The planet is in flames. The essence of the human is out of joint. (Der Planet steht in Flammen. Das Wesen des Menschen ist aus den Fugen.)
—Heidegger, “Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens (Heraklit)”

1. The Influence of Carl Schmitt on Heidegger’s Interpretation of Heraclitus

In the winter course “On the Essence of Truth” from 1933–1934, Heidegger undertakes an interpretation of Heraclitus’ Fragment 53, “Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστὶ πάντων δὲ βασιλεὺς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους” (“war is both the father of all things and the king of all things, and on the one hand it shows forth the gods, on the other, human beings; on the one hand it makes slaves, and on the other hand, the free”). Heidegger’s stated aim is to interpret this fragment in view of the question concerning the essence of beings. Concentrating on the first word of the fragment, Heidegger notes that πόλεμος “does not mean the outward occurrence of war and the celebration of what is ‘military,’ but rather what is decisive: standing against the enemy” (ET 72–3; GA37 90). He then comments on the need to translate πόλεμος not as Krieg (war) but as Kampf (struggle), “in order to hold on to what is essential” (ET 73; GA37 90). The obvious association to Hitler notwithstanding, Heidegger notes that πόλεμος as Kampf “does not mean ἀγών, a competition in which two friendly opponents measure their strengths, but rather . . . . that the struggle is in earnest; the opponent is not a partner but an enemy” (ibid.). What is essential is therefore “struggle,” understood as “standing against the enemy, or more plainly: standing firm in confrontation” (ibid.).
In a related letter dated August 22, 1933, Heidegger wrote to the jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt in celebration of their commitment to the Nazi Party, which they had both joined on the same day (May 1, 1933). In the letter, Heidegger thanks Schmitt for sending as a gift the third edition of Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*, which had been revised and published earlier that year (TBL 132). Heidegger also acknowledges his familiarity with the second edition from 1932, and he comments upon Schmitt’s inclusion of a quotation from the aforementioned Heraclitus fragment for which Heidegger claims to have had an interpretation “set down for years” (ibid.). Schmitt does not refer to the fragment in any of the three editions of *The Concept of the Political*, so it is likely that Heidegger was responding to either an accompanying letter by Schmitt—now lost or destroyed—or perhaps a handwritten inscription within the text. Whatever the case, there is no evidence to date that Heidegger’s interpretation of the Heraclitus fragment existed in print before his presentation of it in the 1933–1934 winter course.

Of course, §74 of *Being and Time* contains a singular remark about how “struggle” is said to free Dasein for its destiny. Moreover, there are cryptic statements about “struggle” in a *Black Notebook* from October 1931 concerning, on the one hand, “struggle against the distorted essence of being” and, on the other, the coincidence of “struggle and preservation” with the “disappearance of mastery and rank” (BN 19; GA94 24). Even more significant, however, is an entry in a notebook from fall 1932 where Heidegger adds the parenthetical remark “(cf. Heraclitus)” to the statement that Dasein’s “mission” (*Auftrag*) is “preserved only in struggle”—“just as if Dasein stood in a stream flowing against us” (BN 83; GA94 113). It is impossible to know whether Heidegger was here attempting to think Heraclitus’ famous “river fragments” (DK 22B12, 22B49a, and 22B91) together with Fragment 53 on *πόλεμος* (DK 22B53). At most, what can be said is that Heidegger was certainly attuned to the rhetoric of “struggle” well before the 1933–1934 winter course, and that the word operates with technical significance in Heidegger’s earlier writings, including the 1925 lecture “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview,” as well as the 1920 review essay “Comments on Karl Jaspers’ *Psychology of Worldviews*,” wherein Heidegger approvingly cites Jaspers’ statement that “struggle is a fundamental form of all existence.” Nevertheless, we do not find any evidence to support Heidegger’s claim that his interpretation of Fragment 53 was “set down for years.” Rather, the first plausible indication of the interpretation does not appear until the fall 1932 notebook entry, which very likely coincides with Heidegger’s reading of Schmitt’s 1932 edition of *The Concept of the Political*. 
Whatever the truth concerning the claim to Schmitt regarding Heidegger’s interpretation of Heraclitus, these remarks serve as context for a more salient observation concerning the striking similarity between the text of Heidegger’s 1933–1934 winter course and Schmitt’s reduction of the concept of the political to the distinction between friend and enemy—a distinction that Heidegger, in his letter to Schmitt, called “an approach of extraordinary significance” (TBL 132). I cite two pieces of text that are crucial for the comparison. First, from the 1932 edition of The Concept of the Political: “the enemy is not merely any competitor or just any opponent in general” (“feind ist also nicht der Konkurrent oder der Gegner im Allgemeinen”) (CP 28; BP 16). Second, from the aforementioned text of Heidegger’s 1933–1934 winter course: “the opponent is not a partner, but an enemy” (“der Gegner ist nicht ein Partner, sondern Feind”) (ET 73; GA37 90).

The similarity between these passages—in which the discussion of πόλεμος is linked to a conflict between enemies in contradistinction to opponents in general—has already been noted by Emmanuel Faye as “the mark of a deep and undeniable reciprocal influence.” However “deep” and “reciprocal” this influence may be, I am here concerned only with the direction that runs from Schmitt to Heidegger. For his part, Schmitt traces the distinction between enemies and opponents to Plato’s contrast in the Republic between the public enemy (πολέμιος) and the private enemy (ἐχθρός), along with the corresponding distinction between war (πόλεμος) and insurrection (στάσις) (CP 28–9; BP 16–7). For Schmitt, the political enemy is by definition the public enemy. On the basis of these observations, it may well be the case that vis-à-vis Schmitt, Heidegger is guilty of surreptitiously reading Plato into his interpretation of Heraclitus. This alone is not sufficient to undermine the merits of the interpretation. But the evidence suggests that, regardless of any preexisting interpretation, Heidegger’s reading of the Heraclitus fragment was traceably influenced by his reading of Schmitt, whose name appears nowhere in the printed text of the lecture course. The question I now wish to pose concerns the degree to which Heidegger’s understanding of πόλεμος informs his conception of δίκη—“justice” or “originary justice,” as the case may be (which I discuss below starting in §4).

In order to address this question, it will first be necessary to more fully develop what is at stake, politically and philosophically, in Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of Heraclitean πόλεμος. To that end, my thesis is threefold: (1) Heidegger’s interpretation of πόλεμος, and therefore his interpretation of δίκη, is demonstrably influenced by his encounter with Schmitt; (2) Heidegger’s failure to consider an important set of connections between δίκη (justice), καλόν (beauty), and φρόνησις (prudence) results in a deeply problematic “decisionism” that penetrates to the core of
his philosophico-political project; and (3) Heidegger’s ontologization of the political is ultimately most problematic not insofar as it renders his theoretical philosophy liable to a critique from the standpoint of politics or moral-juridical normativity, but insofar as it makes his philosophico-political project susceptible to a critique from the standpoint of philosophy.

2. Making the Enemy in Politics and Ontology

Foremost at stake in this inquiry is the risk at which Heidegger folds the rhetoric of “the political” into the discourse of fundamental ontology and its successive permutations. As I shall demonstrate, a linkage between πόλεμος and δίκη permits the founding of politics upon a fascist ontology. This is not to say that Heidegger teaches fascism from the start, or that Heidegger’s thought leads inevitably to fascism.13 To be sure, it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle Heidegger’s philosophical views from his political Weltanschauung. Such a task might take for itself the aim of demonstrating how Heidegger’s work on the extremely abstract question of being lives beyond the excesses of his German chauvinism, his idiosyncratic anti-Semitism, or the entwinement of these attitudes with his unapologetic endorsement of the “inner truth and greatness” of National Socialism.14 In such a case, one could emphasize the importance of Heidegger’s 1907 encounter with the pure philosophy of Franz Brentano’s 1862 dissertation On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle, over and against either his initial encounter with Hölderlin’s poetry in 1908 or his formative education under the antimodernist, Catholic nationalist persuasions of the theologian Carl Braig—the man whom Heidegger, in his youth, always called his “teacher.”15 Lest we forget that Heidegger received Brentano’s dissertation from Conrad Gröber, the family friend and rector of the conservative Catholic seminary Heidegger attended from 1903 to 1906—the same man whom his biographer Rüdiger Safranski called “Martin’s spiritual mentor.”16

Such references to Heidegger’s youth are not simply anecdotal. One of his first publications from 1910 criticized the “psychology of the free thinker” and the “personality” of the modern individual.17 In this vein, he cites “Oscar Wilde the dandy, Paul Verlaine the ‘brilliant drunkard,’ Maxim Gorky the great vagabond, [and] the Overman Nietzsche” (PMV 35; GA16 3) while conversely praising the redemption of atheism by Christian conversion (PMV 37; GA16 5–6). Still, one could set all of this aside as impertinent to Heidegger’s programmatic development of the question of being.

What cannot be dismissed, however, is that Heidegger’s intended destruction (Destruktion) of the history of ontology, set forth in the pages of Being and Time, is only a first step toward the realization of a
larger ambition. Take, for example, Heidegger’s assertion in the 1925 lecture series on Dilthey that the uncritical acceptance of the “Greek doctrine of being” was perpetuated by Thomism through Descartes to Husserl (DRS 175; GA80 156). By the mid-1920s, Heidegger was already formulating the thesis that a return to the historical beginning of philosophy is required to initiate “another beginning,” or what he would first call in the summer of 1932 “a recommencement [Wiederanfang] of the originary [anfänglichen] beginning.” As he put it in 1925, “we must push on until we are once again a match for the questioning of the Greeks” (DRS 176; GA80 156). He then continues to quote the philosopher Yorck von Wartenburg, whom Heidegger claimed “had perhaps an even better idea than Dilthey of this urgent need for historical reflection” (ibid.). Heidegger quotes Wartenburg’s claim that “knowledge has progressed to the point where it annuls itself, and human beings are so removed from themselves that they can no longer see themselves. ‘Modern man,’ i.e., man since the Renaissance, is ready for burial.” Stated bluntly, but in terms he endorses, Heidegger’s larger ambition is nothing less than the “burial” of “modern man.”

Any effort to separate Heidegger’s theoretical philosophy from his cultural orientation and later engagement with Nazi politics cannot do so without taking fair account of his intellectual biography. However, such questioning does not penetrate what is genuinely at stake in the present inquiry—that is, the risk at which Heidegger presses the rhetoric of “the political” into the discourse of ontology, and the subsequent link between πόλεμος and δίκη that permits the founding of politics upon a fascist ontology. Put otherwise, the question at the deepest level is not whether Heidegger’s theoretical philosophy is an exposition of his politics. Rather, the problem, as I see it, is fundamentally a philosophical problem, not a political one—precisely because nothing in Heidegger’s thought prevents the mobilization of his theoretical apparatus in support of the fascist doctrine of National Socialism. What matters, therefore, is the questioning of Heidegger’s philosophy on philosophic grounds. As Leo Strauss once said, “the only question of importance . . . is the question [of] whether Heidegger’s teaching is true or not.” The present essay aims to build on this assertion. By showing how Heidegger’s interpretation of πόλεμος was influenced by Schmitt, and by showing how this interpretation informs Heidegger’s retrieval of δίκη as ‘fittingness,’ we will be in a position to see how the legitimacy of Heidegger’s thought is simply a matter of decision—for or against the question of being as foundational for philosophy and politics alike. However, to arrive at this point we shall be required to observe an essential connection between Heidegger’s translation of “justice” and the aesthetic register of beauty—a connection that Heidegger’s analysis completely elides.
To continue, therefore, with the assessment of Schmitt’s influence on Heidegger, the way forward is prepared by Heidegger’s winter 1933–1934 account of the essence of beings as πόλεμος, understood as struggle with the enemy. “An enemy,” writes Heidegger, “is each and every person who poses an essential threat to the Dasein of the people and its individual members” (ET 73; GA37 90–1). By comparison, Schmitt emphasizes that the “friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense” (CP 27; BP 15); they receive their “real meaning,” along with the notion of Kampf (“combat” or “struggle”), “precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing” (CP 33; BP 20). For this reason, the decision to make the enemy “has no normative meaning, but an existential meaning only” (CP 49; BP 37). The distinction between friend and enemy “can neither be decided by a previously determined general norm nor by the judgment of a disinterested and therefore neutral third party” (CP 27; BP 14–5). Instead, it is determined by the sovereign decision of the combatants alone. As Schmitt famously wrote in 1922, “sovereign is he who decides the exception.” Thus, “war follows from enmity. War is the ontological [seinsmäßige] negation of the enemy” (CP 33; trans. mod.; BP 20).

According to Heidegger, moreover,

the enemy does not have to be external, and the external enemy is not even always the more dangerous one. And it can seem as if there were no enemy. Then it is a fundamental requirement to find the enemy, to expose the enemy to the light, or even first to make the enemy, so that this standing against the enemy may happen and so that Dasein may not lose its edge. (ET 73; GA37 91)

These lines should likewise be read alongside Schmitt on the primacy of internal politics, the weakening of the state, and civil war:

The intensification of internal antagonisms has the effect of weakening the common identity vis-à-vis another state. If domestic conflicts among political parties have become the sole political difference, the most extreme degree of internal political tension is thereby reached; i.e., the domestic, not the foreign friend-and-enemy groupings are decisive for armed conflict. The ever present possibility of conflict must always be kept in mind. If one wants to speak of politics in the context of the primacy of internal politics, then this conflict no longer refers to war between organized nations but to civil war. (CP 32; BP 20)

Civil war is thus war between domestic enemies, not mere opponents or debating partners. Heidegger’s further emphasis on the need for Dasein “to find the enemy, to expose the enemy to the light, or even first to make the enemy . . . so that Dasein may not lose its edge” must stand as one of his most pernicious statements within the context of his participation in the movement of National Socialism. Heidegger continues,
The enemy can have attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people and can set itself against this people’s own essence and act against it. The struggle is all the fiercer and harder and tougher, for the least of it consists in coming to blows with one another; it is often far more difficult and wearisome to catch sight of the enemy as such, to bring the enemy into the open, to harbor no illusions about the enemy, to keep oneself ready for attack, to cultivate and intensify a constant readiness and to prepare the attack looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation. (ET 73; GA37 91)

The question now is what does this talk of πόλεμος, finding or making the enemy, the internal enemy, and the goal of total annihilation have to do with Heidegger’s understanding of justice? I propose to show how the answer lies in the idiosyncrasy of Heidegger’s translation of δίκη, which links it rather directly to the Heraclitean notion of πόλεμος, on the one hand, and the Platonic conception of beauty (κάλλος), on the other. In making this link, the question I wish to raise concerns the risk at which a moral-juridical concept like justice is configured, and even suppressed, by its reduction to an aesthetic or, more radically, an ontological category—an interpretive act, along with Heidegger’s bending of Schmitt’s concept of the political into the service of ontology that amounts, ironically, to a betrayal of Schmitt’s conception of the political as an autonomous order that is completely distinct from aesthetic, ethical, economic, religious, and other antitheses.

3. The Stranger and the Enemy

The line of thought that I am here pursuing was anticipated by the Heidegger of Being and Time, albeit without an answer in that text, when he openly posed a question concerning “the possibility of understanding the stranger correctly” (BT 163; SZ 125). As Heidegger himself admits in the immediately preceding passage, “a lively mutual acquaintanceship on the basis of being-with, often depends upon how far one’s own Dasein has understood itself at the time” (BT 162; SZ 125). In this context, authentic being-with “depends only upon how far one’s essential being with others [Mitsein mit anderen] has made itself transparent and not disguised itself” (ibid.). The problem of transparency and disguise is then exacerbated when situated within the question of Dasein’s heritage. While Heidegger tends to speak of Dasein’s having a heritage in general terms in Being and Time (see BT 434–8; SZ 383–6), he later speaks explicitly about “German Dasein” in the 1933 summer course and the winter course of 1934 (see ET 71; GA37 89). This observation raises the critical question about how to delimit Dasein’s historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) and its heritage (Erbe)—a question that points
inevitably to the underlying problem of an arbitrary decisionism concerning, here, the regional parameters of Dasein’s historical being. Following this thought, we might ask whether the conception of a national or ethnic Dasein is not sufficiently abstract or universal when it comes to the question of correctly understanding the stranger. According to the method of Heidegger’s purely phenomenological analysis, however, such distinctions can be no more and no less than possible determinations, which thus gives the impression that it is perhaps necessary to supplement Heidegger’s merely ontological account with Schmitt’s concept of the political. Otherwise stated, it may be the case that the prideful celebration of German Dasein is itself the expression of a Dasein that is not yet sufficiently transparent to itself.

This is also to say that the question of correctly understanding the stranger, understood within the context of the problem of deciding Dasein’s historicity and its heritage, reveals a tension between Heidegger’s phenomenological method and the existential analysis of Dasein. On the one hand, the inquiry into the meaning of being found in Being and Time is supposed to be carried out at the level of “universality,” where “Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess” (BT 62; SZ 38). On the other hand, “the full authentic historizing of Dasein” exists “essentially in being-with-others,” defined in terms of “the historizing of the community, of a people” (das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes) (BT 436; SZ 384–5). There is consequently a tension between the universal or transcendental character of the analytic of Dasein and the particular or regional character of Dasein’s authentic historicity (eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit). This tension is further exacerbated by Heidegger’s effort, beginning in the 1930s, to root the possibility of “another beginning” (CPE 44; GA65 55) in German Dasein over and against the ancient Greek Dasein that adversely covered over the originary questioning into the meaning of being. However, it would be a mistake to think that the basis for Heidegger’s romantic retrieval of German Dasein or “the historical essence of the Germans” develops only after Being and Time—for example, after his reading of Mein Kampf in 1930–1931. In fact, the 1925 Dilthey lectures already reveal Heidegger’s concern for the rootedness of Dasein’s historicity “in being-with-one-another within a generation” (DRS 174; GA80 153). Heidegger writes, we are history, i.e., our own past. Our future is lived from out of the past. We carry the past with us. That clearly can be seen in being-with-one-another within a generation. Dilthey discovered that this concept of generation was important for the phenomenon of historicity. Each of us is not only his own self but also belongs to a generation. The generation precedes the individual, is there before the individual, and defines the Dasein of the individual. The individual lives in terms
of that which has been in the past, drags himself or herself through
the present, and finally is overtaken by a new generation.

The past can be seized upon and understood in an explicit man-
er. That is, this context of being, in terms of which life is lived, can
be opened up as a theme for research. The past is immediately there
for one as a present that has passed away. **Understanding the past is
always caught up in certain limits. This possibility is determined by
how we ourselves understand and define our own Dasein.** (DRS
174; GA80 153; emphases added)

How “we ourselves understand and define our own Dasein” (and
what is meant by “we ourselves” and “our own”?) is determined by how
one “belongs to a generation.” A “generation” is not defined biologically
but historically as having a “past.”

Every generation has an “explicit” past from which it is thrown (or “dragged”) into the “future” (ibid.). It is, of
course, possible that the terms “we ourselves” and “our own” refer indi-
rectly to the historical constitution of German Dasein. Nevertheless, it is
necessary to guard against the fallacy of Jungian “Zurückphantasien” by
projecting our concerns about Heidegger’s Nazi past onto his pre-Nazi writ-
ings. In the text at hand, the task of understanding the past is framed only
in terms of a “possibility” that is “always caught up in certain limits.” The
limits are undefined. But we are presented with the exigency of a decision:
to decide the limits of what does and does not belong to a generation—and,
possibly, what does and does not belong to being historically German.

With respect to the thematic of ‘fittingness,’ which I will develop
momentarily in relation to Heidegger’s translation of “justice,” perhaps the
most concerning line in these lectures from 1925 appears in Heidegger’s
statement: “only because Dasein is in itself historical [geschichtlich] and
can have its own past are unhistorical [unhistorische] epochs at all possi-
ble” (DRS 175; GA80 154–5; emphasis added). In a 1941 entry from the
Black Notebooks, we find a similar thought connected to Heidegger’s
characterization of “world Judaism.” There, Heidegger writes that “the
question of the role of world Judaism [Weltjudentums] is not a racial
question, but the metaphysical question about the kind of humanity that,
without any restraints, can take over the uprooting of all beings from
being as its world-historical ‘task.’” It is precisely the “unhistorical” char-
acter of metaphysical “world Judaism” that Heidegger associates with the
“uprooting of all beings from being,” i.e., that which obstructs or negates
the possibility of “another beginning” premised on the retrieval of authen-
tic German Dasein. As Heidegger puts it in 1925,

> it is possible to emancipate the past so that we can find in it the
authentic roots [eigentlichen Wurzeln] of our existence and bring it into
our own present as a vital force. Historical consciousness liberates the
past for the future, and it is then that the past gains force and becomes
productive. (DRS 175; GA80 154)
However vulgar the opposition of “German Dasein” to “world Judaism,” it reprises in more concrete terms the question of *Being and Time* concerning the correct understanding of the stranger. In fact, there are two questions linked by the structure of decision. On one hand, the question of the stranger leads implicitly to the existential exigency of deciding upon who is the enemy. On the other hand, a correct understanding of the stranger presupposes or is coeval with a correct understanding of Dasein’s historicity and its heritage, which also bears the exigency of a decision. The Heidegger of *Being and Time* would no doubt insist that “in the existential analysis we cannot, on principle, discuss what Dasein factically decides [entschließt] in any particular case” (BT 434; trans. mod.; SZ 383). Yet the question of understanding the stranger correctly demands exactly such a decision—even if it consists only in what Heidegger calls genuine “decisiveness” (*Entschiedenheit*)—that is, the resolute holding open of the space of decision.32

Whatever the resolution, my point regarding the correct understanding of the stranger, and therefore the question of Dasein’s historicity and heritage, is that the problem of justice as Heidegger conceives it is already speaking to us, albeit indirectly, from the pages of *Being and Time*. What, then, is the problem of justice? At its core, it concerns the problem of ‘fit’ or that which is ‘fitting,’ in Heidegger’s terms. Carl Schmitt’s characterization of the political enemy as “the other, the stranger,” who is “in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien” (CP 27; BP 14–5) further amplifies this question as it pertains to “who” Dasein is and who counts as a “stranger,” especially considering Schmitt’s influence on Heidegger’s interpretation of πόλεμος—the essence of beings—as standing against the enemy.33

4. Justice as ‘Fittingness’

In what follows, I shall restrict my comments on Heidegger’s translation of “justice” to his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Additional, important references would include the discussion of Anaximander in the 1932 summer course on the beginning of western philosophy (BWP 1–76), the winter seminar on Nietzsche from 1938–1939, the 1941–1942 winter course on Hölderlin’s *Andenken*, the 1942 summer course on Hölderlin’s hymn “The Ister,” and the 1946 essay on the Anaximander fragment.34 I focus on the text from 1935, originally delivered as a summer course that year, because it is closest in chronology to the discussion of Heraclitus in 1933–1934, and because it makes an explicit link between justice and πόλεμος through the interpretation of Heraclitus. My purpose is to situate these comments at the height of Heidegger’s political engagement (or as close as possible to it)—before his disillusionment.
with the Nazi regime and the transformative power of politics, beginning as early as the resignation of his rectorship at the University of Freiburg on April 23, 1934, and further confirmed in the 1934–1935 winter course on Hölderlin, which signals a transition (indirectly against Schmitt) to “‘politics’ in the highest and authentic sense, so much so that whoever accomplishes something here has no need to talk about the ‘political’.” Heidegger remained a dues-paying member of the Nazi Party from 1933 to 1945. Yet, what is more radical than Schmitt’s concern for “the ‘political’” is Heidegger’s recovery of German Dasein as a propaedicue to opening “another beginning” of thinking. Again, the fundamental problem that confronts us is not the question of whether Heidegger’s philosophy is an exposition of his politics, but more radically, the decision to found the future of thinking on a renewed inquiry into the meaning of being.

Now, the Greek word that serves as the basis for this discussion is δίκη. The ordinary translation of δίκη is “justice” in English, and Gerechtigkeit in German. However, the translation of δίκη as “justice” consigns it, for Heidegger, to a moral-juridical sense that deprives the word of its “fundamental metaphysical content” (IM 171; GA40 169). For this reason, Heidegger chooses to translate δίκη as Fug or ‘fitting’ (ibid.). By tapping into this “older” sense of the word, Heidegger intends to think ontologically about the notion of δίκη in order to give an interpretation of being as the “fittingness that enjoins” (ibid.).

Three important results follow from this. First, the interpretation of δίκη as ‘fittingness’ replaces the moral-juridical sense of justice with an account of ontological structure. Second, “the interpretation of δίκη as norm” is replaced by a more originary sense, which Heidegger calls “the overwhelming, as regards its powerfulness” (IM 171; GA40 169). Ontological structure is therefore produced by the ‘fittingness’ that enjoins through overwhelming power. Finally, conceived in terms of overwhelming power, δίκη is the “enjoining structure [fühlende Gefüge], which compels fitting in and compliance” (ibid.). From this it will follow that δίκη is the force that sets beings in πόλεμος, with the result that δίκη is revealed in or through the historical struggle of beings with being.

To make this connection between πόλεμος and δίκη, Heidegger cites Heraclitus’ Fragment 80: “εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν” (DK 22B80; cited in IM 177; GA40 175). This is conventionally translated as follows: “it is necessary to know that war is common to all and justice is strife.” But in Heidegger’s hand, the fragment is rendered: “it is necessary to keep in view confrontation, setting-apart-from-each-other essentially unfolding as bringing-together, and fittingness as the
opposed” (im Blick aber zu behalten, not ist, die Auseinandersetzung wesend als zusammenbringend und Fug als Gegenwendiges) (IM 177; GA40 175). The term used here to translate πόλεμος is not Kampf but Auseinandersetzung—that is, “confrontation” or, literally, “setting-apart-from-each-other.” Through the relation of bringing-together and setting-apart, πόλεμος and δίκη are related as two sides of a chiasmus: πόλεμος is essentially bringing-together in confrontation, while δίκη is essentially setting-apart through enjoining. Hence, δίκη is essentially polemical in structure. Heidegger continues, “Δίκη, as the enjoining structure, belongs to the opposed setting-apart-from-each-other” (IM 177; GA40 175). More simply, δίκη is defined through πόλεμος, justice is defined through war, and ‘fittingness’ is defined through confrontation—that is, the struggle of “fitting-in and compliance” (IM 171; GA40 169). Insofar as the structure of beings is held firm in or through πόλεμος, it follows, conversely, that δίκη as ‘fittingness’ is corrupted by the negation of confrontation—that is to say, in the language of Carl Schmitt, the dissolution of the friend-enemy distinction.40

In view of Heidegger’s interpretation of Heraclitus’ Fragment 53, “it is a fundamental requirement to find the enemy, to expose the enemy to the light, or even first to make the enemy,” precisely because standing firm against the enemy is compelled by the enjoining structure of being (ET 73; GA37 91). Being as δίκη describes the jointure of that structure: the fitting of beings with being and the question of making or not making the fit. Standing up to the enemy is, accordingly, the struggle of being-here such that “beings are in their constancy and presence only if they are preserved and governed by struggle as their ruler” (ET 73; GA37 91–2). He continues, “wherever no struggle reigns, standstill, leveling, equilibrium, mediocrity, harmlessness, decline, fragility and tepidity, decay and collapse, in short: passing-away sets in on its own” (ET 74; GA37 92). When Heidegger says that “an enemy is each and every person who poses an essential threat to the Dasein of the people and its individual members” (ET 73; GA37 90–1), this means, in turn, that the essential enemy is one who poses an existential threat to the people for the very reason it threatens to neutralize struggle as “the innermost necessity of beings as a whole” (ET 74; GA37 92). In this way, the essential enemy is one who threatens to uproot the Dasein of a people from their historical confrontation with the enjoining structure of being. Moreover, since struggle is the “innermost necessity of beings as a whole,” the most dangerous enemy is the one who has “attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people,” and thus “set itself against this people’s own essence” (ET 73; GA37 91).

It cannot go unremarked that in several entries from the Black Notebooks, Heidegger identifies the most insidious enemy in exactly the
same terms. First, with respect to the interpretation of δίκη as ‘fittingness’, Heidegger writes in a notebook dated 1934–1935, “The ‘world’ is out of joint [Die Welt ist aus den Fugen]; it is no longer a world, or, said more truly—it never was a world. We are standing only in its preparation” (BN 154; GA94 210). A similar thought later appears in the lecture course on Heraclitus from the summer of 1943, which is cited in the epigraph to this essay: “The planet is in flames. The essence of the human is out of joint” (Der Planet steht in Flammen. Das Wesen des Menschen ist aus den Fugen). As for the enemy who has infected the “innermost roots” of the Dasein of the people, Heidegger writes in a notebook from 1938–1939 that “to appropriate ‘culture’ as a means of power and thus to assert oneself and affect a superiority is at bottom Jewish behavior. What follows from this for cultural politics as such?” The question is left open, but the parameters for a culture war are clearly stated. And again, in the entry from 1941 that I cited earlier, Heidegger writes, “The question of the role of world Judaism is not a racial question, but the metaphysical question about the kind of humanity that, without any restraints, can take over the uprooting of all beings from being as its world-historical ‘task.’” The Jew is therefore the enemy who has appropriated the “culture” of the Germans, attached itself to the innermost roots of the German people, and set itself against this people’s own essence by consummating its “task” as the uprooting of all beings from being, i.e., by the “tenacious skillfulness in calculating, hustling, and intermingling through which the worldlessness of Judaism is grounded” (GA95 97). Quite simply, “world Judaism” is the enemy that threatens the greatest injustice (ἀδικία) against the jointure of beings with being. The German people are thus called to their world-historical task: to prepare for another beginning, for another world.

What is disturbing about all of this is not simply how “the political” is bound to the moral-juridical notion of justice by their mutual reduction to the polemical fitting of beings with being, but just how easily Heidegger mobilizes this ontology of ‘fittingness’ in the service of political fascism and the anti-Semitic politics of National Socialism. This is possible because, with the annihilation of prudence, there is nothing in Heidegger’s thought to assess whether it is appropriate or desirable to think politics through ontology. Rather, there is only the bald decision to think the ontology of ‘fittingness’ as the ground of what Heidegger called in the winter semester of 1934–1935 “politics’ in the highest and authentic sense” (HH 195; GA39 214). I shall address the problem of “decision” below. But the context of this statement is notable as it introduces Heidegger’s intention to ground the historical Dasein of the German people on the poetry of Hölderlin, whom Heidegger calls “the poet of the Germans” (HH 195, 201; GA39 214, 220). Indeed, whereas the 1933 summer
course describes philosophy itself as “the question of the law and structure [Gesetz und Gefüge] of our [German] being” (FQP 4; GA36 4), Heidegger’s purpose in the 1934–1935 winter course is to elaborate “the historical truth of our [German] people,” and thereby direct his audience “to the calling of builders building a new world” (HH 201–2; GA39 221). What deserves emphasis now is the purely willful character of Heidegger’s decision to think the political through the ontology of ‘fittingness’; and this, in turn, shall require us to recover the undeclared association between justice and beauty that the translation of δίκη as ‘fittingness’ demands.

5. The Politics of ‘Fittingness’: The People and the State

To first examine how Heidegger’s notion of the political is modeled on the ontology of “fittingness,” I turn to the 1933–1934 winter seminar Nature, History, and State.42 I note that access to this seminar is limited to student protocols that were approved by Heidegger with at least two known revisions.43 In the absence of Heidegger’s original text, our knowledge about the seminar is necessarily incomplete. Nevertheless, its significance is magnified by the fact that it was delivered concurrently with the lecture course On the Essence of Truth, which betrayed the influence of Schmitt on Heidegger’s interpretation of Heraclitus’ Fragment 53. Although the evidence suggests that Heidegger may have concealed Schmitt’s influence on his reading of Heraclitus, the author of The Concept of the Political is addressed by name in the concurrent seminar (NHS 46; NGS 74). Specifically, Heidegger cites Schmitt’s concept of the political and its basis in the friend-enemy relation in order to oppose his own, fundamentally ontological definition. Heidegger writes, “the political as the fundamental possibility and distinctive way of being of human beings is . . . the foundation on which the state has its being” (NHS 45; NGS 73). He continues,

there are other concepts of the political that oppose this approach, such as the concept of the friend-enemy relation that stems from Carl Schmitt. This concept of politics as the friend-enemy relation is grounded in the view that struggle [Kampf], that is, the real possibility of war, is the presupposition of political behavior. (NHS 46; NGS 74)

According to Schmitt, “the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political” (CP 19; BP 7). Likewise, according to Heidegger, “the political” is “the foundation on which the state has its being” (NHS 45; NGS 73). In both cases, the political is anterior to the state. In the case of Schmitt, however, the political consists in the existential tension with the enemy, and both the people and the state “receive their mean-
ing” from this “distinctive trait of the political” (CP 20; BP 7). For Heidegger, by contrast, the political is understood as a “distinctive way of being of human beings,” which he calls a “historically fateful decision” that “requires us to clarify the original, essential connection between people and state” (NHS 45; NGS 73). For Schmitt, a people is constituted through its relation to the enemy, whereas for Heidegger the political is a distinctly human way of being that is characterized by “the urge for the state, by ἔρως for the state” (NHS 48; NGS 76). This ἔρως for the state is nothing biological (ibid.). Rather, as a way of being, it is an “an essential expression of what the people takes to be the meaning of its own being” (ibid.). Schmitt therefore defines the political through the exogenous relation to the enemy, whereas Heidegger defines the political through the endogenous capacity of human Dasein to question the meaning of its own being. Confrontation with the ontic enemy is, accordingly, replaced by confrontation with the ontological meaning of being. For this reason, Heidegger does not simply oppose Schmitt as much as he transfers the essence of Schmitt’s friend-enemy relation—namely Kampf (struggle)—onto the ontological being of the people who “wills the state as its way to be as a people” (ibid.). It follows that ἔρως for the state is the struggle of a people in seeking its definition as a people. This means, finally, that Heidegger’s concept of the political consists in the “historically fateful decision” of a people to seek its definition through its love of struggle for the state (NHS 45; NGS 73), which is a task that “belongs to the Dasein of every individual human being who takes upon himself the struggle and responsibility for his people” (NHS 49; NGS 76). In other words, insofar as the people “wills the state as its way to be a people” (NHS 48; NGS 76), Heidegger’s concept of the political is fundamentally concerned with the “coming-to-be of the people” through the coming-to-be of the state (NHS 63; NGS 87).

There are now two aspects of the state that require examination: the force that commits a people to the state, and the relation of the state to its being in space. Herein we shall find the ontology of ‘fittingness’ that underlies Heidegger’s concept of the political.

First, Heidegger says, “the people that turns down a state, that is stateless, has just not found the gathering of its essence yet; it still lacks the composure and force to be committed to its fate as a people” (NHS 46; NGS 74). Conversely, “the highest actualization of human being happens in the state” (NHS 64; NGS 88). Moreover, “the Führer state . . . [is] the completion of historical development: the actualization of the people in the leader” (ibid.). Leaving the obvious contrast with Hegel to one side, there is a fundamental dichotomy between a stateless people and a people who has completed history by actualizing its being in the state. The being of the state consists in a “commitment to the
order of the state” (NHS 49; NGS 77). And, “only where the leader and the led bind themselves together to one fate and fight to actualize one idea does true order arise” (ibid.). On the one hand, what the people and state are together is a product of the being of the leader—a purely willful power. On the other hand, a people who is stateless lacks a genuine leader and, as a result, has failed to gather its essence and master its being-in-space (NHS 46, 54–5; NGS 74, 81). Such people are “nomads” and, according to Heidegger, history teaches that they “have not only been made nomadic by the desolation of wastelands and steppes, but they have also often left wastelands behind them where they found fruitful and cultivated land” (NHS 55; NGS 81). The nomad is rootless—and is made rootless because it is wasteful. By contrast, the state is “essentially related to space and formed by space” (ibid.). In fact, “the mastering of space and becoming marked by space, belong together with the essence and the kind of being of a people,” and “the concrete way in which a people effectively works in space and forms space necessarily includes both: rootedness in the soil and interaction [Bodenständigkeit und Verkehr]” (ibid.). The state therefore takes hold through the rootedness of the people in the soil together with “interaction” or the finding of its borders through “working out into the wider expanse” (NHS 55–6; NGS 81–2). Not only does Heidegger’s concept of the state reveal the ontological basis for the exclusionary politics of National Socialism but he also offers unveiled support for the effort to unify the German Volk under the expansionist ideology of the Nazi regime.

At the same time, Heidegger’s failure to consider how nomadism may be understood as a way of mastering space, as a way of using and caring for the land, points to the decisionistic and very arbitrary character of Heidegger’s rank-ordering of the difference between nomadic peoples and the people of the Führer state. This is to say nothing of the way a nomadic people may be bound by λόγος, in the way that diasporic Jews are traditionally bound by the teachings of the Tanakh, as opposed to the Nazi rhetoric of blood and soil (Blut und Boden) or Heideggerian “soil and interaction” (Bodenständigkeit und Verkehr). Nevertheless, the implicit division between nomadic Jews and bodenständig Germans is made explicit when Heidegger notes how, to “a Slavic people, the nature of our German space would definitely be revealed differently from the way it is revealed to us” (NHS 56; NGS 82), and that “to Semitic nomads, it will perhaps never be revealed at all” (ibid.). These remarks are on par with Heidegger’s condemnation of metaphysical “world Judaism.” But now it is possible to see how “rootedness in the soil” (Bodenständigkeit) expresses the ‘fittingness’ of a people to the space that belongs to this people, whereas a rootless people is a nomadic people, who must count as either a stranger or an enemy.
In making these observations, I note as well that the student protocols from the 1933–1934 winter seminar lack an explicit discussion of δίκη or ‘fittingness’. However, the subsequent lecture course from the summer of 1934 develops a direct connection between the ontology of “fittingness” and the coming-to-be of the people. This course, titled Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language, moves from an examination of the essence of language to the essence of human being, at which point Heidegger poses the question: “Who are we ourselves?” (LQL 33; GA38 36). Questioning about “we ourselves” leads to a question concerning “the genuine inner limit of a community” (LQL 45; GA38 51), and this limit is determined through the way “[we] as Dasein fit ourselves [fügen uns] in a peculiar manner into the membership of the people [Volk]” (LQL 50; GA38 57; see also LQL 55; GA38 63). Belonging to a people is therefore a matter of ‘fitting’. However, the people as a genuine community cannot be determined by geographical place, astronomical time, biology, or race, as each of these designates a way of seeing the people “from outside—as an assembly of individual human beings” (LQL 55; GA38 63). Likewise, the manner of belonging to a people cannot be determined through notions of body, soul, or spirit since these are ways of saying what a people is, not who it is as a people (LQL 55–9; GA38 63–8). In answer to the question “who are we ourselves?,” Heidegger writes, “we are this people itself” (LQL 50; GA38 57). And, he continues,

we have characterized this answer at the same time as an answer that is after the manner of decision [entscheidungsmäßige]. We have understood the essence of decision in resoluteness [Entschlossenheit]. Resoluteness however, is not a single act, but a happening [Geschehen], by virtue of which we are fitted [eingefügt] in the happening in which we stand. (LQL 82; GA38 97)

Ultimately, the ‘fitting’ of the people in a genuine community is a matter of decision and resoluteness of decision. For this reason, Heidegger says, “the We is a decision-like one [das Wir ist ein entscheidungshaftes]. How the We is, respectively, is dependent upon our decision, assuming that we decide” (LQL 52; GA38 59). Here, “decision” means setting oneself “for one against the other,” as in the way it is only “a matter of decision whether we want to act jointly [mithandeln] . . . or contrariwise” (LQL 62; GA38 72). This decision is not one that comes to an end upon execution; it does not terminate in “closing oneself off” (Sichverschließen) to the historical happening in which the people is fitted (LQL 66; GA38 76). Rather, as a decision that begins in the moment and continues on, the determination of the people requires resoluteness, understood as “opening oneself” (Sichöffnen) to the happening that issues in history (LQL 65; trans. mod.; GA38 75). Heidegger notes that “happening is no process, but tradition [Überlieferung]; tradition that reaches over beyond us and reaches
through us is to be appropriated only in such a manner that we expressly take it over and are in it itself” (LQL 104; GA38 125). Tradition is thus “the innermost character of our historicity” through which the people is “delivered into the future” (LQL 98; GA38 117). Insofar as “the state is the historical being of the Volk [people],” the people (namely the German people) is unified by its resolute decision to fit its tradition with the genuine happening of history (LQL 136; GA38 165). This is also to say that the being of the people is determined by the historical character of its being-here, in the happening in which it stands. This includes the way the people is fitted in being-with-others, the way it works with or against others, the way it secures its “historical duration,” “the preservation of its mission,” and “the struggle over its mandate” (ibid.). In the sense that the people makes itself a “decision-like one” through its decision for the state, Heidegger adds, “the title that shall characterize the formation of our historical being” is “socialism,” which means “care about the standards and essential-fitting [Wesensgefüge] of our historical being” (LQL 136–7; trans. mod.; GA38 165).

It is imperative to see how this entire discussion of the people and the state is built upon the categories of ‘fittingness’ and decision, where ‘fittingness’ is itself a matter of decision. By this I refer back to Heidegger’s interpretive decision to extract the purely formal structure of δίκη as ‘fittingness’ from its moral-juridical sense. This privileging of ontological structure over and against all prudential dimensions of the life-world is what permits Heidegger to think the political—the coming-to-be of the people through the coming-to-be of the state—in nearly geometrical terms as the exclusive space of the people, rooted in the soil and mobilized through interaction. Yet there is simply no justification for this decision apart from Heidegger’s resolute confrontation with the originary forgetting of the question of being, and hence the need for “another beginning” for which there is likewise no justification apart from the pure poetizing of the tradition and future possibilities of the German people.

This point comes to a head in the Beiträge of 1936–1938 where Heidegger contrasts the being of a genuinely historical people with what he calls an “alleged people” (angeblichen Volk) (CPE 35; GA65 43). This division breaks along the line of authentic versus inauthentic Dasein; in the present context, though, the authentic people comes into being through the historical character of a genuine decision. This decision can be prepared for only by “the philosophy ‘of’ a people,” which poses the either-or question of historical or unhistorical (rooted or unrooted, ensoiled or nomadic) ‘fittingness’ with being (ibid.). Heidegger’s socialist revolution is thus a revolution in the people’s manner of being-here, in their decision to actualize their destiny as guardians of the truth of historical being, as “[only] Da-sein, never ‘doctrine,’ can bring about a radi-
cal change in beings” (ibid.; see also CPE 78; GA65 98). In all these respects, this revolution can succeed only when philosophy belongs to its “first, essential beginning” (CPE 35; GA65 43). “Only in this way can it move the ‘people’ into the truth of historical being instead of being violated [genotzüchtigt] by an alleged people [angeblichen Volk] into something without an essence” (ibid.; trans. mod.).

We are once again confronted with the enemy, now understood as a danger to the coming-to-be of the people and its historical destiny. What I want to emphasize, in this context, is the way that Heidegger’s modeling of the political on the ontology of ‘fittingness’ permits him to join his theoretical philosophy with the revolution for socialism or National Socialism, as he understood it. Heidegger’s thought permits this, not because it leads inevitably to Nazism, but because there is nothing in his thought to prevent it from doing so; and this is a consequence of the thoroughly decisionistic character of Heidegger’s work, all the way down to the hermeneutical resoluteness to think the future of philosophy as a decision between historical and unhistorical being.

What requires examination now is the precise way in which Heidegger permits himself to think politics through a fascist ontology by forgetting the connection between justice and beauty that his translation of δίκη as ‘fittingness’ demands. This is not to repeat the thesis of Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin, as elaborated by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, that “the ‘aestheticization of politics’ was indeed, in its essence, the program of National Socialism.” While this is in effect the hidden truth of Heidegger’s teaching, the reason is not due to a conception of the political as essentially “organic,” pace Lacoue-Labarthe’s analysis, where the nature of the community and hence “the organicity of the people” can reach its completion as a totalitarian regime only by τέχνη, as a work of art. As we have seen, Heidegger rejects all biologistic or racial determinations of the people. Moreover, Lacoue-Labarthe’s thesis is itself a product of the tradition—beginning with Kant—in which the conception of aesthetics as an autonomous science, separate from morality or politics, tends to locate the fundamental experience of beauty as proceeding from the work of art. Since Lacoue-Labarthe describes the political as “a form of plastic art” that in no way reduces the πόλις to “an artificial or conventional formation”—i.e., because “the political belongs to the sphere of τέχνη in the highest sense of the term . . . conceived as the accomplishment and revelation of φύσις itself,” he can also say that the πόλις, as a “natural” or “organic” entity, “is the ‘beautiful formation’ that has spontaneously sprung from the ‘genius of a people.’” As we shall now see, it is not the completion of nature by art but rather Heidegger’s failure to address the ancient connection between beauty and justice that allows him to model politics on a mediately aesthetic, and ultimately ontological, conception of ‘fittingness’.
6. Beauty and Fittingness in Hippias Major

In order to make this connection between beauty and justice, it is necessary to make an appeal to Plato, which should be no less appropriate than Heidegger’s use of the Platonic account of πολεμός that presumably entered his reading of Heraclitus through his reading of Schmitt. Specifically, in Hippias Major there is an extensive meditation on καλόν (beauty) understood as τὸ πρέπον (propriety, or that which is fitting). In the dialogue between Socrates and the sophist Hippias, it becomes a question about whether the fitting makes things beautiful or whether it only makes them appear so. If the fitting only makes a thing appear beautiful, then it deceives about the beautiful itself or “that by which all beautiful things are [made] beautiful” (Hipp. I, 294B; trans. mod.). Socrates then suggests an analogy between “that by which all beautiful things are beautiful” and “that by which all great things are great” (ibid.). All things are great by virtue of “excess”—that is, the way they exceed (ὑπερέχοντι) that to which they are compared. I do not have the space here to reconstruct the argument of the dialogue, but suffice it to say that the search for what makes things beautiful ends in aporia. As Drew Hyland has suggested, it may be the implicit purpose of the dialogue to call into question Socrates’ insistence on seeking definitional terms that are capable of comprehending the whole of a notion “without remainder.” Along these lines, it is worth noting the absence in the dialogue of an equivalent to the notion of excess that makes all things great. In other words, at the point of analogy between the great and the beautiful, the dialogue is in excess of itself; it is missing a discussion of that which could serve as the measure of fittingness as well as the formal division of measure that appears in the Statesman. More pointedly, in the discussion of beauty as fittingness nothing is said about the need for φρόνησις (prudence) in the determination of what is fitting or unfitting. There are only three references to φρόνησις in the dialogue: Hipp. I, 281D1, where Hippias is set up by Socrates to mock the φρόνησις of the ancients; Hipp. I, 288D5, where a variant of φρόνησις (φροντίζω) is used to express thinking about the truth; and Hipp. I, 297B6, where Socrates expresses eagerness for φρόνησις about the beautiful as a cause of the good. The dialogue is silent on the topic of prudence when it comes to understanding the determination of fittingness or the decision by which things either do or do not fit. It would seem, on this basis, that Socrates has good reason to conclude the dialogue by repeating the proverb, “beautiful things are difficult” (Hipp. I, 304E). Beautiful things are difficult because φρόνησις or sound judgment is required for the determination of fittingness.
7. Φρόνησις and the Aesthetic Remainder of ‘Fittingness’

Here we arrive at the core problem of the present study. Having established a link between the aesthetic register of beauty and the moral-juridical register of justice vis-à-vis the notion of ‘fittingness,’ we are now in a position to see how φρόνησις is precisely removed from the meaning of δίκη when a purely ontological interpretation is extracted from the moral-juridical sense of the word. Heidegger claims, of course, that ‘fittingness’ belongs to the meaning of δίκη in “all its domains and powers” (IM 171; GA40 123). But as a matter of method, he arrives at this “originary” meaning of the word only by starting from its moral-juridical sense. Accordingly, when δίκη, like beauty, is emptied of φρόνησις, we are left only with the aesthetic remainder of ‘fittingness’—that is, a purely formal structure. As I shall now elaborate, when knowledge of beauty is emptied of prudence, it cannot speak to the beautiful as a cause of the good. Likewise, when justice is converted into ontological structure, prudence falls out of ethics and politics. What remains is merely an aesthetic ontology of ‘fittingness’, and the question of ‘fittingness’ is answered not by φρόνησις but the pure exigency of decision.

This point bears not only on Heidegger’s decision to root National Socialism in the thinking of being, but even more radically on his decision to make the question of being foundational for the future of thinking. Without φρόνησις, these decisions can be nothing but arbitrary. More specifically, by eliding the connection between beauty and justice vis-à-vis ‘fittingness’, Heidegger loses exactly what the Eleatic Stranger in Plato’s Statesman calls the capacity to “save the measure” (τὸ μέτρον σῴζουσαι) (Pol., 284B; trans. mod.). As the Stranger says, when the weaver, the statesman, or any other productive technician saves the measure, “everything they produce is good and beautiful [ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ]” (Pol., 284A6–B2; trans. mod.). This statement serves effectively as a response to Socrates’ stated desire in Hippias Major to understand how φρόνησις about the beautiful can be a cause of the good (Hipp. I, 297B6). The key is in the link between fittingness and φρόνησις, where φρόνησις (the capacity for sound judgment) is understood to consist in the art of measurement (ἡ μετρητική) (Pol., 283C2–D2). At issue for the Stranger is φρόνησις concerning excess (ὑπερβολή) and deficiency (ἔλλειψις)—in particular, with respect to the length of his speeches in the dialogue. Wisdom about the correct length of a speech must include the understanding of such elements as the topic at hand, the competence of one’s interlocutors, and the circumstances under which the discussion is taking place. Whether I have exercised sound judgment in expounding at length on the topic of this study depends, for example, on whether I am addressing a colleague in philosophy or a group of five-year-old children.
at a birthday party. At issue, in either case, is whether I have exercised soundness of judgment in the art of measurement, that is, the practice according to which fittingness is determined.

I note here that the Stranger distinguishes between two kinds of measurement: arithmetical and non-arithmetical (*Pol.*, 284E2–10). Arithmetical measurement employs an agreed-upon standard that admits of only one correct answer to the question of magnitude. The answer is intrinsic to whatever is being measured, in the sense that the boiling point of a liquid admits of only one correct answer for a given set of conditions. Non-arithmetical measurement differs in the way that correctness is measured with respect to some human purpose. In this case, there is no single correct answer; the measure is excessive, deficient, or fitting with respect to a mean between extremes. For example, the quantity of pasta I should eat may be excessive, deficient, or fitting with respect to my physiological attributes and level of physical activity. The correct portion size is not intrinsic to the pasta but relative to the purpose of satisfying my own bodily needs, which differ from those of an Olympic swimmer. In the case of arithmetical measurement, moreover, φρόνησις is required to know when this kind of measurement will be useful or necessary, which is itself an exercise in non-arithmetical measurement. In other words, mathematics is good for measuring, but mathematics cannot itself tell us what we should measure, when we should measure, or why correct measurements are desirable or good: for this, we require sound judgment (φρόνησις)—and this requires that we preserve the “standard of the mean” (τὸ μέτρον), which emerges as a task only out of real difficulties concerning matters of excess and deficiency in actual practice (*Pol.*, 284A8–B2). Preservation of the mean by φρόνησις is, accordingly, that which makes the works of the productive arts “good and beautiful”—or fitting. Conversely, the Stranger emphasizes that forgetting the measurement of the mean would destroy the productive arts such as weaving or statecraft (*Pol.*, 284A5–8).

By translating δίκη as ‘fittingness’ without reference to beauty and its attendant demand for φρόνησις, Heidegger fails to save the mean that emerges only out of actual practice, and instead converts justice into mere ontological structure. Since the mean indicates “what is right” in the sense of “fitting” or “appropriate,” this is also to say that knowledge of the good—even if only as a problem—is perceived by φρόνησις and made explicit through the circumstances of actual practice. In this way, φρόνησις signifies openness to the good. Conversely, by forgetting φρόνησις, Heidegger makes this openness impossible. What remains is simply the existential or historical exigency of decision, which is especially troubling in the context of Heidegger’s resolution to press his theoretical philosophy into the service of National Socialism.
There has, of course, been much discussion about Heidegger’s ontologization of Aristotle’s ethical concepts, including especially his interpretation of φρόνησις in the 1924–1925 lecture course on Plato’s Sophist.\textsuperscript{57} I shall not repeat those discussions here except to say that Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato is largely filtered through his interpretation of Aristotle. In the course on the Sophist, this is demonstrably true since roughly the first third of the Gesamtausgabe edition (228 pages) consists of commentary on Aristotle’s account of the intellectual faculties in book 6 of the Nicomachean Ethics (see GA19 7–235).\textsuperscript{58} According to the Aristotelian account, φρόνησις is understood to calculate the means required to accomplish practical ends. The ends themselves are given by a separate faculty, namely νοῦς (the intellect), whereas the calculations of φρόνησις generate commands for actions that are adjusted to whatever circumstances may be at hand (see esp. EN, VI.10). In this way, φρόνησις indicates a capacity to engage in sound deliberations regarding the means of achieving correct ethical or political ends. Moreover, φρόνησις is lower than σοφία (wisdom) in Aristotle, since Aristotle ranks the life of theoretical contemplation as higher in εὐδαιμονία (happiness) than the life devoted to ethical or political practice (see EN, X.7–8, 1177a2–1179a32). There are, accordingly, two kinds of happy lives for Aristotle—the highest consisting in theoretical virtue, the lower in practical virtue (EN, VI.7–13, 1141a8–1145a11)—whereas this division between the life that is happiest and the life that is second-best does not appear in Plato.\textsuperscript{59} If the turning around of body and soul in book 7 of the Republic (Rep., 518C–D) can be taken as a reliable indication, εὐδαιμονία in Plato is accessible only by way of the exceedingly difficult intellection of the pure Ideas. But as the myth of Er at the end of book 10 indicates, care for the Ideas is made possible only by φρόνησις (Rep., 621C).

8. Φρόνησις and the Possibility of Philosophy

In anticipation of my conclusion, I turn to comment on the relation between φρόνησις and philosophy in the myth of Er.\textsuperscript{60} This story is about a strong man named Er who “once upon a time” died in war (πόλεμος) (Rep., 614B–621D). Ten days after his death, while the bodies of his comrades were already in decay, his corpse was well preserved (Rep., 614B). Then, on the twelfth day, as his body was lying on the pyre, he returned to life and related what he saw as a “messenger to humankind [ἀνθρώποις]” (Rep., 614D; trans. mod.). I note in passing that Er in Greek is Ἑρός, which is homophonic with Ἐρως, the δαίμων who serves in the Symposium as a messenger between gods and mortals. Whereas Ἑρός is a man of war (πολεμικός), Ἐρως is described by Diotima as a philosopher and intermediary between ignorance and wisdom.\textsuperscript{51} By contrast, Ἑρός is an
intermediary between life and death—and the principal issue in the myth of Er concerns the life choices that human beings make, whether these choices culminate in just or unjust deeds, and whether one is consequently destined to an afterlife in heaven or Hades. Of interest concerning the relation between φρόνησις and philosophy is what Socrates describes as “the whole risk for a human being” (ὁ πᾶς κίνδυνος ἀνθρώπων) (Rep., 618B2; trans. mod.; my emphasis)—that is, how “a soul becomes different depending upon the life it chooses,” the kind of study that makes possible “the capacity and knowledge to distinguish the good life from the bad” (ὁ πᾶς κίνδυνος ἀνθρώπων) (Rep., 618B–C), and therefore knowledge about “how to choose the middle life and flee the excesses in either direction” (γνῷ τὸν μέσον ἀνθρώπων) so that a human being may become “happiest” (εὐδαιμονέστατος) (Rep., 619A7–8; trans. mod.) Provided what is at stake in the choice of life, the homophony between Ἡρός and Ἔρως is notable since both the Republic and the Symposium contain myths concerning the relation between happiness and philosophy involving agents of the “in-between” (μεταξὺ).

In the myth of Er, there is also a particular warning against being “careless” (ἀμελής) in making the choice of life (Rep., 619B). Socrates reports Er to have said this explicitly about a man who, in a previous life, had participated in “virtue by habit without philosophy” (ἐθεὶ ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας ἀρετῆς) (Rep., 619B5–D1). Without philosophy there can be only the semblance of virtue, or a sort of routinized practice; and as a consequence, the man who participates in virtue by habit was careless: he chose a life of injustice that fated him to eat his own children, among other evils (see Rep., 619C). This same need for philosophy is further illustrated in connection with φρόνησις by the dramatic features of the myth—specifically in Er’s description of how a soul must pass repeatedly through the stages of life and death by drinking a measure (μέτρον) of the water from the River of Carelessness (Ἀμέλητα) (Rep., 620D5–621B7). The river itself runs through the Plain of Forgetfulness (Λήθης). No vessel can contain the river’s water; drinking it causes forgetfulness; and only φρόνησις can save one from drinking more than the measure. In other words, carelessness is always an excess. But as drinking water from the river is necessary for rebirth, φρόνησις is required to ensure the right amount of carelessness. Too much carelessness will result in an excess of forgetfulness, which is symptomatic of a defect or deficiency in φρόνησις. It is surely this need for φρόνησις to safeguard the right measure of carelessness that makes the choice of life “the whole risk for a human being” (ὁ πᾶς κίνδυνος ἀνθρώπων). Thus, φρόνησις is care about risk; but for this reason, it is also care about distinguishing the good life from the bad. In this sense, φρόνησις is care about the good, or the Idea of the good, as a fundamental human problem. The question I have posed in the
The present study is whether Heidegger has not drunk excessively from the River of Carelessness by forgetting—or more precisely, replacing φρόνησις with the historically fateful decision for “another beginning” rooted in the question of being.

Heidegger's philosophical project is, of course, predicated on remembering the question of being. The question I am asking is not whether this question deserves remembering, as it certainly does. Rather, the question I am asking is whether Heidegger’s excesses are directly the result of his forgetting of φρόνησις, as exemplified by his translation of δίκη as ‘fittingness’ in detachment from beauty, along with his efforts to think the politics of National Socialism (the difference between the stranger and the enemy, the “fittingness” of the people in relation to the state) through mere ontological structure. Is not this effort to think politics through ontology the result of a defect or deficit of φρόνησις?

The myth of Er indicates that some measure of carelessness and forgetting, perhaps culminating in a measure of madness or daring, is required for living the correct choice of life. “And thus,” Socrates tells Glaucón, “a myth [μῦθος] was saved and not lost [ἀπώλετοι]; and it could save us, if we were persuaded by it” (Rep., 621B8–C1; trans. mod.). In the wake of Heidegger, perhaps we require this myth to save ourselves—and philosophy. As Socrates urges in the last sentence of the dialogue, we should “always hold to the upward path and practice justice with prudence [δικαιοσύνη μετὰ φρονήσεως] in every way so that we shall be friends to ourselves and the gods” (Rep., 621C5–9; trans. mod.). Friendship with the gods is another name for philosophy (see, for example, Symp., 212A3–10).62

In becoming friends to ourselves, we obey the command given to Socrates at Delphi; and in becoming friends with the gods we hold to the upward path, which leads ultimately to the good “beyond being” (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) (Rep., 509B9; trans. mod.). Yet this is possible only by practicing justice with prudence, δικαιοσύνη with φρόνησις. If φρόνησις is openness to the good, even as a problem, then genuine philosophy—at least in its Platonic form—is impossible without φρόνησις. What is finally at stake in the debate about Heidegger’s legacy is not whether he introduced Nazism into philosophy, or philosophy into Nazism, but our fundamental understanding of philosophy and its possibility.

NOTES

Thanks to Jeffrey Mehlman, Brian Marrin, and Jennifer Gammage for helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.


5. Fried offers what is, to my knowledge, the most extensive examination of Heidegger’s treatment of πολέμιος (see Gregory Fried, *Heidegger’s Πόλεμιος: From Being to Politics* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000]). However, the lectures from 1933–4 contained in GA37 were not released until 2001. On the topic of Schmitt’s influence, Fried cites only the letter of correspondence and states that “Heidegger also claims here to have an interpretation of Fragment 53 ‘set down for years,’ but if so, it has not yet been made available to scholars by the archives” (p. 28).


11. Concerning Heidegger’s influence on Schmitt, Faye notes Schmitt’s decision in the 1933 edition of The Concept of the Political to emphasize with italics the existenziell threat posed by the enemy (see Faye, The Introduction of Nazism, pp. 158–60; and Der Begriff des Politischen, 3rd ed., p. 8). He also notes Schmitt’s references on the same page to “own-being” (das eigene Sein) and “other-being” (das Anderssein) (ibid.) to supplement the friend-enemy distinction (Faye, The Introduction of Nazism, pp. 160, 236). However, Faye fails to note that “other-being” (das Anderssein) is used in the 1932 edition (see BP 15), but not in the original edition from 1927. For Faye, these additions serve as evidence that Schmitt “procures for the Nazi struggle between the races an existential and ‘ontological’ support taken from Heidegger’s ‘doctrine’ itself” (Faye, The Introduction of Nazism, p. 160). Faye recognizes that the adjective existenziell was already used by Schmitt in 1932 (p. 159). Yet he fails to acknowledge Schmitt’s use of this term in the 1927 edition, which derived from seminars delivered in 1925–6 (see Schmitt, “Der Begriff des Politischen,” 1st ed., pp. 4–5). On this basis, I submit that from Heidegger to Schmitt, the line of influence at most results in a change of emphasis, rather than a shift in interpretation — whereas the opposite holds in the reverse direction.

12. See Plato, Republic, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 469E6–71C3. The distinction between “military enemy” (πολέμιος) and “private enemy” (ἐχθρός) is common in classical Greek. However, the opposite of πολέμιος (ἐχθρός) goes without a name in the relevant section of the Republic (Rep., 469B3–70D7). Schmitt’s claim that “Plato strongly emphasizes the contrast between the public enemy (πολέμιος) and the private one (ἐχθρός)” (CP 28n. 9; BP 16n. 5) should therefore be modified to indicate...
that Schmitt infers the opposition between πολέμος and ἐχθρός from Socrates’ distinction between πόλεμος and στάσις (Rep., 470B). Insofar as the opposition between πολέμος and ἐχθρός is common, it could be argued that Heidegger did not need Schmitt (or Plato) to make the respective distinction between Feind (qua “military enemy”) and Gegner (qua “private enemy”) in his interpretation of Heraclitus. However, the close resemblance between the passages in question suggests otherwise. For a discussion of enmity in ancient Greece, see David Konstan, The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 193–200, and Andrew Alwine, Enmity and Feuding in Classical Athens (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), pp. 26–8.

13. This is the position of Faye, who has argued that “by its very content [the complete edition of Heidegger’s Gesamtausgabe] disseminates within philosophy the explicit and remorseless legitimation of the guiding principles of the Nazi movement” (Faye, The Introduction of Nazism, p. 246). Controversy related to Faye’s argument and the quality of his scholarship has erupted in a recent set of exchanges between Thomas Sheehan, Johannes Fritsche, Gaëtan Pégny, and François Rastier—all in the pages of Philosophy Today (see Thomas Sheehan, “Emmanuel Faye: The Introduction of Fraud into Philosophy?,” Philosophy Today 59:3 [2015], pp. 367–400, and “L’affaire Faye: Faut-il brûler Heidegger? A Reply to Fritsche, Pégny, and Rastier,” Philosophy Today 60:2 [2016], pp. 481–535; Johannes Fritsche, “Absence of Soil, Historicity, and Goethe in Heidegger’s Being and Time: Sheehan on Faye,” Philosophy Today 60:2 [2016], pp. 429–45; Gaëtan Pégny, “The Right of Reply to Professor Sheehan,” Philosophy Today 60:2 [2016], pp. 447–79; and François Rastier et al., “An Open Letter to Philosophy Today,” Philosophy Today 59:4 [2015], pp. 713–7). In a recent book, Mahon O’Brien has also argued, contra Faye and Heidegger’s “apologists,” that the “real problem . . . is the question as to how a great philosopher could, at any point, have pledged his allegiance to the Nazi Party and insist that the motivation lay in the essence of his philosophy” (Mahon O’Brien, Heidegger, History, and the Holocaust [New York: Bloomsbury, 2015], p. 2). In the argument that follows, I share this much with O’Brien’s orientation to l’affaire Heidegger. For further remarks, see pp. 68–9n. 26 of this essay.


25. The method of investigation in Being and Time is characterized tautologically as “descriptive phenomenology” (BT 59; SZ 35). By definition, phenomenology makes no normative distinctions; it aims simply “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (BT 58; SZ 34). To quote an observation made by Stanley Rosen, “Even, however, if one insists that the phenomenological method applies to all structures of the lifeworld, including those of morality . . . or ‘culture’ . . . the perception or intuition of structure . . . is explicitly separated from the prudential assessment of, through interested participation in, culture” (Stanley Rosen, The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2002], p. 298). Compare Rosen’s remark with BT 434–5; SZ 383.

26. Mahon O’Brien has argued that the abstract universalism of Heidegger’s ontological doctrine is at odds with, and therefore “resists,” the provincialism of Heidegger’s political agenda (see Mahon O’Brien, Heidegger, History, and the Holocaust [New York: Bloomsbury, 2015], pp. 3, 7, 128). This argument relies on separating the transcendental character of the existential analysis of Dasein from Dasein’s historical specificity. In doing so, O’Brien aims to save Heidegger from himself by showing how Heidegger’s exclusionary politics relies, paradoxically, on “conditions which are the transcendental conditions for the possibility of any recognition or co-existence between any human beings at any time and of any race or creed whatsoever” (p. 127). From the standpoint of phenomenological analysis, however, it makes no difference if we prefer the “universal” to the “provincial” interpretation of Dasein’s historicity—precisely because Heidegger empties his ontology of the means to make prudential distinctions. Rather, the deci-
sion for a “universal” versus a “regional” ontology is simply willful or arbitrary. This point is expanded later in this essay.


29. The term “generation” (Generation) also appears (in scare quotes) in §74 of Being and Time where it is used to indicate the historically specific character of Dasein’s being-with-others in a “community” or as a “people” (BT 436; SZ 385). For Heidegger’s anti-biologism, see, for example, BN 105, 170–1; GA94 143, 233, and ET 159–60; GA37 209–10.


33. Just as the determination of Dasein’s historicity and heritage requires questioning what belongs to Dasein as its “own,” i.e., in contrast to what does not vis-à-vis the stranger and the enemy, this questioning also bears on a problem concerning the translation of Eigentlichkeit as “authenticity,” as well as its application to Mitsein. For the basis of this discussion in Being and Time, see §9 (BT 67–71) and later in the text where Heidegger writes that “the mode of authenticity” is defined as the “authentic disclosedness” (eigentliche Erschlossenheit) that “shows the phenomenon of the most pri-
mordial truth” (BT 264; SZ 221). This “most primordial truth” consists in Dasein’s “disclosive being toward its potentiality-for-being,” which can be understood by Dasein in one of two ways: (1) “in terms of the ‘world’ and others” or (2) “in terms of its ownmost potentiality-for-being [eigensten Seinkönnen]” (ibid.). Heideggerian Eigentlichkeit is, of course, rooted in the German adjective eigen, meaning “own,” from which derives Eigenschaft (“property,” in the sense of quality or capacity) and Eigentum (“property,” in the sense of what is owned). On a related note, Frédéric Nef has observed how the Germanic link between “own” and “property” is reduplicated in the Latin etymology, which traces proprius (own) to pro privo (privately)—terms that were later calqued by the French propre and the English “proper” (see Frédéric Nef, “Property,” in Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon, trans. Steven Rendall, Christian Hubert, Jeffrey Mehlman et al., ed. Barbara Cassin [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014], pp. 858–9). Nef further traces from proprius the Latin derivation of proprietas, meaning both “possession” and “characteristic” (p. 858). According to the source Nef cites (the Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Latine), proprietas, which can be traced back to Cicero, then serves as a calque for the Greek ἴδιος (Alfred Ernout and Alfred Meillet, Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Latine: Histoire des Mots, 4th ed., ed. Jacques André [Paris: Klincksieck, 2001], s.v. “prǒpius,” p. 540). Nef translates the latter as “what is private, proper to someone, whether it be a good or a mode of being, by contrast with what is public (ϰοινός)” (Nef, “Property,” p. 858). In both the Germanic and Latin traditions, what is “private” or “proper” is what belongs to one’s “own,” in contrast to what is “public” or “common”—via the Greek opposition between ἴδιος and χοινός. When Dasein understands its “most primordial truth” in terms of its “ownmost potentiality-for-being,” this is therefore consistent with the way Eigentlichkeit concerns what is most “proper” to Dasein—that is, Dasein’s “ownmost” or “private” possibility, namely its death. However, in the same way that the Greek ἴδιωτης, in its derivation from ἴδιος, designates the private person in contrast to the public figure, it is a stretch of the associated etymologies, if not a category mistake, to extend the private sense of Eigentlichkeit to the public or common sense belonging to Mitsein—that is, “being-with” in the sense that Dasein may understand its potentiality-for-being “in terms of the ‘world’ and others.” This difficulty may explain Heidegger’s reluctance to offer a complete account of “authentic Mitsein” in Being and Time, as the radical individuation of Dasein in eigentlich being-toward-death is, in principle, incompatible with the collective being of Mitsein. If, however, at the level of being-with—that is, the “public” or the “common” that underlies the political—Eigentlichkeit is determined by a collective understanding of being-toward-death, then such understanding must presuppose or be coeval with the determination of Dasein’s public or common being-with. What follows is therefore a hermeneutic circle in which the disclosure of that which is publicly or commonly proper to Mitsein requires the disclosure of Mitsein as that which is proper to Dasein’s public or common potentiality-for-being. This is to say, insofar as Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-being-with consists in a collective being-toward-death, the possibility of a collective being-toward-death requires the disclosure of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-being-with. The criterion for deciding the collective is therefore either empty or futile, as what is “ownmost” with respect to
Mitsein is infinitely deferred to the determination of the collective for which no criterion exists apart from the radical finitude of its death. This problem effectively repeats the tension between the transcendental and regional character of Dasein's authentic historicity. Moreover, for the reader who wishes to make associations between the “properness” or “propriety” of Eigentlichkeit and Heidegger’s subsequent translation of δίκη as “fitness,” we shall see that in the absence of ὕπονομος the determination of “fitness” is no less futile than the determination of what is “ownmost” or “proper” with respect to Mitsein. Even if the task is framed in terms of owning up to one’s own proper existential-historical situation in being, the determination of what is properly one’s “own” is at best a product of the hermeneutic circle, and at worst an arbitrary or simply willful decision. In any case, the associations between the “ownness” or “properness” of Eigentlichkeit and the “fitness” of δίκη present further evidence that, at the level of collective being, Heidegger defends a fascist (which is not to say “Nazist”) ontology all the way down to the etymological roots.


36. I have used single quotation marks to indicate when ‘fitness’ (Fug) expresses Heidegger’s sense of the word.

37. The translation of δίκη as Fug, which emphasizes the “primitive” entanglement of “natural science with the projection of human experiences into things” (BWP 10; GA35 12), is initially worked out through Heidegger’s interpretation of the Anaximander fragment in the 1932 summer course. But instead of emphasizing how “knowledge of nature” is inseparable from the “moral evaluation of things” (BWP 10; GA35 12–3), Heidegger subtracts the moral-juridical sense of δίκη, thus leaving behind only a physics of fitness (BWP 9–12; GA35 10–4). I note, as well, that Heidegger treats δίκη as Recht (right) in the 1932 summer course (BWP 10–1; GA35 12–4), whereas Gerechtigkeit (justice) is used in the 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics (IM 171; GA40 169). While there is good reason to distinguish δίκη from δικαιοσύνη along the lines of Recht and Gerechtigkeit, I have followed Heidegger’s choice of translation in the latter text throughout.
38. Heidegger claims, for instance, that “the overwhelming, being, confirms itself in works as history” (IM 174; GA40 172).


40. For Schmitt, this is a symptom of liberalism (see, for example, CP 27–8, 69–73; BP 15–6, 55–9). For Heidegger’s related critique of liberalism in the 1933–4 lecture course, see ET 93–4; GA37 118–20.


44. A key insight into Heidegger’s critique of Hegel on the end of history is given by Robert Bernasconi who suggests that “the project that came to be known under the title of ‘the overcoming of metaphysics’ was initially developed in this context of a questioning of the Volk” (Robert Bernasconi, “Who Belongs? Heidegger’s Philosophy of the Volk in 1933–4,” in Nature, History, State, 1933–1934, ed. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt [New York: Bloomsbury, 2009], p. 119). This is to say, Heidegger’s questioning into the being of the Volk was instrumental to his development of “another beginning,” in opposition to the Greek beginning that terminates not in Hegel but in Nietzsche. See also, for example, CPE 34; GA65 42.

45. There is some controversy about the translation of Boden as “soil” rather than “ground”; Bodenständigkeit could just as easily be translated as “rootedness in the ground” or “groundedness.” The archaic term “autochthony” has also been proposed, as it retains the sense of belonging to something “indigenous” (see Robert Metcalf, “Rethinking ‘Bodenständigkeit’ in the Technological Age,” Research in Phenomenology 42:1 [2012], pp. 49–66). For present purposes, it is important to preserve the chauvinistic significance of the term, since Heidegger is here speaking about the German Volk in terms of German Dasein. For additional commentary, see Charles Bambach, Heidegger’s Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Theodore Kisiel, “The Seminar of Winter Semester 1933–4 within Heidegger’s Three Concepts of the Political,” in Nature, History, State, 1933–1934, ed. Gregory Fried and

46. This appears as a gross omission in Heidegger’s own examination of how a people preserves itself through language. For example, he writes, “language [is] the ruling of the world-forming and preserving center of the historical Dasein of the people” (LQL 140; GA38 169).


48. Ibid., pp. 68–9.

49. Ibid., p. 66.


52. Drew Hyland, Plato and the Question of Beauty (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 25–6. In Plato, consider, for example, how Hippias repeatedly resists Socrates’ efforts by offering paradigmatic examples of beauty, including the ability to speak well in a public forum or court of law, as well as protect oneself, one’s property, and one’s friends (see Hipp. I, 304A5–B4).


54. Further evidence for the connection between justice and fittingness in Plato can be found in the definition of justice in the Republic as the practice of minding one’s own business (Rep., 433A1–B1), or the principle of one man, one job (Rep., 373E9–4E9), in addition to the founding of the “just” (δίκαιος) (Rep., 435B1) or “beautiful” city (καλλίπολις) (Rep., 527C2) by expelling everyone over the age of ten (Rep., 540E4–1A5). Furthermore, in the Statesman, the young Socrates assents to the Stranger’s suggestion that the correct regime may kill or banish some of its citizens for its own good (see Pol., 293E5–4A5).

143–55; and *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice: Hölderlin—Heidegger—Celan* [Albany: SUNY Press, 2013], esp. pp. 2, 25). However, Bambach nowhere addresses the problem of decisionism or the linkage of justice to beauty and φρόνησις.

56. After subjecting Plato’s “highest Idea” to a process of “formal extrapolation” in the 1933–4 winter course “On the Essence of Truth,” Heidegger goes so far as to say that “ἀγαθός, good, originally has no moral meaning” (ET 147; GA37 192). For commentary on this in relation to Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s cave allegory in the same set of lectures, see Francisco J. Gonzalez, “Heidegger’s 1933 Misappropriation of Plato’s *Republic*,” in *Ermeneutica e filosofia antica*, ed. Franco Trabattoni and Mariapaola Bergomi (Milan: Cisalpino, 2012), p. 74. Gonzalez formulates his conclusion to this paper as a response to Faye. Specifically, the issue is “not that Heidegger introduced National Socialism into philosophy, but that he introduced philosophy into National Socialism; not that his ontology was in reality a disguised politics, but that his politics was in reality a disguised ontology” (p. 112). Gonzalez adds in a footnote: “we still await the book that would acknowledge all the facts, take Heidegger’s political involvement seriously, and pursue a philosophical critique of what in Heidegger’s philosophy made this involvement possible” (pp. 113–4n. 65). The present study endeavors, in particular, toward an answer to the last part of this statement.


58. See Aristotle, *Ethica Nichomachea*, ed. Ingram Bywater (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), VI. Consider also Gadamer’s claim that “Heidegger always viewed Plato through the lens of Aristotle, and by
so doing, he missed something that could have assisted his later thinking much better than his complete absorption in Hölderlin” (Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Reply to Diane P. Michelfelder,” in The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer, ed. Lewis E. Hahn [Chicago: Open Court, 1997], p. 458). The critical work to substantiate the first part of this statement has been developed in detail by Stanley Rosen (see, esp., The Question of Being, and “Φρόνησις or Ontology”).

59. The Philebus is a possible exception, as it ranks five genera of the good, in pursuit of the question concerning the happy life for all human beings (Plato, Philebus, trans. Harold N. Fowler [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990], 11D). In this connection, the relevance of the Philebus consists most immediately in Socrates’ rank-ordering of “measure” (μέτρον) and “proportion” (σύμμετρος), respectively as first and second, above “mind and wisdom” (νόος and φρόνησις), which are third (Phil., 66A–D). However, the teaching of the Philebus is so notoriously obscure that anything more than the most preliminary statement of its significance is impossible here. As for the Republic, it is possible to consider the lives of philosopher-kings as second-best, but this is only because they are compelled to rule: a function of realpolitik, rather than a difference in virtue.

