

HEIDEGGER'S KANTIAN READING OF ARISTOTLE'S
THEOLOGIKE EPISTEME

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Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is probably further than we ourselves are today in philosophy.

—Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*

HEIDEGGER'S AFFINITY for Aristotle's and Kant's works is probably what best describes his trajectory during the 1920s. After a passionate dialogue with Augustine and before turning his attention towards Hölderlin, these two philosophers served as privileged interlocutors in the elaboration of *Sein und Zeit's* fundamental ontology, as well as in the reformulation of this same project in what would be called a *metaphysics of Dasein*. The importance given to the two of them at that time is obviously tied to their respective reflections on the essence and the conditions of possibility of metaphysics.

Before initiating a discussion with the metaphysical tradition under the sign of an overcoming [*Überholung, Überwindung*] in the 1930s, Heidegger first tried to examine the possibility of metaphysics. In the 1920s, in fact, he spoke of a "retrieval" or a "repetition" [*Wiederholung*] of the ontological and metaphysical questionings. Guided by Aristotle's efforts to establish a first philosophy that would give an account of beings both in their universality and in their primacy, Heidegger also attached fundamental importance to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the sole, explicit attempt known to history to question metaphysically the possibility of metaphysics. However, Heidegger was not merely inspired by these philosophical attempts: he proposed to retrieve or repeat these two metaphysical investigations so that the questions that had been hidden under concealments brought about by tradition might come to light.

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The great retrievals to which Heidegger then proceeds are well known: the first pages of *Sein und Zeit* evoked an “explicit retrieval [*ausdrückliche Wiederholung*] of the question of being,”¹ while the fourth and last part of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* spoke of a “laying of the ground for metaphysics in a retrieval [*in einer Wiederholung*].”² However, besides these two attempts, Heidegger retrieved other traditional problems. A retrieval exercise that is not so well known is that of Aristotle’s problem of the divine [τὸ θεῖον], which Heidegger tried to interpret in a nonreligious sense, as an endeavor concerning the world. This paper will approach this peculiar retrieval, which disclosed a previously unknown bond between the metaphysical projects of Aristotle, Kant, and Heidegger.

Even though Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* constitutes the principal model for Heidegger’s *Metaphysics of Dasein* it would be impossible to understand this project without taking into account his interpretation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and the questions this text left open.³ Confronted with the contemporaneous interpretations of Aristotle’s works—those by Werner Jaeger and Paul Natorp—Heidegger proposed to revive Aristotle’s questioning process. Convinced that the traditional readings of Aristotle’s works concealed problems that Aristotle himself could not solve, Heidegger wanted to return to the source and try to read with new, phenomenological eyes

¹Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001), 2; trans. J. Stambaugh, *Being and Time* (New York: SUNY, 1996), 1; hereafter *SZ*. Here and below, the first citations of Heidegger’s texts list the German edition followed by the English translation, should one be available. In subsequent notes only the abbreviation for the German edition will be given followed by the volume number (when applicable), page numbers for the German edition, and page numbers for the translation, for example, *SZ* 2/1, or with volume number *GA* 2.1/2.

²*Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am M.: Klostermann, 1991), 204; trans. R. Taft, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 144. References to Heidegger’s writings will generally be to the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1976–); hereafter *GA*.

³Some pages taken from the 1929/30 winter semester dedicated to a correct interpretation of Aristotle’s πρώτη φιλοσοφία are probably the most enlightening: *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt–Endlichkeit–Einsamkeit*, in *GA*, vol. 29/30 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), §§ 8–12; trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

the texts that gave birth to what would later be called “metaphysics.” On this path, Kant was to give Heidegger a helpful hand. As this paper will show, Heidegger found arguments in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* to legitimize his interpretation of Aristotle’s concept of the “divine.”

I

If the Heideggerian endeavors of the 1920s can all be considered as retrieval attempts, the methodological implications of such an undertaking were rarely a subject of discussion in the published texts,⁴ and this is quite problematic insofar as the concept played an essential role in the very structure of *Sein und Zeit*.⁵ Not only does the retrieval concern the basic task of the essay—the “explicit retrieval of the question of being”⁶—it is also a basic methodological concept of “phenomenological destruction,” which describes Heidegger’s relation to the history of philosophy in the 1920s.

Even though the “phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology” was never published as planned in *Sein und Zeit* (§6), the principles of destruction and of retrieval continued to govern Heidegger’s reading of the history of philosophy in the following years. In his lecture course from the summer semester 1928, dedicated to Leibniz, Heidegger exposed these principles, opposing them to those of the neo-Kantian *Problemgeschichte*.

⁴ Concerning the “retrieval” or the “repetition,” see Robert Bernasconi, “Repetition and Tradition: Heidegger’s Deconstructing of the Distinction Between Essence and Existence in the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*,” in *Reading Heidegger From the Start. Essays in His Earliest Thought*, eds. Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren (New York: SUNY, 1994), 123–36; as well as John D. Caputo, “Hermeneutics as the Recovery of Man,” *Man and World* 15, (1982): 343–67.

⁵ As Paul Ricoeur once clearly highlighted it, §§67–71 proceed to a “repetition” or a “recapitulation” of the first section’s analyses, to show their temporal content. See *Temps et récit. 3. Le temps raconté* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 122; trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 66.

⁶ SZ 2/1.

Fundamental ontology is always only a retrieval [*Wiederholung*] of what is ancient, of what happened earlier. But what is ancient is transmitted to us by retrieval, only if we grant it the possibility of transformation. For by their nature these problems demand as much. All this has its basis, as we will show in detail, in the historicity of the understanding of being. And characteristically, the tradition [*Tradition*], i.e., the externalized transmission [*Weitergabe*], deprives the problem of this very transformation in a retrieval. Tradition passes down definite propositions and opinions, fixed ways of questioning and discussing things. This external tradition of opinions and anonymous viewpoints is currently called “the history of problems” [*Problemgeschichte*]. The external tradition, and its employment in the history of philosophy, denies problems their life, and that means it seeks to stifle their transformation, and so we must fight against it.⁷

What distinguishes the retrieval from other methods of historical exegesis is that it gives the problems the possibility to come back to life, that is, to be reactivated so that they are not merely transmitted, but undergo a transformation and present themselves to human Dasein along with their whole problematic content.⁸ The retrieval never manifests purely historical interest in the history of philosophy. It always considers history as the key to seizing the historicity of Dasein’s present understanding of being.

Under the auspices of the retrieval, the book *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, published two years after *Sein und Zeit*, proposed a “phenomenological destruction” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, whose aim was to retrieve the project of “laying the ground for metaphysics.”⁹ In this book, Heidegger defined the link between his undertaking and Kant’s text as follows:

⁷ *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, in *GA*, vol. 26 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 197; trans. M. Heim, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 155; slightly modified translation.

⁸ In the lecture course from the summer semester 1920, Heidegger already opposed the destruction [*Destruktion*] or the dismantling [*Abbau*] with the simple adoption [*Übernahme*] of a philosophical system as Kantianism, and with the idea of a re-creation [*Repristinierung*], that is, the restoration to an original and pure state of the philosophical texts. See *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks. Theorie der philosophischen Begriffsbildung*, in *GA*, vol. 59 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 5 and 95.

⁹ Even though this book no longer used the phenomenological language of the destruction, it is nonetheless as a “phenomenological” attempt that the

The idea, however, attested to through this interpretation, provides an indication of the problem of a fundamental ontology. This is not to be perceived as something supposedly “new,” as opposed to the allegedly “old.” Rather, it is the expression of the attempt to adopt in an original way what is essential in a laying of the ground for metaphysics, i.e., to aid in the ground-laying through a retrieval [*Wiederholung*] of its own, more original, possibility.¹⁰

Regardless of Kant's solution to the problem of metaphysics, Heidegger's retrieval of his questioning opens this philosophical reflection to its very own possibility—that is, to possibilities which were made effective by Kant or remained latent in his works. This questioning exceeds the sole Kantian text by enabling a wider examination that would explore untapped possibilities.

In the first lines of the fourth section of the *Kantbuch*, Heidegger attempts to give a definition of the retrieval:

By the retrieval of a basic problem, we understand the opening-up of its original, long-concealed possibilities, through the working-out of which it is transformed. In this way it first comes to be preserved in its capacity as a problem.¹¹

The retrieval thus works by opening up a specific problem's own “long-concealed” possibilities, an opening up which is at the same time a transformation. However, the retrieval does not give the problem a new form; it only helps it recover its original content and possibilities by taking it out of the framework in which tradition has enclosed it. The problem of the laying of the grounds for metaphysics thus gives a new voice to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, going beyond what the text explicitly explained. The aim of this interpretation of the Kantian text is thus not to betray Kant's first intention but to continue his own questioning toward possibilities that were opened up by the *Critique* itself.

In the unpublished lecture *Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik*, given in Amsterdam on March 22nd, 1930,¹² the status of

Heidegger of the mid-1930s understood his work. See the preface to the fourth edition of the *Kantbuch* (text to be found in *GA*, vol. 3, xiii/xvii) on this.

¹⁰ *GA* 3, 203/142.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 204/143.

¹² The text of the lecture, which will be published as part of volume 80 of the *GA*, is already available in H. France-Lanord and F. Midal eds., *La fête de*

the *Wiederholung* is more precisely defined. In this context, Heidegger does not discuss the retrieval of the laying of the grounds for metaphysics, as is still the case in the *Kantbuch*, but the retrieval of its “achievement”:

If Hegel’s metaphysics really represents the achievement [Vollendung] of Western metaphysics, how can we still talk about a problem of metaphysics? . . . But metaphysics still is a possible problem and this means that the argument [Auseinandersetzung] with Hegel becomes necessary, despite the fact that Hegel’s metaphysics is an achievement; especially if what comes to its achievement in Hegel is something that is *not original in itself* and if *the metaphysics that comes to its end is the one in which the fundamental question fails to appear*.¹³

Insofar as metaphysics still holds a possibility that its “first” achievement failed to notice, it is possible to retrieve the metaphysical endeavor once more. This concealed possibility is, according to Heidegger, that of a questioning that would not deal with beings but with being as such. Here, the distinction between a fundamental question [Grundfrage] and a guiding question [Leitfrage] appears in Heidegger’s works.¹⁴ However, according to Heidegger, the fundamental question of metaphysics—the question of being as such, then understood as the question concerning the intimate link between being and time and the conditions of possibility of the understanding

la pensée. Hommage à François Fédiér (Paris: Lettrage Distribution, 2001), 16–62; hereafter *HPM*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36 ; italics in the original.

¹⁴ This distinction can be found in the summer semester 1930 lecture course (*Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit. Einleitung in die Philosophie*, in *GA*, vol. 31 [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982]; trans. T. Sadler, *The Essence of Human Freedom. An Introduction to Philosophy* [London: Continuum Books, 2002]) and in the winter semester 1930/31 lecture course (*Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *GA*, vol. 32 [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980]; trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988]), but not in the summer semester 1929 lecture course (*Der deutsche Idealismus (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) und die philosophische Problemlage der Gegenwart*, in *GA*, vol. 28)—from which the major part of this Amsterdam lecture comes—nor in the winter semester 1929/30 lecture course (*Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt–Endlichkeit–Einsamkeit*, in *GA*, vol. 29/30). In a revised version, this terminology reappears in the texts of the *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, in *GA*, vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989); trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

of being contained in Dasein—appeared neither in Hegel's works nor anywhere in the whole history of metaphysics, which only examined beings as such [τί τὸ ὄν]. Nevertheless, Heidegger planned to raise the question of being as such, as the retrieval of the traditional metaphysical question concerning beings. Thus, the reawakening of the question of being and its explicit retrieval do not constitute, as it might be misinterpreted, the complete rejection of the whole metaphysical tradition from the Greeks to Hegel. It has to be understood as a retrieval, a recovery of their work, an endeavor that makes it possible to raise the question that historical metaphysics never fully succeeded in asking.

The fundamental question is thus reached thanks to the retrieval and radicalization of the guiding question, and not by rejecting it or leaving it behind, nor by overcoming the metaphysical tradition. The question of being that Heidegger wants to raise is not a new question but, one might say, a question that was never fully explored in the history of metaphysics. The fundamental ontology seeks to retrieve the questioning at the point where such a possibility was opened and closed. That is why the question of being, the fundamental question, is intrinsically tied to a historical investigation concerned with the metaphysical guiding question.

However, if the question about beings really found its solution or its achievement in Hegel's absolute metaphysics, how can we begin to recover this inheritance? In the conference about Hegel's metaphysics, Heidegger wrote,

The only possibility left is the *retrieval* [*Wiederholung*] of the traditional guiding question: what is a being?, but so that this question is brought back to the ground that lies hidden in it, i.e. so that we succeed in bringing to its elaboration and real happening the concrete question concerning being's essence and essential ground. This self-unfolding problematic of the fundamental question is rooted in the problematic that was indicated with the title "Being and Time."¹⁵

We can clearly see how the metaphysics of Dasein is placed in relation to tradition. Hegel accomplished metaphysics without putting an end to the "problem" of metaphysics—that is, without closing all possibility of questioning it. Hegel's metaphysics should thus be

¹⁵ *HPM* 52.

considered the achievement of the questioning concerning beings, or beingness of beings, an achievement that omitted the fundamental question about being as such. This achievement of metaphysics would only be a false appearance, insofar as a more original metaphysics is still possible.¹⁶ Thus the metaphysics Heidegger was trying to found—the metaphysics of Dasein—was a metaphysics that intended to reveal metaphysics' traditional ground, thanks to a retrieval of its questioning, which always means a transformation of it as well. This metaphysics of Dasein had the task of raising metaphysics' guiding question, so as to make possible metaphysics' fundamental question concerning being and time. However, the question about beings does not necessarily constitute an arbitrary question that would only be of historical interest. It is through this question, and only through it, that we are able to reach the fundamental question concerning the meaning of being.

If Heidegger was later to interpret this transition from the guiding question to the fundamental question as the overcoming of metaphysics as such, he first understood it as the radicalization and retrieval of latent potentialities. However, the problem of being is not the only problem that was retrieved during these metaphysical years. As will now be shown, Heidegger also took into account another question, buried under centuries of tradition. While reading Aristotle's works in the 1920s, Heidegger took an interest in the Aristotelian concept of the divine. This problem, Heidegger wrote, was rapidly taken over by the Christian tradition and reinterpreted from the perspective of the creation of the world, but it could include, as we will see, untapped possibilities that philosophy is still able to retrieve.

II

The interpretation Heidegger gave of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the 1920s is not only a guideline for an understanding of the genesis and the decline of the fundamental ontology but also constitutes an incursion into the eternal debates on the object and structure of Aristotle's first philosophy. Far from being a trivial projection of

¹⁶ Ibid.

Heidegger's thoughts on Aristotle's text, this reading represents an original and serious solution to the question of the relation between the science of "being qua being" [ὄν ἢ ὄν] and "theology" [θεολογική ἐπιστήμη] in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Instead of assuming some sort of evolution in Aristotle's thought, or a mere incoherence, Heidegger tried to show that this tension between ontology and theology is a fundamental feature of the essence of metaphysical thought itself. The well-known thesis concerning the existence of an onto-theological structure of metaphysics appeared at that precise moment, as a result of Heidegger's participation in debates, opposing thinkers such as Werner Jaeger and Paul Natorp.¹⁷

However, besides this particular interpretation of the relation between ontology and theology in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Heidegger also proposed an original reading of the object of the θεολογική ἐπιστήμη. Opposing many readings of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Heidegger attempted to show that what were usually understood as theological problems were in fact absolutely alien to Aristotle's thought. According to Heidegger's reading, the θεολογική ἐπιστήμη does not consist of a research concerning God and His possible existence. Rather, it presents an investigation into the problem of the world or, as Heidegger puts it, concerning "beings as a whole" [*das Seiende im Ganzen*]. According to Heidegger, traditional metaphysics could not tackle this problem of beings as a whole without immediately referring to a creative God, an Unmoved Mover, thought of as the efficient cause of physical nature. However, this would not have been the case in Aristotle, where the Unmoved Mover was not the efficient but the final cause of physical nature. Any similarity between Aristotle and some proof of God's existence was considered by Heidegger as a "complete misunderstanding of the θεῖον, which, in Aristotle, is at least left to stand as a problem."¹⁸ Aristotle's problem of the divine, according to Heidegger, would lead to a question concerning the world that did not consider it in terms of its "ground" [*Grund*], but that considered it as a "whole" [*Ganzes*]. The theological interpretation of this concept would be the work of Aristotelianism—

¹⁷ On this, see my *La métaphysique du Dasein. Heidegger et la possibilité de la métaphysique (1927-1930)* (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2010), part 1, ch. 2.

¹⁸ GA, vol. 29/30, p. 67/44.

not of Aristotle himself. However, to prove his point, Heidegger did not refer to the text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Rather, he tried to show that this specific problem of the world was an authentic metaphysical problem. As we will see, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* served his desire to retrieve this forgotten problem. My objective in this paper is, then, to read the interpretation Heidegger gives of Aristotle's θεολογικὴ ἐπιστήμη and of the concept of θεῖον, in order to expose the parallels between Aristotle's and Kant's enterprises clearly.

This particular Heideggerian interpretation of the concept of θεῖον beyond the Christian tradition appeared in the lecture courses of the 1920s, which Heidegger dedicated to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and to Greek philosophy in general. We find the first traces of this idea in the summer semester of 1922, dedicated to a phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle's ontology and logic. Here, Heidegger tried to show that the use Aristotle made of the adjective θεῖον should not be interpreted within a religious perspective.¹⁹ The definition Aristotle gives of "wisdom" [σοφία in the first book of the *Metaphysics* as the "science of the "divine things," [τὰ θεῖα"] was not a testimony of some prescientific phase in Aristotle's evolution—as Werner Jaeger would put it—but should be read in the light of the eighth book of *Physics*, which constitutes, for Heidegger, the key to an understanding of Aristotle's theology. In the summer of 1922, he wrote,

For Aristotle, the concept of θεῖον [divine] comes from the problem of φύσις [nature], that is to say, from its fundamental determination, that is κίνησις [movement]. And in fact, the clarification of the objective sense of the θεῖον and its sense of being is an ontological interpretation of the fundamental mobility of beings.²⁰

The concept of θεῖον should then be understood as emerging from the phenomenon of κίνησις, rather than from some religious experience. The same idea was also presented in the famous *Natorp-Bericht* in the fall of 1922:

For Aristotle, the idea of the divine does not come from the explanation of an object to which we would arrive through a

¹⁹ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zu Ontologie und Logik*, in *GA*, vol. 62 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), 101.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

fundamental religious experience. The θεῖον is rather the expression of the *supreme* character of being that results from the ontological radicalization of the idea of the moved being [*des Bewegtseienden*].²¹

Thus, Aristotle's God, the Unmoved Mover, would have no connection with religious and traditional theological problems, with which it has been associated throughout history. Considered by Heidegger as the "ferment"²² of the history of philosophy and theology up to Hegel, this notion of the θεῖον found its origin in Aristotle's attempt to understand nature's movement. If we interpret Aristotle's *Physics* as the first proof of God's existence, we only impose on Greek thought schemas that are proper to a later theology. Despite the importance that the Unmoved Mover might have had in Hegel's concept of the Absolute Spirit and all the history of Christian theology, Aristotle's God is at the outset a nontheological God, a mere "neutral ontological concept"²³ that has nothing to do with the "conceptual expression of religious life."²⁴

This would also be the case regarding Plato. In the winter semester 1924/25, in his lecture course on Plato's *Sophist*, Heidegger wrote:

Already in Plato, where the notion of the θεῖον has a more obscure and much more comprehensive sense than in Aristotle, "divine" does not have a religious meaning. . . . We must conceive the "divine" in a worldly sense [*in einem weltlichen Sinn*], or—from the standpoint of Christianity—in a pagan sense, insofar as θεῖον, "divine," here simply means to relate, in one's knowledge, to those beings having the highest rank in the order of reality. Included here is nothing like a connection of the divine or of god to an individual man in the sense of a direct personal relationship.²⁵

This "worldly" or "pagan" sense of the divine justifies Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's theology as something that is different

²¹ *Ibid.*, 389.

²² *Ibid.*, 100.

²³ *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie*, in *GA*, vol. 22 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 179.

²⁴ *GA* 62.101.

²⁵ *Platon: Sophistes*, in *GA*, vol. 19 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), 242; trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, *Plato's Sophist* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 167. Heidegger refers here to Plato's *Sophist* (216b9ff.)

from a science of God. It is rather as a science of the world or a science of beings as a whole that Heidegger speaks of Aristotle's θεολογικὴ ἐπιστήμη. Even though it was later interpreted as the science of the ground of the world, of its cause, that is not yet the case in Aristotle. Heidegger thus writes:

Theology [θεολογικὴ ἐπιστήμη] has the task of clarifying beings as a whole, the ὅλον, the beings of the world, nature, the heavens, and everything under them. . . . It must be noted that the clarification of beings as a whole, nature, by means of an unmoved mover, has nothing to do with proving God through a causal argument.²⁶

Nonetheless, this question of the concept of beings as a whole, concerning the ὅλον, would have quickly been replaced by a question concerning the “highest sphere of beings” [τιμιώτατον γένος], understood as the divine ground of the world, God [θεός]. According to Heidegger, there would be an attempt in Aristotle to question the world independently of all questioning concerned with a possible causation of the world. This theological problem would have disappeared with the emergence of the theological questions that take the world as a mere summation of all beings, which has to be questioned with respect to its creative ground, to the creator hidden behind all beings. Heidegger saw this deviation of the original problem as the work of Aristotelianism and not of Aristotle.

With this in mind, we could consider that the attempt Heidegger made to think of the world from Dasein's standpoint as “being-in-the-world” or as a “world-forming being” was some sort of solution to Aristotle's questioning of the world as a whole. In his essay *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, Heidegger explains that the fundamental ontology understands the world neither as the summation of all beings, nor with respect to its cause, but as the whole of all relations with beings which Dasein is able to project and bring to understanding: “World as a wholeness ‘is’ not a being, it is rather that from out of which Dasein *signifies to itself*, toward which beings it *can* comport itself and how it *can*.”²⁷ In this perspective, world is understood as the wholeness of

²⁶ GA 19. 222/153.

²⁷ “Welt als Ganzheit ‘ist’ kein Seiendes, sondern das, aus dem her das Dasein *sich zu bedeuten gibt*, zu welchem Seienden und wie es sich dazu verhalten kann.” *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, in *Wegmarken (1919-1961)*, vol. 9, GA (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976), 157; trans. W. McNeill,

the possibilities Dasein gives to beings. World is not the summation of all effective beings, but rather a frame that contains the possibilities of beings and in which beings have to appear.

A century and a half earlier, another German philosopher had also thought of beings as having to enter reality, passing through just such a frame of all possibilities. With his concept of a "transcendental ideal," Kant paved the way for Heidegger's understanding of the world as a whole. And as we will see, Heidegger also considered this Kantian notion as the key concept to understanding Aristotle's θεολογικὴ ἐπιστήμη, as well as the traditional misunderstandings about Aristotle's position.

III

Thus, in many of his 1920s lecture courses Heidegger affirmed that the Aristotelian problem of the θεῖον opened ways of questioning to which the philosophers who followed were blind. Instead of following Aristotle's intuitions, they dedicated all their efforts to the problem of the foundation or causation of the whole of beings by a supreme being, a θεός. As Heidegger wrote in the winter semester of 1926/27, "In this Aristotelian point of departure lies a fundamental problem which the tradition concealed by misinterpreting it in a theological, Christian and anthropological way."²⁸ This *theological* deviation or deflection of an authentic *theological* problem that characterizes the whole of Western metaphysical tradition constitutes an important issue in Heidegger's "*Zurück zu Aristoteles!*" of the 1920s.

In the summer 1928 lecture course dedicated to Leibniz, Heidegger gave a schematic overview of his understanding of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and of the tasks we face when trying to retrieve metaphysical questions. In this presentation, Heidegger also referred to the recent debates concerning the unity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, as found in the works of Natorp and Jaeger. Natorp considered Aristotle's solution in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* to

Pathmarks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121; italics in original.

²⁸ GA 22. 330.

be incoherent, while Jaeger thought it testified to Aristotle's general evolution from theology to ontology.²⁹ In this lecture course, Heidegger rejected both solutions, concluding, "these questions cannot be resolved solely through historical-philological interpretation."³⁰ He maintained that the question of the unity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* could not be solved by simply reading the texts, but it also required a good acquaintance with the history of Western thought, in which the essence of metaphysics manifested itself. A good knowledge of Aristotle is not sufficient, said Heidegger. One also has to be concerned about these problems in order to understand what is at stake here. Heidegger writes:

These questions cannot be resolved solely through historical-philological interpretation. On the contrary, this interpretation itself requires that we be guided by an understanding of the problem which is a match for what is handed down [*diese bedarf selbst die Leitung durch ein Problemverständnis, das dem Überlieferten gewachsen ist*]. And we must first acquire such an understanding.³¹

The understanding of the nature of metaphysical questioning and of the meaning of each of its orientations is a requirement for correctly grasping Aristotle's problem. What might at first astonish the reader of this lecture course is that, here, Heidegger explicitly referred to Kant. Heidegger wrote: "See Kant on this point: 'Von dem transzendentalen Ideal,' *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*."³²

Heidegger thus singled out a link between Aristotle's fundamental metaphysical problem and the precise chapter of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* that is concerned with the transcendental ideal. This note is somewhat enigmatic, insofar as it does not say in what way this chapter constitutes what Heidegger calls an "understanding of the problem which is a match for what is handed down." However, there is no doubt that Heidegger considered this precise chapter, "Of the

²⁹ On this, see Enrico Berti, "La Metafisica di Aristotele: 'Onto-teologia' o 'filosofia prima'?" *Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica* 2-4 (1993): 256-82 and Jean-François Courtine, "Métaphysique et ontothéologie," in eds. J.M. Narbonne and L. Langlois, *La métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux* (Paris/Québec: Vrin/PUL, 1999), 137-58.

³⁰ GA 26.17

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., n. 3.

Transcendental Ideal,” as a contribution to such an understanding—even though he did not tell us how.

The aforementioned chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* introduces a section dedicated to the “Grounds of proof [*Beweisgründen*] of speculative reason inferring the existence of a highest being” and thus, to a topic intimately linked to that of the onto-theological unity of metaphysics. That particular problem of God’s existence reveals, according to Heidegger, that Kant belonged to the onto-theological tradition. In 1927, long before the 1961 conference *Kants These über das Sein*, Heidegger already thought that the statement of the ontological thesis—“*Sein ist kein reales Prädikat*”—in a theological context should not be considered astonishing:

Kant discusses the most general concept of being, where he is dealing with the knowability of a wholly determinate, distinctive being, namely, God. But, to anyone who knows the history of philosophy (ontology), this fact is so little surprising that it rather simply makes clear how directly Kant stands in the great tradition of ancient and Scholastic ontology. God is the supreme being, *summum ens*, the most perfect being, *ens perfectissimum*. What most perfectly *is*, is obviously most suited to be the exemplary being, from which the idea of being can be read off.³³

Nevertheless, in the lecture course of summer 1928, Heidegger did not refer to Kant’s thesis about being but to a very precise chapter of the first *Critique* in which a particular problem arises. As I would like to show here, Kant’s chapter “Of the Transcendental Ideal” gave precise indications for the Aristotelian problem which was mentioned earlier, namely, that of an interpretation of “divine” [θεῖον] in terms of “God” [θεός], the theological interpretation of the pagan problem of the divine. It seems that Kant tried to determine, before Heidegger, what drives philosophical thinking from θεῖον towards θεός—or, to paraphrase Kant, from the transcendental ideal towards the God of theology. As this paper will show, this Kantian concept of a transcendental ideal gives some clues to the misinterpretation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* by his followers.

³³ *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, in *GA*, vol. 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976), 37–8; trans. A. Hofstadter, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 29.

To my knowledge, the only person who has tried to give an interpretation of Heidegger's enigmatic reference to Kant's transcendental ideal in the summer 1928 lecture course is Enrico Berti, in his article on the onto-theological structure of Aristotle's metaphysics. According to Berti, Heidegger was here referring to his *Kantbuch* and to the sections he dedicated to the distinction between ontology [*metaphysica generalis*] and special metaphysics [*metaphysica specialis*], a distinction understood as a retrieval of Aristotle's onto-theological problem.³⁴ However, Berti did not take into account the fact that Heidegger explicitly referred here to one precise chapter of Kant's *Critique*, a chapter that plays no important role in the *Kantbuch*.³⁵

Heidegger evoked the problem of the transcendental ideal a few times in his lecture courses and writings,³⁶ usually referring to Kant's understanding of finite knowledge and to the fact that God has knowledge of the totality of possibilities. In these years, Heidegger was to insist many times on the fact that reason's finitude is always thought of negatively in modern philosophy, as compared to an infinite reason. The concept was considered for the first time in the winter 1926/27 lecture course, entitled *Geschichte der Philosophie von Thomas von Aquin bis Kant*. In this text, Heidegger gave great importance to Kant's concept of the transcendental ideal, considering it the point of departure for all post-Kantian philosophy, "above all, for the most significant philosophy, that of Schelling and Hegel."³⁷ And, while showing how the onto-theological structure of metaphysical thinking played a role in Thomas Aquinas, Heidegger wrote that

³⁴ Enrico Berti, "La Metafisica di Aristotele," 258–9.

³⁵ It is actually mentioned once in the book (*GA*, 3, 152/107), but it plays no central role in it.

³⁶ See *Geschichte der Philosophie von Thomas von Aquin bis Kant*, in *GA*, vol. 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2006), 6, 9, 203, 209, and 216; *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in *GA*, vol. 25 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977), 416; trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 282; *GA*, vol. 26, pp. 17, 55, 225, and 229/14, 44, 175, and 178; *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, in *GA*, vol. 27 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 276, 290–6, and 404; *GA*, vol. 9, pp. 152, 161/118–19, and 125; *GA*, vol. 3, pp. 152/107; *Nietzsche: Seminare 1937 und 1944*, in *GA*, vol. 87 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2004), 149.

³⁷ *GA* 23.8–9.

Aquinas' theology had to be understood from the point of view of Kant's notion of the transcendental ideal. Even though this text is not too explicit, it does refer directly to the fact that Kant's transcendental ideal is the key to understanding the relationship between Aquinas' theology and an earlier theology, which presumably is Aristotle's.³⁸

However, apart from the note from the summer semester 1928, there is no clear link established between this chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and Aristotle's problem of the θεῖον. In the winter semester 1927/28 lecture course entitled *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, which followed the one on Leibniz, Heidegger presented a long commentary on Kant's transcendental ideal. Yet, even though it was another testimony to this chapter's importance, his commentary never went beyond paraphrase. A short mention of our problem, nonetheless, emerges. In this lecture course, Heidegger highlighted the fact that the problem of the transcendental ideal not only has to do with theology but that it is also of a highly philosophical nature:

This reference [to Christian theology] doesn't mean that . . . the problem falls in advance outside of the philosophical discussion. On the contrary, it indicates that in the discussion of this idea lies the fundamental possibility for a clarification of *the fundamental problem of ancient philosophy* and the way it had an impact on medieval Scholastic philosophy.³⁹

Kant's text "Of the Transcendental Ideal [*prototypon transcendentale*]" consists of a very dense twelve page introduction to the questions concerning the possible proof of the existence of a supreme being, a section that concludes the "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements." After the exposition of his "System of Transcendental Ideas," Kant continues with what he calls the *ideal of pure reason*. An *ideal*, Kant writes, is a concept that serves as a standard [*Richtmaß*] in order to judge the integrality of the determination [*Bestimmung*] of a concrete thing. The finite knowledge of a thing—that a finite being might have—is always considered finite, as opposed to a hypothetical complete and perfect knowledge of it. According to Kant, this partial determination of a thing is the only determination of which human understanding is capable and is always carried out with respect to a

³⁸ Ibid., 216.

³⁹ GA 27.294; italics mine.

possible complete determination of the thing. That is to say, human reason possesses a purely subjective idea of such a complete determination of a thing, from which it evaluates the determination it is capable of. Thus, the simple fact that I am aware of the incompleteness of my determination of a thing is a testimony to my possessing such an idea of a theoretically possible complete determination. The reason aims at complete and perfect determination, without being able empirically to reach it: “Hence reason thinks an object is to be thoroughly determinable . . . , although the conditions appropriate for this determination are lacking in experience and the concept itself is thus transcendent.”⁴⁰ If a thing can always be determined more precisely, it is because we aim toward this ideal of a complete determination, even though it is only possible through an infinite understanding.

To use an analogy, Kant writes that we judge the degree of an action’s virtue by comparing it to a moral *ideal*—which is, according to him, the wise man of the Stoics—an ideal that, although it exists only in one’s thought, is completely congruent with the idea of wisdom.⁴¹ Just as the wise man of the Stoics serves as a standard to judge, at a moral level, one’s virtue, pure reason also possesses, at a speculative level, a standard to which it can compare the degree of completeness of the determination or of the knowledge of a thing. “Just as the idea gives the *rule*,” Kant writes, “so the ideal serves in this case as the *archetype* [*Urbild*] for the thoroughgoing determination of the copy [*Nachbild*].”⁴²

When speculative reason claims to thoroughly determine a thing, it must compare its partial determination to a standard understood as the whole of possibility. Every single thing is thus considered:

in relation to *the whole of possibility* [*auf die gesammte Möglichkeit*], as the sum total [*Inbegriff*] of all predicates of things

⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 571/B 599. The English translation of this text is mine but is based on the translations by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996) and Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, A 569/B 597ff.

⁴² *Ibid.*

in general . . . , as deriving its own possibility from the share it has in that whole of possibility."⁴³

This "sum total of all predicates of things," which Kant also calls the transcendental ideal is, in other words, the storehouse where all predicates that can be attributed to a thing are stocked, a "transcendental substratum . . . which contains, as it were, the entire storehouse of material from which all possible predicates of things are to be supplied."⁴⁴ Thus, a concrete thing is conceived as a limitation of this sum total of all predicates, in the same way as a geometrical figure represents a limitation of infinite geometrical space.⁴⁵ The complete determination of a thing, if possible, is carried out as a limitation of all possible predicates to the sole predicates that properly constitute the thing itself. However, this would mean, writes Kant, that "to attain a complete knowledge of a thing, one must possess a knowledge of everything that is possible," something that of course never happens for a human subject. This idea of a thoroughgoing determination is thus a concept that has no existence *in concreto* and resides only in reason.⁴⁶ However, even though a thoroughgoing determination has no objective reality, Kant nonetheless considers this transcendental ideal as a necessary concept for the knowledge of a thing, thought of as a share of the whole of all predicates.

So what is the ontological status that Kant reserves for this extraordinary concept called the transcendental ideal and that exists only in thought? This "whole of all possibilities" or "of all possible predicates in general" is an *ideal*; that is, something that cannot be represented empirically but that does not, however, have the status of a chimera. The ideal "forms the basis of the complete determination of everything that exists."⁴⁷ Kant writes:

It is obvious that reason, in achieving its purpose, namely, of representing the necessary complete determination of things, does not presuppose the existence of a being that corresponds to this ideal, but only the idea of such a being. . . . The ideal is, therefore, the archetype [*prototypon*] of all things, every one of which, as

⁴³ Ibid., A 572/B 600; italics mine.

⁴⁴ Ibid., A 575–6/B 603–4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., A 578/B 606.

⁴⁶ Ibid., A 573/B 601.

⁴⁷ Ibid., A 576/B 604.

imperfect copies [*ectypa*], derives from it the material of its possibility.⁴⁸

Kant gave this ideal different names. These are all names that traditional theology gave to God, but Kant tried to sort out what belonged properly to the transcendental ideal. He first called it the primordial being [*ens originarium*] insofar as all things—understood as incomplete copies—derive from it, as does the copy from an archetype. The transcendental ideal is also the highest being [*ens summum*], insofar as anything that exists is below it. Even though it might not be an effective being, as a possible being it is the highest of all. It is finally the being of all beings [*ens entium*], insofar as everything is conditioned by it. However, even though this transcendental ideal presents itself as a necessity for the speculative use of pure reason, we do not have the right, argued Kant, to deduce, speculatively, its objective existence.

Despite having got this far, speculative reason must come to a halt in the determination of the transcendental ideal. Every additional determination—let's say “singular,” “simple,” “all-sufficient,” “eternal,” and so on—constitutes a hypostasis that leads speculative reason to define, illegitimately, the primordial being as a God.⁴⁹ The transcendental ideal is only the concept—not the cause—of all reality. For a thing to be determined integrally, the sole idea of the sum total of all predicates is sufficient. Our world, understood as the effectuation of certain possibilities, constitutes a limitation of this primordial sum total, of the archetype called the transcendental ideal. Nonetheless, the relation between the world and this ideal should not be understood as a causal relation. If this world is included in the transcendental ideal (as its limitation), it is not, as Heidegger puts it, in the sense of “an ontical dependency of the finite things as created toward an existing creator,”⁵⁰ but as the restriction of an absolute totality of all possible things. The transcendental ideal contains the sum total of all worldly possibilities without being the cause of the world, its ground or its fundament.

⁴⁸ Ibid., A 577–8/B 605–6.

⁴⁹ Ibid., A 580/B 608.

⁵⁰ GA 27.295.

When reason infers the existence of a God from the transcendental ideal, it thus makes it a “pure fiction”;⁵¹ it takes this supreme reality as if it “would underlie the possibility of all things as a ground, and not as a sum total, as a whole.”⁵² What Kant writes here is fundamental for our purpose: it is an illegitimate use of speculative reason that leads us to interpret the whole of all possible reality, the transcendental ideal, as a basis, the ground for all things. And, with this illegitimate inference, the transcendental ideal becomes “the object of a transcendental *theology*.”⁵³ As Kant wrote, the three terms he used to refer to the ideal—*ens originarium*, *ens summum*, *ens entium*—do not “signify the objective relation of an actual object to other things, but only that of an idea to concepts; and, as to the existence of a being of such preeminent excellence, it leaves us in complete ignorance.”⁵⁴ Speculative reason is in need of such a concept in order to produce finite determinations of things. However, this need does not prove the existence of a supreme being in any way.

So how can we explain this transformation of the transcendental ideal which, first understood as the sum of all reality, becomes the ground for all things? Kant writes,

This ideal of the supremely real being . . . is first *realized* [*realisirt*], that is, made into an object; thereupon it is *hypostatized*; finally, by a natural advance of reason to the completion of unity, the ideal is even personified.⁵⁵

This by no means signifies that God's existence is an illusion. What Kant wants to propose here is reason's incapacity, at a speculative level, to apprehend the existence of such a being. As has been said, this illegitimate use of speculative reason led it to transform the whole [*Inbegriff*] into a ground [*Grund*]⁵⁶—or, according to Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle, to transform the θεῖον into a θεός.

The sections that Heidegger dedicated to this Kantian question in his winter 1928/29 lecture course do not mention Aristotle directly. As we have seen, he only mentioned some “philosophical fundamental

⁵¹ *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 580/B 608.

⁵² “Vielmehr würde der Möglichkeit aller Dinge die höchste Realität als ein *Grund* und nicht als *Inbegriff* zum Grunde liegen.” *Ibid.*, A 579/B 607.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, A 580/B 608; italics mine.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, A 579/B 607.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, A 583/B 611, note; italics mine.

problem,” which could, as I have argued, refer to the unity of metaphysical thought. However, the parallel that can be drawn between the Heideggerian-Aristotelian theological problem and the one presented in this chapter of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* leaves no doubt as to a possible connection. According to this interpretation, we should conclude that the “worldly” concept of θεῖον as found in Aristotle does not characterize so much a being that would be the cause of all beings, as a sum of all possibility from which a concrete being could be determined; what Heidegger refers to normally as beings as a whole, *das Seiende im Ganzen*. The interpretation of this whole of all predicates as a ground was not so much the work of Aristotle as of the tradition that made, according to Kant’s idea, an illegitimate use of speculative reason.

IV

The interpretation given here of Heidegger’s reference to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* in the context of an exegesis of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* could seem somewhat risky as it is not supported directly by any other Heideggerian text. Nonetheless, the parallels drawn between both problems—that is, between Heidegger’s understanding of the erroneous traditional interpretation of Aristotle and, on the other hand, the Kantian idea of an illegitimate inference of the existence of a supreme being, based on the concept of “the sum of all possibilities”—seem clearly to point to the presence of a common problem in Kant and in Aristotle. Aristotelianism, like the whole tradition, succumbed to the temptation of interpreting the transcendental ideal in theological terms. While Kant provides the clues for us to understand the mechanisms of such an illegitimate interpretation and the key to avoiding it, the traditional interpretation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as a direct ancestor of the proof of God’s existence gives us the perfect historic illustration of the problem.

The demonstration Heidegger gives of this erroneous interpretation of Aristotle’s concept of θεῖον cannot be carried out on the basis of a philological study of Aristotle’s work—that is precisely the critique he addressed to Natorp and Jaeger in 1928. In fact, his interpretation takes as its basis a mechanism that belongs to human reason and that Kant highlighted in his first *Critique*. What value can

we give to such a Kantian interpretation of Aristotle's work? Philologically speaking, probably none. However, embedded in an investigation specifically concerning the essence of metaphysics, this Heideggerian attempt to retrieve the Aristotelian problem with regard not to a better understanding of Aristotle's work but to a better understanding of man's attempts to answer metaphysical questions, is surely an important contribution. These problems which Aristotle and Kant confronted find here a new shape. They are transformed and revived to such extent that they bring the metaphysical investigation to life once more.

So how does this problem of a deviation of the question concerning beings as a whole to another one concerning the ground of all beings become an important question for today's philosophy? Is this question of the pretheological status of Aristotle's concept of the divine a mere historical issue, or could it also be a question for current metaphysics or, at least, for Heidegger's metaphysics of Dasein? It seems, in fact, that this ontological or metaphysical enterprise that Heidegger carried out gives importance to something we might call a *theiological*—not theological—question, which could be seen as retrieving Aristotle's problem of the θεῖον. This metaphysical project claims in fact to give an answer to a question concerning not only beings as beings, the ontological question, but also to a question concerning beings as a whole, a *theiological* question that calls upon Aristotle's heritage.

So we might consider Heidegger's project of a metaphysics of Dasein as the retrieval of the two main problems of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*—that of the science of the ὄν ἢ ὅν and that of the θεολογική ἐπιστήμη—two questions that had been forgotten by tradition. *Sein und Zeit* tried explicitly to retrieve the first of the two questions. The second one—the question concerning the phenomenon of the world, beings as a whole—was also passed over by the ontological tradition, as Heidegger had already written in *Sein und Zeit*.⁵⁶ From these two questions, Heidegger discovered a certain onto-theological structure in his own metaphysical thinking. He explicitly drew parallels between his own attempt and Aristotle's in the summer semester of 1928 and in the next one, during the winter semester of

⁵⁶ SZ 100/93.

1928/29. In the latter, Heidegger affirmed that the problem of being is not the sole metaphysical problem and that both the problems of being and of the world “constitute the authentic concept of metaphysics.”⁵⁷ This idea had already emerged in the summer semester of 1928 when he brought up the idea of a “special problematic which has for its proper theme beings as a whole,” a “new investigation” that was the result of the overturning of ontology and to which Heidegger gave the name “metontology.”⁵⁸ Heidegger here referred directly to the dual structure of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:

In their unity, fundamental ontology and metontology constitute the concept of metaphysics. But herein is simply expressed the transformation of the one basic problem of philosophy itself, the one [of] the dual conception of philosophy as πρώτη φιλοσοφία [first philosophy] and θεολογία [theology].⁵⁹

During these years, Heidegger tried to find a way to deal with the problem of the world without taking it as the summation of all effective beings, as would the natural sciences. In order to do so during the winter semester 1929/30 lecture course, Heidegger even retrieved his own idea of “formal indication” to differentiate his philosophical approach to the phenomenon of the world from the scientific concept of the world. As we can see clearly in texts such as *Vom Wesen des Grundes* or in this 1929/30 metaphysical lecture course, Heidegger’s notion of the world does not concern only the effective beings, but also all possible beings. Insofar as the world is characterized not so much by effective beings as by Dasein’s projection of his many relations with beings, Heidegger did not try to examine the cause of all effective beings but rather attempted to grasp

⁵⁷ GA 27.324.

⁵⁸ GA 26.199/157. On the Heideggerian concept of metontology, see, among others: Steven Galt Crowell, “Metaphysics, Metontology, and the End of *Being and Time*,” in *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 222–43; Theodore Kisiel, “Das Versagen von *Sein und Zeit*: 1927-1930,” in ed. Thomas Rentsch, *Martin Heidegger. Sein und Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 263–4; Jean Grondin, “Der deutsche Idealismus und Heideggers Verschäferung des Problems der Metaphysik nach *Sein und Zeit*,” in ed. Harald Seubert, *Heideggers Zwiegespräch mit dem Deutschen Idealismus* (Köln: Böhlau, 2003), 46–7; Jean Greisch, *Ontologie et temporalité. Esquisse d’une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit* (Paris: PUF, 1994), 481–3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 202/158.

the world's unity, its wholeness, or what he also called its "curvature" [*Rundung*].⁶⁰

Grasping Dasein as "being-in-the-world" or as a "world-forming being" opens new ways of posing this problem. However, this nontraditional approach nonetheless has some precedents. We have seen that this concept of beings as a whole could be found in Kant's idea of a whole of all possibility, the transcendental ideal that lies at the bottom of all effective beings without acting as a cause. We also found in Aristotle's notion of the divine an antecedent of an attempt to approach the world with regard not to its cause but to its wholeness—the divine [θεῖον] understood as a whole [ὅλον] and not as God [θεός]. In this regard, Heidegger's metaphysical enterprise succeeded in retrieving the question hidden behind the historical theologizing misinterpretations of Aristotle.⁶¹

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⁶⁰ GA, vol. 29/30, pp. 412/284.

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