato's depiction of *erōs* and nature in the *Phaedrus*. The chapter begins by sketching three phenomenological approaches to embodiment and argues that Levinas's view of our embodied existence incorporates insights from both Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, but that it also relies on a conception of "elemental being" that points back to the Presocratics. The chapter proceeds to sketch the main features of what one might hold is the cosmological understanding of the elements, "elemental" being, characteristic of Presocratic thinkers. It concludes with a reading of passages from Plato's *Phaedrus* that indicate that Plato, notwithstanding his reputation as a thinker who radically disregarded the body, explicates some of the aspects of our bodily existence central to Levinas's thought concerning *erōs* and the nature of the soul in this dialogue.

In chapter **thirteen**, Derrida's complex reading of Plato's *Phaedrus* is analyzed in detail. Derrida sought to locate the structure upon which the history of philosophy in his view rests, a structure he terms "phonocentrism" or "logocentrism," in the very activity of reading texts

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passed on to us from ancient Greek thinkers. Nowhere is such a structure more thoroughly integrated than in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and the only way to uncover it is to read the *Phaedrus* as a whole and write down the experience of reading it, as Derrida does in *Plato's Pharmacy*. In this chapter, Arnaud Macé endeavors to read Derrida's *Pharmacy*, uncovering three layers in its reading of the *Phaedrus*, which provides a successively deeper understanding of the structure of logocentrism. The first layer is concerned with finding the thread that unifies the whole dialogue in the opposition between writing and true knowledge expressed in live speech; the second finds that Plato deconstructed this first opposition by conceiving true knowledge through metaphors of writing and by building his ontology on a grammatical scheme; the third shows how Plato's writing proves that a trial against writing is needed in order to discover the nature of the text as forever differentiating the many layers of its meaning and prompting the desire for it. Derrida's *Pharmacy*, Macé argues, is nothing but a reading of the *Phaedrus* that lets the dialogue unfold the very structure of metaphysics that is enshrined in it.

We have in general used a system of abbreviations to refer to the works of ancient authors and of the phenomenological thinkers who are discussed in this book. While the system is the same across the different chapters, our contributors have not always used the same editions or, where applicable, the same translations. We have therefore thought it more convenient to add a list of abbreviations in use at the end of each chapter, complete with the editions and translations preferred by the chapter's author. Where contributors have supplied their own translations, this is noted in the text. Where references are made to the works of phenomenological thinkers writing in another language than English, we have endeavored to supply page numbers of both the original publication and a published English translation, in that order.

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