



**University of  
Zurich**<sup>UZH</sup>

**Zurich Open Repository and  
Archive**

University of Zurich  
University Library  
Strickhofstrasse 39  
CH-8057 Zurich  
[www.zora.uzh.ch](http://www.zora.uzh.ch)

---

Year: 2021

---

## **The politics of silence: Heidegger's black notebooks**

Knowles, Adam

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226758152-004>

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-236808>

Book Section

Published Version

Originally published at:

Knowles, Adam (2021). The politics of silence: Heidegger's black notebooks. In: Lochhead, Judith; Mendieta, Eduardo; Smith, Steven. Sound and affect: voice, music, world. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 56-70.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226758152-004>

# The Politics of Silence

HEIDEGGER'S BLACK NOTEBOOKS

Adam Knowles

*As long as we do not know more than we write,  
as long as we do not think from the unsayable,  
as long as we do not belong to beyng, every word is too much.  
Once again to know more than we say and speak. Once again to keep  
silent, to silence over the language of metaphysics through saying.  
Once again the word. Once again the listening answer.  
Instead of noise, stillness—through writing and speaking?*<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Since the publication of the first three volumes of Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* in 2014, an uneasy form of academic normality has begun to settle around a set of texts that justifiably sparked perplexity and outrage when they came to light.<sup>2</sup> As the cycle of routine academic exegesis, translation and commentary has taken hold of Heidegger's peculiar testimony, the philosophical contours of these texts have begun to reveal themselves more clearly. While the earliest responses to the *Notebooks* focused on the troubling and deeply pernicious anti-Semitic passages that are most prevalent in the volumes of 1938–41,<sup>3</sup> a second layer of responses by Heidegger scholars has tended to downplay the philosophical value of the *Notebooks*.<sup>4</sup> In the midst of the initial wave of philosophical and journalistic responses, Günter Figal, the former head of the Heidegger Gesellschaft, issued a sagacious proclamation: "The first results are not the best ones."<sup>5</sup> Heeding Figal's warning in this essay, and while still engaged in what I characterize as an active reading and rereading of the *Notebooks* that remains necessarily open to revision, I will argue that the *Notebooks* are a central element of Heidegger's "sigetics" (*Sigetik*). Sigetics, derived from *sigē*, one of the Greek

words for silence, is a term Heidegger develops for experimentation with a silent thinking in the 1930s and beyond.<sup>6</sup> In order to demonstrate the sigetic operation of the *Notebooks*, I will focus on a term that is central to Heidegger's understanding of silence: the capacity for silence (*das Schweigenkönnen*).

By focusing on Heidegger's treatment of silence, this essay will show that the *Notebooks* are not ancillary to Heidegger's thinking, but instead function as a series of signposts and guides that serve to lead readers through his thinking to what Heidegger in various terminological formulations calls "the preserved destiny of the hidden Germans" (*die aufbehaltene Bestimmung der verborgenen Deutschen*) (*GA*, 97:31).<sup>7</sup> The core of Heidegger's politics in the *Notebooks* involves recovering a capacity for listening to the silent call of the hidden Germans, a people whose history "possesses a power for keeping silent through which another form of communication is grounded" (*GA*, 97:31). According to Heidegger, this communication, silent but not wordless, is only possible for those who have the strength to "wile daily and nightly in the unnameable" (*GA*, 97:35) as a manner of preserving the essential force on the "invisible front of the secret spiritual Germany" (*GA*, 94:155/114). By being attentive to Heidegger's vast repertoire of methods of silence and silencing, as well both worded and wordless forms of saying in the *Notebooks*, I will show that they constitute a central component of Heidegger's thinking and not merely—as those deeply invested in the value of Heidegger's thinking may be tempted to believe—a philosophically irrelevant private project.

As he announces early in the first volume, Heidegger intends to "write out of a great reticence" (*GA*, 94:28/22), and, as he states sometime around 1940, they are written in "the time of the essential active silence" (*GA*, 96:54). What does this active silence say? How does this silence speak? And what does this silence *not* say, either because Heidegger chooses not to say it, or because Heidegger's thinking points to something unsayable? Perhaps most importantly and most troublingly, what are the ethical implications of turning to Heidegger to deal with these questions? After all, it is well known that he brutally implemented the Aryanization laws during his time as rector of Freiburg University in 1933–34 during *Gleichschaltung*, the forced ideological assimilation of German institutions of higher education.<sup>8</sup> And what would it mean to inadvertently silence the *Notebooks* by assuming defensive postures that depict them as a mere biographical curiosity?

I will provide some provisional answers to these questions in two sections. In the first section, I analyze Heidegger's development of the capacity for silence in his 1933–34 lecture course "Being and Truth,"

taught contemporaneously with the earliest volumes of the *Notebooks*. In the second, I will focus on selected passages from the first three volumes of the *Notebooks* in order to demonstrate how silence functions as the matter and the medium of Heidegger's thinking in order to illuminate a discussion of the capacity for silence in the third volume of the *Notebooks*. This chapter will therefore move from the ontological analysis of silence to the analysis of the performance of silence, though for Heidegger these two are always deeply intertwined. This brief essay intends not to offer a comprehensive account of silence in Heidegger's work, but rather to trace some important thematic and terminological continuities between the *Notebooks* and Heidegger's larger project of thinking, while also arguing for the continued importance of Heidegger's work, not despite, but because of, the purportedly "dangerous" element of Heidegger's thinking.<sup>9</sup>

### The Capacity for Silence as the Exercise of Power

Although we are often accustomed to thinking of silence in terms of disenfranchisement, the silence that Heidegger becomes increasingly concerned with in the 1930s is a matter of power. Far from resulting from a lack of power, this silence is something one is capable of, something with which one empowers oneself and for which acquires a capacity.<sup>10</sup> As we will see in the following section, Heidegger's politics involves vesting oneself with this silence as an endowment bestowed only on select few listeners.

In his 1933–34 lecture course "Being and Truth," held while he served as *Rektor-Führer* of Freiburg University, Heidegger calls this power, in a section entitled "The Ability to Keep Silent as the Origin and Ground of Language," the "capacity for silence" or the "ability to keep silent" (*das Schweigenkönnen*).<sup>11</sup> The passage seeks to ground a claim that completely reverses the priority of speech and silence established in *Being and Time*: "The ability to keep silent is the origin of language" (*das Schweigenkönnen ist der Ursprung der Sprache*) (*BT*, 84). How is the capacity for silence the origin of language? And what kind of language emerges from silence?

Heidegger begins unfolding this claim in a properly Aristotelian fashion by acknowledging the circularity of the process, for "we are supposed to speak about keeping silent" (*BT*, 85). Yet even as he poses this question, he draws back, asking instead what would it mean to *not* speak about keeping silent. What form of silence would it presuppose if one were to preserve silence in reverence? Is it not possible that "one could sell oneself short all too cheaply and relegate keeping silent, as

a dark ‘mystical’ thing, to the so-called emotional premonition and intimation of its essence”? Hence, Heidegger concludes, we will speak about silence but not believe that “with the help of a ‘definition’ we have come to grips with keeping silent” (*BT*, 85). Silence can be known, and known to a certain degree, but it is known through speech. This speech, moreover, is not contrary to silence, even if it is the interruption of silence. At this point Heidegger turns to a question that obsesses him from the late 1920s onward: the status of language in distinguishing the human from the animal.<sup>12</sup>

At first Heidegger seems to suggest that, if the animal does not have to or simply cannot speak, and if the animal is constantly silent, then the animal must be “prepared for and capable of speaking to a much a higher degree, because it can keep silent more—indeed, constantly” (*BT*, 85). But something even more fundamental distinguishes human from animal, namely that, even while silence is the origin and ground of language, animals have no capacity to speak. Humans, those creatures who have a deficient capacity for silence because they do in fact speak, and do so constantly and resoundingly, are the only creatures able to keep silent as a capacity for silence. Hence Heidegger concludes: “Human language arises from the inability to keep silent, and consequently from a lack of constraint. The *miracle* of language is therefore based on a *failure* [*Versagen*]” (*BT*, 85). How can we speak through a failure?

This justification for this strange “miracle” is found in a phrase that echoes like a refrain throughout Heidegger’s thinking: “Only what can speak can be silent” (*Schweigen kann nur, was sprechen kann*).<sup>13</sup> The capacity for silence thus emerges as a complex, manifold concept somewhere in the distinction between muteness and silence. On the one hand, the capacity for silence can be meaningfully applied to analyze particular instances of silence. This, however, does not mean that every act of silence is equal, for “a mute is unable to keep silent, even though he says nothing” (*BT*, 109). The mere act of nonvocalization is not sufficient to determine the distinction between muteness and the capacity for silence; instead, something else must be known, namely whether or not the speaker is *empowered to choose* silence. The secret spiritual Germans come into their own as the people empowered to choose silence.

As his own performances of silence show, Heidegger is well attuned to the distinction between silencing and the power to choose silence. Heidegger’s capacity for silence as an act or deed requires this prior sanctioning of the possibility of choosing silence as an arrangement, attunement, or structure that distinguishes muteness from silence. Thus Heidegger concludes: “Keeping silent is rather, at the very least, the

not-talking of someone who can talk. As we said before, it is a definite, exceptional way of being able to talk" (*BT*, 86).

We thus begin to see that the *Notebooks* are Heidegger's peculiar performance of this form of not-talking as an exceptional way of being able to talk. They are the performance of a willfully chosen silence whose medium is the word. Layered over with manifold registers of silence, they are perhaps most important not for what they do say, but for what they do not say. Moreover, they fill a gap in Heidegger's work at which he hints as he summarizes the significance of silence for his understanding of language:

Note that with this proposition, I pass decisively beyond what is said in *Being and Time*, § 34, page 164 and following. There, language was indeed brought into an essential relationship with keeping silent; the starting point for a sufficiently originary conception of the essence of language was laid down, in opposition to the "philosophy of language" that has reigned until now. And yet I did not see what really has to follow from this starting point: keeping silent is not just an ultimate possibility of discourse, but discourse and language arise from keeping silent. In recent years, I have gone back over these relationships and worked them through. This obviously cannot be explained here. Not even the different manners of keeping silent, the multiplicity of its causes and grounds, and certainly not the different levels and depths of reticence [*Verschwiegenheit*]. Now only as much will be communicated as is needed for the advancement of our questioning. (*BT*, 87)

This quote is significant for a number of reasons. Beyond announcing a decisive reversal of a critical element of his own conception of language in *Being and Time*, it also provides significant hints at how silence operates within Heidegger's work.<sup>14</sup> Firstly, when Heidegger curtly remarks that "this obviously cannot be explained here," that does not necessarily mean that there is an appropriate place to explain this conception of silence. Indeed, it is not so much a matter of silence not being explained in such a large lecture course, but more that this silence cannot be explained at all. Hence Heidegger announces that, even though he has "gone back over" and "worked through" the "the different manners of keeping silent, the multiplicity of its causes and grounds, and certainly not the different levels and depths of reticence," he will not rehearse these manifold registers at the moment. Instead, he will only communicate as much as "is needed for the advancement of our questioning."

The *Notebooks* are the continuation of that questioning, but also the performance of the very silence that is being questioned.

### The *Black Notebooks* as the Performance of Silence

Whether on account of the nature of the philosophical diary, a lack of care, or a deeply seated ironic gesture on Heidegger's part, the *Notebooks* are not easy to read. This is not merely because one so often gnashes one's teeth at the outlandish politics Heidegger represents before, during, and after World War II. The difficulty lies also on a purely aesthetic level: they are repetitive, mundane, and too often lacking in the exuberant prose that marks Heidegger's writing in its most vital moments. Indeed, reading the *Notebooks* from beginning to end is such a grueling and odious task that it will likely be their fate to be poached for particular passages, especially since their structure of seemingly unrelated entries seems to lend itself to this strategy.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these problems, with time the attentive reader begins to recognize not so much a guiding thread throughout the *Notebooks*, but a fabric woven together by means of a web of terms. At times this fabric is held together with great cohesiveness, and at times it seems to intentionally unravel. It binds together many different tentative alliances of words, with a number of fundamental terms emerging repeatedly at critical junctures and then often disappearing without warning. The weft and warp of this fabric is silence. Even in his most direct, obtuse, and offensive moments, Heidegger still holds something in reserve. Thus one might say that the mantra of the *Notebooks* is an entry from the fourth volume: "I only trust in one thing: that we have been given the gift of knowing more than we say. Otherwise the word has no weight" (*GA*, 97:57). Yet even if Heidegger intends to lend weight to the word in the *Notebooks*, that does not mean that they are not overburdened by a great amount of dead weight that must be sifted through. By stressing this repeated thematization of silence, I do not mean to say that the *Notebooks* are *about* silence, for it is hard to say that they are about anything. Instead, it is more appropriate to say that they are *of* silence, or that they emerge out of silence, the necessary silence with which Heidegger lends weight to the word. In this section I will explore some of the modalities of the capacity for silence expressed in the *Notebooks* according to the rough organizing principle of chronology.

In the earliest entries of the first volume of the *Notebooks*, Heidegger stages a conversation with himself as he ponders entering what he calls the "situation" (*GA*, 94:7/7). Silence is at the center of many of the

questions he poses to himself. Thinking on how a man comes to himself, for example, Heidegger asks: “Must he not have kept silent for a long time, in order to once again find the force and power of language and to be borne along by it?” (GA, 95:6/6). Shortly thereafter he follows up: “Must the great lone path be ventured, silently—into Da-sein, where beings become more fully beings?” (GA, 94:7/7). Once again, only a few pages later Heidegger reminds himself: “Yet ‘say’ it to yourself daily in your taciturnity: be silent about bearing silence” (GA, 94:10/8). Remaining silent about silence is the fundamental mode of attunement that sets the ground for listening, a listening that must be learned anew by those attuned to its voice. This listening is not intended for all, but is instead intended for the originary listeners, whom Heidegger christens with such names as “the most solitary ones” (*die Einzigsten*), “the most futural ones” (*die Künftigsten*; GA, 94:338/246), “the questioners” (*die Fragenden*; GA, 94:285/209), “the few” (*die Wenigen*; GA, 94:198/145), “the invisible ones” (*die Unsichtbaren*; GA, 94:370/269), and “the race to follow” (*das übernächste Geschlecht*; GA, 94:346/252).<sup>16</sup> Heidegger describes the listening attained by these solitary few in a characteristic passage: “The *Originary silence* as *further* silence in and out of the presentiment of language. But that silence is not inactive—rather, the initially open listening into (beings)” (GA, 94:78/59).

The few, solitary, and silent ones listen to something quite specific: the emergency (*Not*).<sup>17</sup> “The emergency” is an ontological term that is at best tangentially related to the actual state of Europe’s destruction during World War II. For Heidegger, listening to the call within the emergency is the only essential political task, for it is useless to “try and improve any aspect whatever of that which lies on the surface, instead of bringing into salience the most extreme and broadest plight: the decay of being” (GA, 94:88/67). Hence politics for Heidegger does not involve making adjustments to what has already come to be, but instead involves an essential questioning rooted in an attuned listening that speaks through a silent saying in tune with this listening. Moreover, Heidegger intends to portray his own very public and often boisterous involvement in politics not as the manifestation of this essential saying, but instead as the expression of its necessary failure. Why is this failure necessary? Is it necessary because—to draw on a language quite foreign to Heidegger—politics must always tell *the noble lie*?

But how to experience this plight? Is it necessary that many, the many, experience it? No—that is even impossible. The “situation”—not what passes for that today, but the place of the track of the essence of being—should and can be known only to a few, and they must be



silent if they are to act in the power of this knowledge. . . . Because nothing escapes contemporary people, because they have a facile and correct answer for everything, whereby they throttle everything as already having been, the essential must therefore remain in silence now and for the future — but all the harder and all the clearer may be what is said in the power of that silence. (GA, 94:88/67)

Heidegger's ontological politics is a politics of decomposition. More precisely, it is a politics of hastening the decomposition of that which is already in a state of putrefaction. Heidegger lays out these relations in a schematic depicting the relation between philosophy, language, and humanity:

*Philosophy!* Finally its essence is up for discussion. It is to bring:  
 Dasein to silence (positively)  
 being into words (language—truth)  
 and the pretense about humanity into silence — thus it is to put  
     humanity at risk (positively)  
 However: bringing being to the word means everything but setting  
     up and popularizing an “ontology.” (GA, 94:1815)<sup>18</sup>

The painful difficulty involved with reading passages such as this is that Heidegger both does and does not mean that philosophy literally ought to put humanity at risk. That is to say, Heidegger posits something under the guise of an ontological claim that cannot but have deeply troubling ontic consequences, even if Heidegger does not expressly commit to them. Heidegger's silence often operates in this gap, as can be seen in his initial hope that World War II will result in an essential confrontation that might bring about the “purification of being from its deepest disorder” (GA, 96:283). There is obviously much more to be said about this politics of decomposition, but for the moment I would like to remain on the topic of silence.

The decomposition of being is accompanied by a decomposition of language, which for Heidegger has degraded into so many used-up, spent, and worn-out words that have lost all vitality through the “ruination of language” (*Sprachverhuzung*; GA, 96:238). The ruination of language is brought about by the tendency of the masses to easily draw equivalences and to muddle what is unique with comparisons. Hence the listening few hold back in a silence that will not shy away from expressing itself through false, apparent equivalences offered up for the sake of the many who could and should not understand what is held in silence. A language that necessarily fails does not preserve itself by

keeping silent, yet it can at least influence the particular formation of its failure by controlling the way it speaks. This is how Heidegger would like us to understand his voice as the *Rektor-Führer*, but also his voice of reckoning in the *Notebooks*: the necessarily elusive attempt to control a discourse that tries to write the story of its own failure. I mean this not at all as a defense of Heidegger, but as an attempt to translate the complexity of his multilayered attempt at self-representation through the writing, preservation, and disclosure of the *Notebooks*—works that Heidegger intended to be the capstone of his *Complete Works*.

This complex play between failure, the essential word, and the deed of silence is illustrated in a particularly dense entry from the third volume of the *Notebooks*, which I will first translate in full and comment on:

The stages which rise up to the essential occurrence of the word beginning from the most immediate use of the word are these: *the word signifies, the word has meaning, the word says, the word is*. The last one means: the word belongs to the essential occurrence of being itself and in that belonging achieves the highest loyalty to its own essence. . . . Hence the contemplation of language in the “philosophy of language” goes astray instead of forging ahead to rescue the word. The first “act” of this rescue consists in the capacity for silence [*das Schweigenkönnen*], the second in learning to hear the rare conversation [*das seltene Gespräch*], the third in the attempt to hint at the essential word. However, any effort in this direction becomes ensnared in the vicinity of the things that have recently been written and spoken; and even if this effort does rise above this ensnarement, it remains in the grips of the common distortion of the essence of language [*Sprachunwesens*]. (GA, 96:288–89)

Here Heidegger traces the steps from the use of the word, which always fails in what it intends to say, to the essential occurrence of the word. Yet even restoring the relation to the essential occurrence in the three-step process of developing the capacity for silence, hearing the rare conversation, and experimenting with forms of written and spoken silence is not sufficient to rescue the word. This is because the word has always already been abandoned, having fallen victim to the chatter of things already spoken—the material for so many hasty comparisons. Whether or not any philosopher of language agrees with this ontology of decline is irrelevant to the interpretive task at hand, for, independent of whether or not Heidegger has provided a convincing description of language, what is of interest here is recognizing that Heidegger offers

critical interpretive hints for understanding the relation between his public political persona and the place of his thinking in that persona.

Among the many things that the *Notebooks* are and might be, they are in part a continuously evolving set of directions on how to read the *Notebooks* and, by extension, Heidegger. This does not mean to say that we as readers of Heidegger are beholden in any way to the interpretive scheme of the master, yet it does compel us to recognize that any attempt to come to terms with Heidegger's politics must begin to unravel the complicated and manifold manners in which Heidegger embedded his politics within a complex set of strategies of veiling, occlusion, evasion, and well-chosen silences for which he himself provides hints on how to unravel, especially in the *Notebooks*. In other words, Heidegger remains an essential resource for understanding his own failure.

### Conclusion

To summarize the results of this exploration of Heidegger's strategies in the most succinct form possible, it is necessary to draw the following contradictory conclusion: Heidegger both did and did not mean what he said in the *Notebooks*. In other words, when Heidegger writes in 1945, among many other travesties of thinking contained therein, that misrecognizing the destiny of the German people was "a more essential 'guilt' and a 'collective guilt,' the magnitude of which could not be measured against the atrocities of the 'gas chambers,'" and that the "German people and land are already a single 'concentration camp,'" he both did and did not mean what he said (*GA*, 97:99–100). Pointing out this ambiguity is potentially a very dangerous statement that risks sounding flippant. Hence, it is necessary to state as clearly as possible that, by saying that Heidegger, at least in some way, did not mean what he said because what he said is itself a distortion and falling away from what cannot be said, I do not intend to defend Heidegger or absolve him of any responsibility for his loathsome political views. Indeed, I intend to do the contrary, for in reading Heidegger we must always remain vigilantly attentive to the possibility that what Heidegger did not say, that what he did not relinquish to the essential distortion of language, may even be *far more disturbing than what he did say*. As Heidegger writes: "Those who are deadly silent [*Totgeschwiegenen*] have seemingly been reputed to have the greatest impact" (*GA*, 96:70). The danger of not reading the *Notebooks* as an integral part of Heidegger's philosophical project is that we prevent ourselves from drawing even more radical (and radically disturbing) conclusions about Heidegger's politics than is possible simply by recreating Heidegger's political deeds or search-

ing—in the manner of Emmanuel Faye—for a superficial philosophical National Socialism.<sup>19</sup>

By way of closing, I want to reiterate the ethical stakes of arguing for the *Notebooks* as having philosophical and not merely biographical value. I am deeply concerned with the possibility that labeling the *Notebooks* as philosophically irrelevant serves as an unintended apology for Heidegger that, in effect, allows for the easy resumption of business as usual in the world of Heidegger scholarship. This unwitting apology goes something along these lines: these terrible texts are Heidegger's words, they tell us about the man, but they are not his thinking and therefore have no impact on his thinking. Moreover, I am equally concerned about the possibility of taking recourse in chronology and retreating back to *Being and Time*, a work that—in Jeff Malpas's words—seems to be accorded a degree of “quarantine,” as if it were untainted merely because it was written before Heidegger's public entry into right-wing politics.<sup>20</sup> Yet there is, as Malpas notes, something even more problematic about the very use of the language of quarantine, purity, and contamination, “a language so characteristically employed by the Nazis and anti-Semites themselves.”<sup>21</sup>

The *Notebooks* must be reckoned with by every responsible Heidegger scholar for their impact on Heidegger's thinking as a whole. What is so fascinating about the *Black Notebooks* is that, in so many ways, they beg not to be read. They seem written so as to be written off. This is not incidental to their structure, but is instead embedded and folded within the texture of the work, within its fabric of silences. The *Notebooks*, for all of their rambling screeds, droning meditations, and slack-jawed commentary on contemporary events (with Heidegger necessarily at the center of them), are saying something else beneath all of those feints. Have we found the language to say what Heidegger could not or did not say? And what will it mean to find it? What will it mean to be the audience for this terrible performance of silence? What—in other words—is Heidegger's capacity for silence a capacity for?

## Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte, 1942–48)*, vol. 97 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015), 56; “Beyng” is the conventional translation of Heidegger's use of the outdated German spelling of *Sein* (being) as *Seyn*. *Seyn* indicates the use of the term in the being-historical sense developed in Heidegger's thinking in the 1930s.

2. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*, vol. 94 of *Gesamtausgabe: IV. Abteilung; Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main:

Vittorio Klostermann, 2014); *Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938–1939)*, vol. 95 of *Gesamtausgabe: IV. Abteilung; Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014); *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*, vol. 96 of *Gesamtausgabe: IV. Abteilung; Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014); hereafter cited parenthetically as “GA” with the German/English pagination. Translations from vol. 94 the *Black Notebooks* are taken from *Ponderings II–VI: Black Notebooks, 1931–1938*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016). All other translations from the *Black Notebooks* are my own.

3. The scholarly and journalistic literature on the *Black Notebooks* is already quite extensive. The first volume to appear in English was Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Reading Heidegger’s “Black Notebooks 1931–1941”* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016). For a bibliography that covers contributions until mid-2015 see Andrzej Serafin, “A Reception History of the *Black Notebooks*,” *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 5 (2015): 118–42. On Heidegger’s anti-Semitism, see Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), and “Heidegger, ‘World Judaism’ and Modernity,” in *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 5 (2015): 1–20; and Jesús Adrián Escudero, “Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* and the Question of Anti-Semitism,” *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 5 (2015): 21–49.

4. David Farrell Krell, “Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks, 1931–41*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 45, no. 1 (2015): 127–60.

5. “Philosoph Günter Figal tritt als Vorsitzender der Martin-Heidegger Gesellschaft zurück: Kritische Forschung nötig” (radio interview, WDR3), accessed September 20, 2015, <http://www.wdr3.de/zeitgeschehen/guenterfigal1106.html>.

6. On Heidegger’s sigetics, see Daniela Vallega-Neu, “Heidegger’s Reticence: From Contributions to *Das Ereignis* and toward *Gelassenheit*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 45, no. 1 (2015): 1–32; Vallega-Neu, “Heidegger’s Poietic Writings: From Contributions to Philosophy to *Das Ereignis*,” in *Heidegger and Language*, ed. Jeffrey Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 119–45; and Francisco Gonzalez, “And the Rest Is Sigetik: Silencing Logic and Dialectic in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 38, no. 3 (2008): 358–91. On *sigē* and silence in the Greek world, see Silvia Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

7. On secret spiritual Germany, see Theodore Kisiel, “The Siting of Hölderlin’s ‘Geheimes Deutschland’ in Heidegger’s Poetizing of the Political,” in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus, II: Interpretationen*, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch* 5 (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2009), 145–54; and Richard Polt, “The Secret Homeland of Speech: Heidegger on Language, 1933–34,” in *Heidegger and Language*, ed. Jeffrey Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 63–85.

8. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allen Blunden (London: HarperCollins; New York: Basic Books, 1993), esp. part 3; and Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), chaps. 13–18.

9. Heidegger’s former friend and collaborator Karl Jaspers described Heidegger’s thinking as “dangerous” (*verhängnisvoll*) in a report that he wrote to the French denazification commission in 1945. The report is in the form of a letter written to Friedrich Oehlkers on December 22, 1945. A translation of the letter can be found in Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, 336–41. Peter Trawny probes the limits of this dangerous element in *Freedom to Fail: Heidegger’s Anarchy*, English ed. (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015); the “danger” of Heidegger is likewise at stake in Jacques Derrida’s many readings of Heidegger, including, most importantly in this context, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

10. For more on this conception of silence see my essay “A Genealogy of Silence: *Chōra* and the Placelessness of Greek Women,” in *PhiloSOPHIA: A Journal of Continental Feminism* 5, no. 1 (2015): 1–24.

11. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 84–88; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as *BT*. For a detailed analysis of this lecture course, see Polt, “The Secret Homeland of Speech.” I deviate from the translators’ rendering of *Schweigenkönnen* as “ability to keep silent” and instead choose the more Aristotelian “capacity for silence.” For a detailed explanation of this decision, see my essay “Steresis and Silence: The Aristotelian Origins of Heidegger’s Thinking of Silence,” in *Sources of Desire: Essays on Aristotle’s Theoretical Works*, ed. James Oldfield (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 94–110.

12. Heidegger’s most extensive treatment of the question can be found in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

13. Martin Heidegger, *Plato’s “Sophist,”* trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 11; see also Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of “Sein und Zeit,”* trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 159 ff.

14. For more on this reversal see Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger’s “Contributions to Philosophy”: An Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 7–52.

15. Jeff Malpas confirms this assessment in “On the Philosophical Reading of Heidegger: Situating the *Black Notebooks*,” in *Reading Heidegger’s “Black Notebooks 1931–1941,”* ed. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 12: “Although hermeneutically problematic, this tendency toward what amounts to a form of selectively focused reading is partly a result of the nature of the *Considerations*, and of the *Notebooks*, as a disparate collection of reflections on a wide range of topics, and so as lacking the sort of overarching thematic or organizational unity that would normally be associated with a single work.”

16. I have deviated here from many of Rojcewicz’s renderings.

17. For more on the emergency, see Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

18. Translation modified.

19. Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

20. Malpas, “On the Philosophical Reading of Heidegger,” 17.

21. *Ibid.*, 10.