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Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger: The Role of Method in Thinking the Infinite

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I dedicate my work here to my mother, Ishbel Hanley; to the joyous spirit of my father, Edward Hanley; and to the memory of Marcel who saw it all. In gratitude.
At any rate, when light breaks over me
The way it did on the road beyond Coleraine
Where wind got saltier, the sky more hurried

And silver lamé shivered on the Bann
Out in mid-channel between the painted poles,
That day I’ll be in step with what escaped me.

-Seamus Heaney
From “Squarings”
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INTRODUCTION

It is less difficult now than it might have been twenty years ago to justify a comparative study of Aristotle and Heidegger. It long ago entered the canonical Heidegger mythology that Brentano’s dissertation on the four senses of being in Aristotle inspired Heidegger to ask the one question that obsessed him. However, the publication of Heidegger’s courses have revealed the extent to which Heidegger was in conversation with the Greek master on the question of being.

The following pages take a largely historical approach to the question of the relationship between being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger. My text treats less the influence of Aristotle on Heidegger, or Heidegger’s interpretations of Aristotle, than the problem itself as conceived by each of the two philosophers. How, I ask, is the relationship between being and God construed in each thinker, and what is the role of methodology in the determination of this relationship?

I look first to Aristotle for the roots of Western ontology, and then at the reversal of the traditional lines of metaphysics as interpreted by Heidegger. Aristotle cannot discuss being without reference to a temporally infinite god; two thousand years later, Heidegger replies to Aristotle with a finite- and godless- ontology. But the question of the infinite, a notion traditionally associated with God, remains present, though unspoken and non-thematized, in Heidegger’s thought. The final chapter of the dissertation offers some indications of how we might rethink the relation of the finite to the infinite, accepting
Heidegger's finite ontology, but seeking a way to coherently reincorporate a notion of the infinite.

In the first part of the following work, I examine Aristotle's notion of being [tà òn] with a view to the essential role played by God in the framework of that ontology. I argue that whether we conceive the science of being *qua* being [tà òn hé òn] as ontology, ousiology, or theology, in the final analysis the unity of this science is determined through aetiology.¹

Science for Aristotle is the search for *aitía*, which, as I discuss, I translate as "grounds".² God appears in Aristotle as the ground of the movement from potentiality to actuality characteristic of all beings in the physical world. In the *Physics*, the word "God" does not appear. The deification of a primary ground is not possible within the scope of natural science, anymore than it would be appropriate for the modern physicist to appeal to God as explanatory of the "big bang". However, throughout the *Metaphysics*, and particularly in book Lambda, Aristotle does use the work "God" to designate that which in the *Physics* was named the primary principle of movement. God is further characterized in the *Metaphysics* as fully actual and eternal.

Whether as active causal principle or as the teleological focus of desire, God is firmly placed within the realm of being. Neither God nor being are ever characterized as

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¹ These four aspects of Aristotle's science of being, viz. aetiology, ousiology, ontology, theology, are often characterized in the literature as irreconcilable (Jaeger, Natorp, Aubenque); as reducible to theology (Owens); or as in harmonious unity (Reale). My argument relies on a study of the *Posterior Analytics*, where Aristotle presents his view of science.

² See Chapter one, sec. II for a justification of this translation.
*ápeiron* (non-limited or infinite in respect of quantity); however, both God and the cosmos are temporally infinite. Being is thus quantitatively finite but eternal; and the eternal movement of beings from potentiality to the fulfillment of actuality is grounded in the eternal presence of a non-kinetic, immaterial, fully actual God.

The second part of the dissertation looks at how the early Heidegger (up until the "turn" in the mid-1930’s), re-interprets and transforms Aristotle’s notion of being: he sets it against the backdrop of human existentiality—a constellation not found in Aristotle—and disentangles being from the concept of God. Heidegger’s fundamental ontology entails the destruction of ontotheology. The study of ontology has traditionally been divided, in his view, between the questions of: 1) what is common to all beings; and 2) what unifies beings as a whole. Whereas Aristotle grounds general being [τὸ ὄν]- treated as the study of form- in a supreme being [*theós*] that unifies beings, Heidegger unifies the two questions through an appeal to the perspective of finite human being living in a world of concrete activity. In this reading, the radical linking of ontology and theology in Aristotle—wherein God is explanatory of being— is abandoned for an approach to the meaning of being that begins with human involvement in determining the meaning of being.

Heidegger examines being through a phenomenological study of "Dasein", human being understood in its ontic and ontological character. His question in *Being and Time* concerns the meaning of being for Dasein:³ this changed view of the type of questioning

³ This is true also of his lecture courses in the years surrounding the publication of *Being and Time* (see bibliography).
that belongs to philosophy makes the aetiological role God played in Aristotle irrelevant to Heidegger’s ontological framework.

Nor does Heidegger develop desire in relation to God, but in relation to Dasein as transcendence towards the world; Dasein reaches out to possibilities it sees in the world. Heidegger reverses the Aristotelian priority of actuality over potentiality, arguing that human beings interpret the world in terms of possibility. He no longer seeks grounds for what is actually present, but looks at the limits of human being in understanding possibilities. This indicates a further shift from the priority of the theoretical in Aristotle, to Heidegger’s emphasis on the more primordial praxis of Dasein in transcendence. Since Dasein is temporally finite (human beings are mortal), the possibilities it can reach towards in transcendence are finite: being therefore, which is always meaningfulness for Dasein, is also experienced as temporally finite. What then of the infinite?

At the end of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, Heidegger asks but does not respond to the question of what the presupposition of an infinite might imply for Dasein. In point of fact, Heidegger does not have much to say about either the infinite or God, although he is uncompromising about the non-identification of his own notion of being, and God. In Heidegger’s thought, it seems there is no role left for an infinite “God”, yet it seems that the concept nonetheless remains, and remains unaccounted for. Is there any way to accept Heidegger’s analyses without abandoning a philosophical concept of God? These are the questions with which my dissertation ends, although I do in the last pages offer some suggestions towards a solution. In the disposition of angst, Dasein, confronted with the limitations of its own finite existence, is thrown back on its own finite
possibilities which it appropriates in authenticity. I suggest that equally gratitude, phenomenologically experienced as a response to being in the world at all, is an experience of the infinite.

Although I refer to many of Aristotle’s texts, my interpretations of Aristotle focus primarily on the *Metaphysics*, which, as I discuss below, I read as an integrated work; and on the *Posterior Analytics*, which I use principally in relation to Aristotle’s treatment of “scientific” method. I also treat the *Nichomachean Ethics*, particularly the sixth book, and *De Interpretatione*, works which Heidegger frequently discusses in his courses.

In general, I work with Heidegger’s published texts, lectures and courses from the years immediately preceding the publication of *Being and Time*, (GA 19-24; from WS 1924\25 to SS 1927), to those in the subsequent five years (GA26-33, up to SS 1931). I include references to an early text published as an introduction to a book that never appeared, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* (1922). This is a seminal text which contains in embryonic form some of Heidegger’s later views on Aristotle. I also treat *On the Essence of Truth*, which, though published late, was presented in a series of lectures in 1930. I make occasional reference to later texts, in order to show a line of development in Heidegger’s thought.

The rationale for treating only this period is first of all manageability. Heidegger’s thought takes a different turn in the early thirties: a turn away from the Dasein-analysis. In these later years, Heidegger develops a notion of the divine not found in the earlier work, and it would be a very large task, one meriting a separate volume, to treat this in relation to Aristotle. It seems clear that Heidegger’s thinking after the *Kehre* is a
development of his thought before the turn;\(^4\) all the more reason to have a good grip on the large corpus of early writings before broaching the later works. Another reason to focus on the early Heidegger is that it is in the writings surrounding *Being and Time* that his debt to Aristotle is most clearly in evidence, both explicitly and implicitly.

A further, important note. Much of the recent scholarship on Heidegger has been concerned with documenting his involvement in National Socialism. There is now no doubt whatsoever that Heidegger was an member of the party, gave active support to anti-semitic administrative decisions, betrayed his friends and colleagues, and maintained belief in a peculiar version of National Socialism from 1932 virtually to the end of the war. The question of whether his writings are infected with such thinking remains open. In the works I treat here, I find no textual evidence that supports any particular political stance; though we might want to look twice at concepts such as “fate”, “destiny” and “the history of being”, given uses Heidegger made of these terms in other nefarious contexts.

\(^4\) See Heidegger's preface, written in 1962, to Richardson (1974). Heidegger says that there is a turn or a change in his thought, already underway ten years prior to 1947. But “the basic question of *Being and Time* is not in any sense abandoned by reason of the *Kehre*” (xviii). Further, “only by way of what [Heidegger] I has thought does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by [Heidegger] II. But the thought of [Heidegger] I becomes possible only if it is contained in [Heidegger] II” (xxii).
PART ONE

ARISTOTLE

It is always possible to ask why.\(^5\)

The role that God plays in Aristotle’s metaphysics is dictated by methodology. In part one of this dissertation, I argue that for Aristotle, God is eternal non-kinetic complete actuality: pure form. As such, he is the ground of the movement from potentiality to actuality that defines beings in the physical cosmos; and he is the principle of understanding being \textit{qua} being. The seeking of \textit{aitía}, or grounds, determines a science, or \textit{epistêmē}, and the kind of knowledge characterized by the understanding of grounds is the goal of science. Aristotle says that the \textit{Metaphysics} treats the first \textit{epistêmē}, which he calls both the science of being \textit{qua} being and the science of theology. In order to grasp the formal relation between God and being in Aristotle’s ontology, I argue, it is important to understand what \textit{epistêmē} means, and how the search for grounds colours Aristotle’s questioning. This is the task of my first chapter.

Science, I argue there, is the search for universal grounds of phenomena peculiar to a particular subject genus. To be scientifically explicable, phenomena must be grasped according to their essence or species form; this essence is expressed as a universal in the definition. Knowledge of universal grounds and definitions is possible by means of the

\[^5\text{An. Post. II: 92 b 25}\]
identification and noetic intuition of universal principles. Knowledge of these is ultimately grounded in perception of particulars.

In chapter two, I discuss the *Metaphysics* as a search for first principles and *aitía*, ones that apply universally to being *qua* being. The study of being is focussed on *ousía*, the primary phenomenon of the primary science. *Ousía* must be understood according to its form or essence in order to be universally explicable. Sensible *ousía* is the starting point for knowledge of universal principles, since knowledge begins with perception.

In chapter three, I argue that the first mover or the *ousía* named God is the primary ground of sensible *ousía*, and the primary principle that makes universal knowledge of grounds possible. God is the primary formal and final *aition* of being *qua* being, and is also consequently the primary efficient *aition* of movement in the physical cosmos.

The inextricable link between ontology and theology in Aristotle sets us up for a debate that possesses much of contemporary philosophy: the debate concerning ontotheology. The relation between Aristotle’s method of scientific seeking of grounds and the role that God plays in his theory of being is especially important to examine, given the overall task of this dissertation. I argue that whereas God is an essential part of Aristotle’s aetiological metaphysics, for Heidegger, the God of metaphysics is not an object of philosophical study.¹ The reason for this is not that Heidegger arbitrarily decides against doing ontotheology, but rather that his phenomenological method no longer seeks explanatory grounds. As we will see in Part Two of the dissertation, phenomenology in

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¹ Though as I argue in chapter six, a different kind of God might be compatible with Heidegger’s ontology.
the early Heidegger begins with description of the concrete and finite existence of human being, an ultimately groundless existence. Aristotle also begins with the concrete, but he posits the eternity of the physical cosmos, and seeks grounds. For Aristotle, there is a ground for everything concrete, even if this ground is an inexplicable principle.
CHAPTER ONE

Aristotle's Method
The Requirements of a Science

A hard look at the meaning of science will help to delineate the project of the *Metaphysics*, and to clarify the relationship that holds there between ontology and theology. In this first chapter, then, I explore the method of Aristotelian science, before discussing in subsequent chapters how this method lights the problem of being *qua* being and its relation to the concept of God.

This chapter concentrates primarily on the *Posterior Analytics*, since it is in that work that Aristotle discusses the meaning and methodology of science. In the first division, I engage in a broad exploration of the notion of *epistēmē*, and the task of the *Posterior Analytics*. The second section looks at the notion of *aitía*, grounds, while the third examines the nature of the principles, *archai*, which are used to provide *aitía*. How we come to know these principles by means of *epagōgē* and *noûs* is the subject of the fourth section. Finally section five discusses *epistēmē* and *noûs* as dianoetic dispositions [*hēxeis*], and *sophía*, wisdom, as the combined working of *epistēmē* and *noûs*.

My argument is that science is the seeking of explanatory grounds, and the search for principles that bring those grounds to light. Scientific explanatory grounds are universal, and the formal *aition* is primary. This requires that phenomena must be understood universally, according to their definition. Definitions are *aitía*, universal
statements of essence known on the basis of particulars through epagōgē; intuition of the universal is noûs. Epistēmē then is universal knowledge of grounds, founded on an intuitive grasp of universals, noûs, which is itself based on perception of particulars. The unity of epistēmē and noûs is sophía; and the science of wisdom is the subject of the Metaphysics.

I

The Meaning of "Epistēmē"

What does Aristotle mean by "epistēmē", a troublesome term translated sometimes as "science", sometimes as "understanding", and sometimes as "scientific knowledge"? "Epistēmē" comes from the composition ep-istamai, formed from epí, upon, plus the passive istamai, to be set, or to stand. Epistēmē then is the sort of knowledge that we can build upon, that which we set or stand other knowledge upon. But the word is used in a dual sense. It refers first to a subject area that is studied by means of an intellectual process that arrives at the grounds of phenomena that come within its purview; thus it is a methodological term that can be applied to different subject areas, called epistēmai- "sciences". It is also used as an epistemological term to refer to the quality of knowing that is the result of such means: understanding. In this sense, the word designates a particular kind of knowledge, knowledge characterized by an understanding of aitía, or explanatory grounds, of what is.

In the Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle defines epistēmē as a mode of conception dealing with universals and things that are of necessity (NE: 1140b 31). Now epistēmē
can be communicated through teaching, and all teaching starts from what is previously known, proceeding either by way of deduction \([\text{sullogismós]}\) or induction \([\text{epagōgē}]\) (NE 1139b 25-27). Induction supplies \(\text{archai}\), whereas deduction works from \(\text{archai}\). \(\text{Epistēmē}\) designates the outcome of a deduction from first universal principles, which are themselves known through \(\text{epagōgē}\) (induction) (NE 1139b 30) and \(\text{noûs}\) (intuition)(NE 1141a 7). \(\text{Epistēmē}\) then is the understanding of universal explanatory grounds, formally revealed through deductive applications of \(\text{archai}\).

The \textit{Posterior Analytics} lays out the characteristics of \(\text{epistēmē}\) in much more detail. The work is the study of what constitutes scientific understanding, and what the requirements are for something to be called a demonstrative science. In the second \textit{Analytics}, Aristotle is concerned with the general conception of science. He does not examine any one science in particular, but rather lays out the grounds for what constitutes an ideal, or demonstrative science. Each science should have its own object, a particular subject genus, and its own indemonstrable first principles, though all sciences have recourse to common axioms (\textit{APo}: 77a 27). A demonstrative science uses these unprovable principles to form proofs, explicitly drawing out the consequences implicit in the juxtaposition of two such principles. This it does using a syllogistic form known as a demonstration \([\text{apódeixis}]\).

Demonstration, or the scientific syllogism \([\text{sullogismòs epistemonikós}]\) (71b 17-8), like any syllogism, has a conclusion that follows from the premisses by the rules of
inference, but it is particular in that it must have true but unprovable premisses. The conclusion is a factual statement describing a state of affairs, and that must also be true. The purpose of the demonstration is not simply to "prove" a conclusion, however, but also and primarily, to show why the conclusion is true. For a science to be demonstrative, it must already have a set of first principles established, and then it should draw out proofs on the basis of these principles. Since science deals with the universal and the necessary, the body of facts resulting from demonstrations are universal statements that are always true. Since demonstration works by giving the reason why a conclusion must follow from premisses, the body of facts that composes a completed demonstrative science is also explanatory of why what is— in the specific subject genus of a science— is as it is.

There is one supreme or primary science that furnishes first principles upon which other sciences are based (though not the first principles specific to each science). This science is the one that Aristotle pursues in the *Metaphysics*. As I will argue in chapter two, the *Metaphysics* is concerned with seeking the most universal grounds and principles of what is. Since the first principles of this science apply to being *qua* being, and specifically *ousía*, they are applicable to any of the more specific subject matters of the other sciences, which study "some portion of being" (*Meta*: 1003a 25).

The science discussed in the *Metaphysics*, I will argue, is not a demonstrative science. First philosophy as Aristotle treats it there is not a demonstrative science, since

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7 Or its premisses must be themselves demonstrable on the basis of true and unprovable premisses. A non-scientific syllogism can have false premisses.
it remains in the preliminary stages of seeking and establishing its own first principles (which are used by all other sciences). Indeed establishing first principles is the stated aim of the work; and principles, as we will see below, are not demonstrable. Why then discuss demonstration here, given that this dissertation concerns a metaphysical problem, that of the relation of ontology and theology? First, because outlining the elements of a demonstrative science, that is, an ideal science, permits exploration of the constitutive elements of any science whatsoever, including that of being *qua* being. Second, because the sort of knowledge that results from demonstration, *epistēmē*, is what Aristotle is seeking with regard to *ousía* in the *Metaphysics*, even if he cannot achieve it by means of demonstration.⁸

Aristotle writes in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that scientific knowledge deals with universals and things that are of necessity and cannot vary [*ex anágkēs ára esti tò epistetón*]; it studies eternal things that do not come into existence or perish (*NE*: 1139b 20ff; 1140b 30). This indicates that scientific knowledge is of: 1) universals that express formal relations between phenomena; or 2) form as the unchangeable element of sensible things; or 3) God, which we will see is pure form, and thus the principle of rationality, the first principle of the sciences. Though all knowledge begins with perception, scientific knowledge is of the universal. Form, though particular to an individual sensible thing,

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⁸ Because in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle is seeking grounds of *ousía*, he must find principles. When he finds God as the first principle, he has found a ground; he does not take the next step of engaging in formal demonstration. Nonetheless, the study of demonstration shows us the standard that Aristotle is attaining to, in seeking grounds for *ousía* in the science of being *qua* being.
(this form in this matter), is also universal (the same form common to many individual things). Science treats the form of particulars in its universal, unchanging aspect. Science works with “facts” or propositions, statements that are based on perception of particulars, and it seeks universal true statements that are explanatory of particulars.\(^9\)

In the second *Analytics*, in constructing a demonstration, Aristotle begins with perception of things or relations between things, and then puts these perceptions into predicative form. He then uses a deductive procedure that uses pre-established first principles in predicative form to seek the explanatory grounds of the predicative statement. He begins for example with the observation that the planets do not twinkle, and seeks to construct a syllogism with this fact as the conclusion. The two premisses should be known to be true, and must entail the truth of the conclusion. Furthermore, they must be explanatory of the conclusion, i.e., they must give a reason why the planets do not twinkle. If such a demonstration is possible, then we can be said to *scientifically* understand the fact that the planets do not twinkle.\(^{10}\)

\(^{9}\) The problem of particular and universal is complex and crucial, and will receive detailed treatment below and in subsequent chapters. See Hintikka (1960) for a discussion of how “truth in every instance” in Aristotle implies the necessity of universal attributes, as well as their universality in time. See also Hintikka (1986) on ambiguity between the being of facts and individuals in Aristotle. And further on the topic as it applies here see McKirahan (1992: Chapter ten), who discusses that necessary and eternal scientific facts can clearly apply to non-eternal particulars. Aristotle writes that scientific facts are always and eternal, but this does not entail that science requires particulars that exist eternally.

\(^{10}\) In the *Metaphysics*, such a method is not possible until the first principles, which could serve as premisses, are established. Nonetheless, the *Metaphysics* is an attempt to ground certain phenomena; it is a search for first principles which could be used in demonstrations to reveal the *aitia* of these phenomena.
Science, as the search for grounds, begins with what is the case, and looks for conditions explanatory of its possibility. I call this type of argument "transcendental". Transcendental arguments are of course aetiological: they seek grounds for givens. Such arguments in a sense have the form of deductions "read upwards" from conclusion to the premisses that ensure the truth of the conclusion. But the important difference between demonstration and transcendental argument is that the principles (or formally speaking, premisses) of transcendental arguments are not established prior to the conclusion. They are rather necessary postulates, made on the basis of the perceived truth of the conclusion, and in order to ground the conclusion. Though the primary function of demonstration as discussed in the second Analytics is to ground perceived phenomena and not to establish new facts, it works with principles that are already established. Demonstration is the formalized mode of a search for grounds: it is an ideal form of argument, since it not only reveals grounds transcendentally, but also works downwards from known premisses, and thus deductively proves the conclusion.

It is naturally possible to construct demonstrations using previously known premisses for the purpose of arriving at new facts, but this is not the primary function of science.

11 My use of this term is not to suggest that this method of reasoning should be equated with Kant's "transcendental": Aristotle is in no way attempting to ground the given in a body of a priori principles. Any notion of "pre-existent" knowledge in Aristotle is in relation to first principles which are known prior to any possible deductive outcomes of their use in demonstration. I choose the term "transcendental" merely to denote the direction of inquiry, from a given, to the condition of possibility for that given. The argumentation is "re-ductive" rather than deductive.

12 The arguments that Aristotle constructs for the necessity of a prime mover are transcendental and non-demonstrative in this sense (see chapter three).
demonstrative or not. Jonathan Barnes maintains in his revised translation and commentary (1993) that the *Posterior Analytics* has as its chief aim to determine how facts and theories discovered by scientists should be systematically organized and intelligibly presented; the purpose of demonstration is to arrange facts such that their interrelations and grounds become clear, not to discover what is unknown.13 This corresponds with McKirahan’s view, in his seminal text devoted to the *Analytics* (1992). In chapter seventeen particularly, Mckirahan distinguishes between “knowledge of the fact” and “knowledge of the reason why”, arguing that to expose the latter is most properly, in Aristotle’s own view, the purpose of the scientific syllogism. Ferejohn (1991) argues for a two-stage interpretation of Aristotle’s demonstrative science, in which demonstration only applies to the organization of patterns of reasoning in a “finished” science, (one in which the research has been completed). But in this second phase, it is the explanatory function of the demonstration which is primordial: “a demonstration must above all constitute an explanation”.14

The general consensus among these major commentators then is that the purpose of science is not simply to gather new information deductively on the basis of what is already known but rather, and even primarily, to ground observed states of affairs. The

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13 Barnes originally argued in this context that in the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle was “giving the pedagogue advice on the most efficient and economic method of bettering his charges” (1969, 147). However he recanted on this point. See the introduction to his translation and commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* (1993), particularly the supplementary notes on pp. xviii-xx.

second *Analytics* does not tell us how to uncover new facts or truths, but it does give us a method of grounding what we observe. The method proposed there is formal demonstration, but it is the exposition of explanatory grounds that is primary in determining a science. Science is knowledge of explanatory grounds; thus as we will see, the *Metaphysics* qualifies as a science even if it is not demonstrative. It seeks grounds for the primary phenomena, *ousiai*, and finds this in the supreme principle of God.

In brief, scientific knowledge, *epistēmē*, is the understanding of universal grounds. We can know these by constructing demonstrations that ground the relation between a subject and predicate which themselves describe a perceived thing or state of affairs. But in order for it to be possible to reveal *aitē* we need to comprehend certain principles: we need *noûs*. These principles can function as premisses in a demonstration, and can be known through induction.  

II

*Aitē*

Science works in two phases: it establishes *archai*, and it then seeks *aitē* for apprehended states of affairs by means of these *archai*. Science uses principles to ground the reason why something is as it is. I will look at *archai* and their establishment below.

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15 Induction is not the only means to noetic apprehension of principles. See chapter three.

16 "*Arche*" means literally a beginning or source; or sovereignty, power or dominion. "Principle" the traditional translation, captures these meanings, as well as the technical and logical meaning of the word as an established truth or proposition used to deduce the truth of other things.
But first let’s see what *aitía* means in the context of science, starting with a discussion of the term, and my translation of it by “grounds”.

The etymology of the word *aitía*, used as a substantive, suggests one who is accused, one who is blameworthy, one who is responsible or guilty in the face of an accusation: the culprit. Aristotle in his more technical usage employs “*aition*” in relation to what it is for a thing to be what it is: when he asks about the *aition*, he is asking what is to blame, what is responsible, for something being a certain kind of thing.

To use “cause” to translate the term is to distort the etymological meaning of *aition*, as well as to betray the technical use that Aristotle makes of the word. “Cause” in our mechanistic age suggests only what Aristotle calls “*he tí próton ekínese*”, that which initiated the change, or the “efficient cause”. It leads the reader away from the more complex Aristotelian notion of “responsibility” or “guilt” that the term “*aitía*” implies.

We can see clearly the complexity of Aristotle’s notion of *aition* in the fourfold distinction (material, formal, efficient and final *aitía*) established in the *Posterior Analytics* (94a 22-24), discussed in the *Physics* (194b 23-35) and presumed in the *Metaphysics* (985a 13).

Another possibility of translation is “explanation”. This is used by Michael Ferejohn in his important work, *The Origins of Aristotelian Science* (Yale University Press, 1991). The problem with this translation is that it suggests that *aitía* are epistemic principles, dependent in some sense upon human perception or reading of a given “state of affairs”. However, as I argue at length (see particularly this section below and ch. two, sec. II, esp. the discussion of being as truth), for Aristotle there is no distinction between what I
(accurately) know, and what is truly the case in the world. To identify an aitian (to be able to explain some aspect of why something is at it is), is at the same time to relate something about the ontic condition of that which is being explained. In other words, my explanation of what is, is dependent upon what truly, or "objectively" is. "Explanation" covers up this more original condition of truth. The explanation is what must be said or thought in order for knowledge to be possible; the "object" of that knowledge is the ground, what it is that makes the ousía as it is. An aitian is not just our account of why something is, but also and primarily what it is that is responsible for something being as it is. I sometimes emphasize the epistemic sense of aitian by use of the phrase "explanatory grounds". "Reason" suffers the same fate: it denotes epistemic rather than ontic conditions.

"Grounds", on the other hand, has a certain legitimacy. Its definition in the OED (II 5) as "fundamental principle", or "circumstance on which an opinion, inference, argument, statement or claim is founded" is consistent with the Greek meaning. Because the term relates both to the epistemic condition of knowing the reason why ("fundamental principle"), and (primarily) to the "objective" conditions in the world that make such knowledge possible (the "circumstance" on which claims are founded), "grounds" is adequate in conveying the sense of "responsibility" that the Greek word carries. It is wide enough, and abstract enough, to apply to all of Aristotle's four aitia as technical terms.

Not only this, but "grounds" is used by some top scholars in the analytic tradition to translate "aitía". McKirahan particularly, in his seminal work, Principles and Proofs: Aristotle's Theory of Demonstrative Science (Princeton University Press, 1992) uses
"grounds" without comment, so standard a usage has it become. Furthermore, in the German tradition of Aristotle commentary, the word "Grund" has long been employed.\textsuperscript{17} Though my motivation in choosing "grounds" was not guided by this consideration, the German use of "Grund" does make my comparison of Aristotle and Heidegger rather more neat. Now let's look at how Aristotle uses the search for grounds in his scientific method.

a) The questions we can ask; The things we can know

The well-known passage at the beginning of the second book of the \textit{Posterior Analytics} discusses the four kinds of questions that we can ask, corresponding to the four kinds of things that we can know. We can ask questions about the \textit{tò hòti}; \textit{tò dióti}; \textit{eî ésti}; or the \textit{tí estin}. In other words, we can ask about: the that it is, the why it is, the if it is, and the what it is (\textit{APo}: 89b 23-25). These are said in general to correspond to:\textsuperscript{18}

1) questions about the fact (can \textit{P} be predicated of \textit{S});  
2) the reason why (why does "\textit{S} is \textit{P}" hold);  
3) simple existence (is there an \textit{S}); and  
4) essence (what is \textit{S}).

Before continuing, it is important to be clear on some terminology. Every syllogism has three terms: a major term, the predicate of the conclusion; a minor term, the subject of the conclusion; and the middle term, a term that appears in both premisses but not in

\textsuperscript{17} Admittedly, in the French tradition, Carteron, Tricot, Aubenque, all use "cause"; Reale, representing here the Italian tradition also uses "causa": the Teutonic root of the word "grounds" makes translation of "\textit{aitúa}" more difficult in romance languages.

\textsuperscript{18} See for example Barnes (1994), McKirahan (1992).
the conclusion, and which provides the ground for why $P$ is true of $S$ in the conclusion.

Take the classic syllogism:

**Pr1:** All humans are mortal.
**Pr2:** Socrates is a human.
**Conc:** Socrates is mortal.

Here, “mortal” is the major term, “Socrates” is the minor term, and “human” is the middle term. “Human” is the link between “Socrates” and mortal, and provides a ground for the fact of Socrates’ mortality. The major premise is the one that contains the major term (here Pr1); and the minor premise contains the minor term (here Pr2). We know that “Socrates is mortal” is true because we know both that all humans are mortal and that Socrates is a human. What is proved then, is that Socrates is mortal, but what is grounded or explained is the reason why the proposition “Socrates is mortal” is true.

Now Aristotle writes that of the above questions, the first and the third ask about whether there is a middle term or not; whereas questions two and four ask what the middle term is. And “the middle term is the aitia, and that is what we are trying to find out in every case” (90a 7). The four questions that we can ask then can only be adequately answered by reference to some ground. Let’s look at these questions and the relation between them and a middle term, or an aitia. Though aitia are not restricted to their appearance in the demonstration, this will tell us what kind of information a ground provides.

Aristotle divides the four questions into two discrete sets. Thus he says that once we have established 1) that something is the case, then we ask 2) the reason why. Likewise, once we have established 3) that there is a so and so, then we can ask 4) what
it is to be this so and so. But what is the difference between the first and third question? The first deals with predications of things or concepts and asks whether or not "S is P" is the case, whereas the third asks whether there is such a thing as the subject mentioned. The third question "if x is" asks, for instance, whether there is such a thing in the world that corresponds to the nomination "centaur". If there is not such a thing in the cosmos, we are then left with simply a name and cannot begin to search for aitia. Aristotle argues that unless we know that something exists, that is, that there is something in the cosmos that corresponds to the name, the essence of something can be discussed only nominally, but not in a real sense (92b 5-8). Thus we must know if there is an x, we must know whether the term x corresponds to anything real, before we can ask about the "what" or the essence of that x.

How can a simple ei esti question be answered through a middle term? Or in other words, how can existence be grounded? Some commentators are concerned with making the third question susceptible to answer through demonstration. But this seems unnecessary, since the demonstrative phase of a science does not begin until after ascertaining the existence of a subject or the factual reality of a state of affairs. Looking for the aition begins, as Aristotle clearly states, after the apprehension of a state of affairs or of a being that corresponds to a nominal subject. If I cannot find a reason to explain the state of affairs being what it is, or that supports the existence of an x, then I cannot be said to scientifically know a proposition involving that state of affairs or entities. Thus I do not have to demonstrate that the fact or being is, but must rather generate an ground

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19 For discussion on this point see Gómez-Lobo 1980; also Hintikka 1986.
for the fact or being from previously established premisses. If I can generate such a
demonstration, then clearly there is a middle term.²⁰

In summary, science only explains or grounds things that it knows already to be, or
to be the case. Knowledge begins with and is bound to perception; so grounds cannot be

²⁰ This seems initially at odds with the fact that Aristotle says that questions of
existence ask whether there is a middle term. But there is no conflict. If the subject does
not “exist” (if there is nothing real that corresponds to the nominal definition) then there
can be no middle term. No proposition involving centaurs can be said to be scientifically
true, so no middle term could be used in premisses (which have to be known to be true)
that would lead to a conclusion in which “centaur” was the major term. Therefore, the
question “is there a middle term” will be answered negatively of any existential
proposition involving centaurs, or other non-existent entities.

(“Non-existent” clearly applies to “thoroughly” non-existent things, as opposed to
“currently” non-existing things, that is, to goat-stags as opposed to either dodo birds, or
to eclipses that are not presently happening. There never were any particulars that could
ground a universal statement about goat-stags, therefore no nominal definition, or
statement of essence, of goat-stag can be demonstratively proved to apply to a particular
goat-stag. The same is not true of dodos. See Mckirahan: 1992, p. 131. How then do we
know what goat-stags are? By nominal definition, but we cannot know them
scientifically.)

It is possible to find such a middle term in cases where the simple existence of an
subject C is asserted. Thus Hintikka (1986) suggests a demonstration of the form:

Pr1: Every B is simpliciter.
Pr2: Every C is B.
Conc: Every C is simpliciter.

However, this demonstration could only work for things that we already know to exist,
as a way of explaining how we know that they exist. If C were non-existent, then the
second premise would be false, and, as will be made clear below, both premisses in a
demonstration must be known to be true. For the same reason, the demonstration could
not work if it were not known whether C exists. Aristotle therefore does not admit
demonstrations of simple existence, except as explanatory of why we know that a certain
thing exists. Mckirahan offers a different example of an existence proof which I think is
susceptible to some of the same criticism (1993, p. 188ff). His proof, which is similar to
Hintikka’s, works (like Hintikka’s) if it is seen as an explanation of a fact that is already
known to be true, viz., the existence of a certain subject C. In fact he writes that the third
question “does not investigate simply whether something exists, but in addition whether
its existence can be proved from the principles of the science” (p.191).
speculative. This point will be significant in showing that Aristotle does not “prove” the existence of God. The existence of God is not demonstrated or demonstrable, but God is offered as a ground of perceived things. Aristotle writes that demonstration proves something of something, affirmatively or negatively (90b 34); and proving what something is, is different from proving that it is (90b 38). The difference is that showing that something is, indicates that a demonstration involving such a thing is possible; on the other hand, proving what something is shows the reason why such a thing is what it is. To know what something is, is the same as knowing the why of it (90a 15-16). The primary question is thus what something is. Knowing the answer to the fourth question, that of essence, will provide grounds.

Returning to the first question: questions of fact ask not about “existence”, but about the positing of a predicate in relation to a certain subject. Here, “is there a middle term” means “is there a ground of the fact”? Aristotle’s example here (89bff) is a predication of “sun” by “eclipse”, thus we ask whether the sun suffers eclipse. Once we know that it does, then we ask why it does. We take into account our knowledge that the earth moves, and construct a demonstration with the eclipse of the sun as conclusion. Such a demonstration exhibits the reason why it can be said that “the sun suffers eclipse” is true. But the reason why it is true is based on a definition of solar eclipse; on showing what a solar eclipse is (blocking of the sun by the movement of the earth). To answer to the

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21 The arguments concerning the prime mover are in other words transcendental or re-ductive, in the sense defined above, rather than deductive.
first question, then, we must know the reason why; but the answer to the reason why is again provided by a middle term that exhibits what something is.

Aristotle says we have unqualified scientific knowledge\(^{22}\) of something when we know 1) that the a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\) because of which the thing holds is (indeed) its a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\) (at first glance, this seems tautological: the point is that we must be able to recognize the a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\) as the a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\); we must have epistemic understanding of the ontic ground); and 2) that the thing being grounded cannot be otherwise (71b 9-12). Science, it seems, is ultimately aetiology. To understand the a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\) is at the same time to understand what something is, and the necessity of something’s being what it is.

To describe science in these terms seems to conflate a\(\text{\textit{itía}}\) and archaí. In fact principles and grounds are in a sense identical: in book Delta of the Metaphysics, Aristotle writes that “all a\(\text{\textit{itía}}\) are archaí” (Meta 1013a 17). He clarifies the form of identity in book Gamma, where he says that a\(\text{\textit{itía}}\) and archaí, like “being” and “one”, are the same in that they denote the same thing, though they are not the same in definition (1003b 24). In the Posterior Analytics the identity of the two is not explicitly stated. However, it is clear that the a\(\text{\textit{tion}}\) of the relation between major and minor terms is expressed by the middle term in a demonstration. This middle term is “carried by” the premisses; primary a\(\text{\textit{itía}}\) then are expressed in primary premisses or first principles (and never in conclusions). The middle term itself, as a simple term, is not an a\(\text{\textit{itía}}\) however: the term “man” does not itself ground the relation between “Socrates” and “mortal”. It

\(^{22}\) Epistēmē haplōs, as opposed to the accidental knowledge [kata sumbebēkōs] that a sophist might have, which would not fulfill one of or both the conditions mentioned here.
is the definition of “man” as expressed in the principle “all men are mortal” that makes it possible to understand: 1) why it can be said truly that Socrates is mortal (epistemic ground); and 2) why it is in fact the case that Socrates is mortal (ontic ground). Thus principles and grounds are the same nominally; the difference lies in function, or definition.

In the context of demonstration, archai are used to establish the logical truth or validity of conclusions; they assure that, as the outcome of a syllogism, the statement under consideration follows from known premisses and is true. Aitia, on the other hand, though they are inseparable from their appearance in premisses, reveal the grounds of the relation between the subject and the predicate in the conclusion, and are thus the “internal” grounds of the truth of the conclusion, and the soundness of the demonstration. Succinctly, principles are used to show that a proposition is true; grounds show why a relation holds, or why something is at it is. Grounds are known in the same way that primary premisses or principles are, and are in a sense applications of principles to particular cases, as we will see below.

b) The four kinds of ground

In book two of the second Analytics, (94a 20ff) Aristotle discusses four kinds of aition: these are listed as:

1) what it is to be something [tò tí en eínai];
2) if certain things hold it is necessary for this to hold [tò tínôn óntôn anágkê toût' eínai];
3) what initiated the change [he tí prôton ekînese]; and
4) the for the sake of which [tò tînos eîneka].
Note that here the familiar quartet of 1) formal; 2) material; 3) efficient; and 4) final aitia\textsuperscript{23} is upset by the substitution in the second position of “necessitating ground” for “material cause”. The necessitating ground, as Aristotle’s remarks make plain here, is the link between two premisses which share a middle term, and from which the conclusion follows necessarily. There is some debate as to whether this can be identified with a material ground, or seen as a special case of material aition.\textsuperscript{24} Since Aristotle remarks elsewhere that the premisses of a deduction are the matter or material ground of the conclusion (\textit{Phy}: 195a 15-18; \textit{Meta}: 1013a 15), it seems possible to interpret the phrase as material ground. Further, the phrase indicates not simply that a certain $X$ has a particular material structure, but rather that the matter of $X$ is the ground for $X$ being a certain kind of $X$. Given the geometrical example Aristotle uses to explain this aition, it is clear that material aitia include “intelligible” matter (as described in \textit{Meta} 1036a 10; 1045a 34).

\textsuperscript{23} Cf.: \textit{Phy}: 194b 23-195a 3; 198a 14-25; \textit{Meta}: 983a 24-31.

\textsuperscript{24} Ross in his commentary translates the phrase simply as “ground” (whereas he uses “cause” for “aition”), arguing that Aristotle is making an epistemological point concerning the structure of the syllogism. Citing \textit{Phy}. 200a 15-30, Ross notes that premisses necessitate a conclusion, whereas the material cause is necessitated by and does not necessitate that of which it is the aition (Ross 1957: pp 638ff). The material wood, for example, does not necessitate something being a house in the same way that premisses necessitate a conclusion. Barnes 1993, (citing \textit{PA} 677a 18, where Aristotle clearly uses the phrase to indicate material necessity) argues against Ross, saying that the phrase indicates a “special case of material explanation- viz. the case in which the fact that the matter of $X$ is such and such does necessitate $p$” (Barnes 1993: pp. 226 ). Aristotle is not, in the passage from the \textit{Analytics} giving a list of epistemic causes, but rather showing the types of ontic grounds for something being what it is. Matter can be shown to be a definitive ground in this sense. (See my example below).
Each of these four *aitía* work as a middle term in a syllogism, (though Aristotle's examples are notoriously sketchy),\(^\text{25}\) such that they ground the relationship between subject and predicate in a concluding proposition. But we saw that all the questions ask about grounds refer to the essence of something. How does this square with there being four *aitía*? I will put each of the four into a demonstration to show how they work. Again, this is only a formal mechanism to describe and distinguish the *aitía*, which of course are not limited to demonstrations.

1) In the first case,\(^\text{26}\) the middle term expresses the essence of the major term. Thus if the fact to be grounded is that the moon undergoes eclipse, the middle term will give an explanatory definition of lunar eclipse. Let's say the definition of eclipse is “screening by the earth”, then we get:

\begin{align*}
\text{Pr1:} & \quad \text{Everything screened by the earth is eclipsed.} \\
\text{Pr2:} & \quad \text{The moon is screened by the earth.} \\
\text{Conc:} & \quad \text{The moon is eclipsed.}
\end{align*}

Such a demonstration proves the fact, that the moon is eclipsed, by giving the reason why the moon is eclipsed. But the reason why is a definition of “eclipse”. The definition states the essence, or the *tò tí esti* of “eclipse”.\(^\text{27}\) Note that the essence is not being demonstrated

\(^{25}\) This is one reason why chapter 11 of the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*, discussed here, is considered so difficult and obscure by commentators. Ross calls it “one of the most difficult chapters in the whole of Aristotle” (1949; p.78). Because this chapter is, more than others, definitely unfinished, the examples I employ to illustrate the function of the four *aitía* are not pure Aristotle.

\(^{26}\) For the “demonstration of essence”, Aristotle refers us back to his discussion at 93a-94a 20.

\(^{27}\) I use “essence” to translate both *tò tí esti* and *tò tí ēn eînai*, though I mention the Greek in all cases. The first of these terms refers to the essence of the complete
here, but it is being used as an ground.\textsuperscript{28} In the demonstration that answers the question of essence, the middle term must be a (pre-established) definition of the major term: “this is the reason why all sciences are based upon definitions” (99a 22-4).\textsuperscript{29} The formal \textit{aition} is the ideal type, since it gives the why in terms of the what; it shows why something is by reference to what it is.

2) The “necessitating grounds” occurs as a middle term in a demonstration that, in Aristotle’s example, gives material grounds for the relation of the major and minor terms. Thus, to adapt Barnes’ example\textsuperscript{30} we might concoct the syllogism:

\textbf{Pr1:} All humans are made of flesh and bones.
\textbf{Pr2:} Flesh and bones are subject to destruction.
\textbf{Conc:} Humans are subject to destruction.

The middle term here, “flesh and bones” is the necessitating material ground for the truth of the concluding proposition. This demonstration gives the material reason why it is that the conclusion, as the fact to be grounded, is true. But notice that there is implicit here individual, as a combination of matter and form, thus to the individual construed as particular. The latter refers to the form of the individual, and thus to the universal character of the individual. Ultimately these are identical, since the individual form of something is always universalizable. Form manifests itself in a particular individual, but it is common to many individuals. See chapter two.

\underline{28} On the complex relation between definition, essence and demonstration see section three below.

\underline{29} More on definitions in the section on \textit{archai} below.

\underline{30} I use a contrived material example (suggested by Barnes 1993, p. 226) rather than Aristotle’s own geometrical example for the sake of a clarity not evident in Aristotle’s unfinished text. As noted, this chapter (book two, 11) of the Analytics seems to be rather notes and ideas than fully explained doctrines.
a definition, a statement of the "what" of human beings as composed of flesh and bones. The material *aition* is dependent on an essential or formal *aition*.

3) The third *aition* is commonly called the efficient cause, here "that which initiated the change". Again, in the demonstration, it is by means of a middle term that this form of ground works as a means of showing how the subject and predicate of a predication hold. The example Aristotle gives (94ba 1-8; modified here) is:

Pr1: Those who are first to attack are attacked.
Pr2: The Athenians first attacked Sardis.
Conc.: The Athenians are attacked by the people of Sardis.

Here the reason why the Athenians are attacked is explained by means of the middle term, an *aition* of the change, "first to attack". But again, the ground of change, the efficient *aition*, is dependent on a "what": a definition of Athenians as "those first to attack".

4) Lastly, the final *aition*, or the "for the sake of which" is also used as a means of explaining or grounding the truth of a proposition. Again, Aristotle's own examples here are much criticized, but following Barnes, I adapt Aristotle's example at 94b 10 to:

Pr1: Shelters for belongings are roofed.
Pr2: Houses are shelters for belongings.
Conc.: Houses are roofed.

The fact that houses are roofed is here grounded by reference to the purpose. What is the purpose of roofing houses? They shelter belongings (the middle term). This demonstration provides a final *aition*, but again by means of a formal *aition* or an essential ground: the definition of houses as "shelters for belongings".

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31 Barnes, 1992, p. 231.
These then are the four senses of aitia that Aristotle discusses as the goal of science to make clear, and which can be formally revealed in the demonstration. All four aitia are dependent on the understanding of the essence of that which is to be grounded. And what something is, is for Aristotle the primary question for a science to address: knowing the why means knowing the what. But how do we get to know grounds?

For any knowledge of grounds to be possible, indemonstrable principles are required. In science in general, universal archai provide grounds for the particular or less universal thing or fact that is to be explained. In a demonstration, archai provide the middle term that grounds the relation between the major and minor terms in a conclusion; they thereby provide the aition sought by science. Again, grounds and principles are nominally the same, but they are different in function and definition. An aition is an application of a universal archē to a particular proposition. Without some notion of what archai are and how they are apprehended, then, whatever epistēmē means for Aristotle is obscure.

32 Any formal ground shows an essential, and thus indubitable, connection between subject and predicate. The other aitia do not necessarily do this, (e.g. an efficient explanation is not in itself indubitable) although in my examples above, they do in fact do so. But this is only because the examples all incorporate some kind of formal explanation, giving a definition by making a universal statement, and then a statement about a particular that belongs to the universal class. See Barnes: "demonstration reveals the formal explanation, and this in turn will reveal one or more of the other three types of explanation" (Barnes, 1993, p.226).
III

The Types and Function of Archai

I will look at *archai* first in the context of demonstration. Scientific deductions must be both valid and sound. Demonstration follows one of the valid forms of syllogistic reasoning laid out in the *Prior Analytics*, such that the conclusion does indeed follow from the premises by the rules of inference. But also, the premisses must be known to be true. In the first *Analytics*, a premise is defined as “an affirmative or negative statement of something about some subject [lόgos kataphantikòs he apophantikòs tinòs katá tinos]” (APr: 24a 16). A premise is an apophantic statement, a proposition that affirms or denies that something is true of something. Now scientific demonstration proceeds from “things [premisses] that are true, primary, immediate, better known than [gnórimon], prior to, and explanatory of the conclusion” (APo:71b 20-4). Let’s look at this statement piece by piece.

First, why must the premisses of a scientific demonstration be primary and immediate or indemonstrable, and must all such premisses be primary? If all premisses were demonstrable, then there would always be prior premisses required to prove their veracity, and there is no infinite regress of demonstration possible (72b 19-25). Demonstration chains can be formed such that the conclusion of one demonstration is used as a premise in another subsequent demonstration, so that not all premisses are “directly” primary. But ultimately all conclusions refer back to some ultimate and immediate primary premises, which Aristotle calls *archai* (72a 25-8). It is these indemonstrable *archai* upon which each particular science is based. Each science has a
set of unproved principles, appropriate to the genus it studies, which it uses to draw inferences.\textsuperscript{33} But all sciences use certain common principles, ones that are not specific to any particular subject matter, but which rather concern the nature of demonstration itself (77a 27-30). These, as we will see, are the concern of the first science, that which is studied in the \textit{Metaphysics}. Principles are necessary to a science even if it is not demonstrative.

Secondly, what does it mean that primary premisses are prior to and more knowable than the conclusion, which they work to ground? That which is prior and more knowable \textsuperscript{[gnórimon]} can either be more knowable for us, or more knowable in itself \textsuperscript{[kath' hauto\textbf{t}].} In sense perception we have immediate knowledge of a certain object or event; things we know through the senses are more knowable to us in that they are more familiar. But \textit{archai} are more knowable in themselves: they are universals that we know not directly thorough sense perception, but through an act of intellection. As universals, they are not subject to destruction as is the particular that is accessible to sense perception, and are thus better known in themselves. This needs clarification.

\textsuperscript{33} Thus geometrical questions will not be medical, etc. Nor is the geometrician expected to give an account of the principles that she uses, since the first principles of geometry are accepted as indemonstrable. A doctor arguing with a geometer about geometry must be clear on the first principles geometry uses, but this is not commonly the case. Therefore, writes Aristotle, foreshadowing today's over-specialization, "one should not discuss geometry among people who are not geometers, because they will not recognize an unsound argument" (\textit{APo}: 77b 12-15).
a) Archaí as universals

Aristotle says that “scientific knowledge cannot be acquired by sense-perception” (APo: 87b 28-9). This is somewhat misleading, because sense perception is a necessary step towards knowing universals; but it is not in itself apprehension of the universal. Sense perception is of the particular, but archai are universals, and epistēmē is dependent on recognition of the universal.

The archai used as premises in a demonstration are universal statements; otherwise, there could be no universal term, and thus no middle term, and no aitio (77a 7). This does not mean that knowledge is uniquely of universal objects, but rather that epistēmē treats universal propositions that concern real objects, or relations between objects or facts about real objects, taken universally.34 We can have universal knowledge of particular things when we are able to apprehend that the particular participates in a species. To see an individual material horse that has four legs, and to see that horse as a particular instantiation of horseness, which is characterized by four-leggedness, are two different intellectual activities. The first is immediately dependent on sense-perception; the second begins with sense perception, but involves an act of the intellect that permits us to see the particular horse as belonging to a species about which we already have certain information. This is the universal, which though “furthest from the senses”, is better known kath’hautō, in itself, without direct reference to the immediacy of perception.

Though a conclusion that is a particular can be known to be true through the senses, the reason why it is true is not known through the senses. Thus, for example, the reason

34 On this point see Barnes (1993), p. 145.
that this horse has four legs is because all horses have four legs. We saw that the formal aitia is primary. This can be grasped only by an act of the intellect that relates the particular to be grounded, to a species that defines it. In the demonstration, this connection is brought out through a universal middle term, that shows the relation between major and minor terms in the conclusion (that which is to be grounded). In order for this connection to hold, the premisses of the demonstration, the archai in which the middle term appears, must be understood to be true. The apprehension of an attribute of a particular subject as belonging to a class, or as a universal attribute, is thus explanatory of the relationship between the attribute and the particular to which it pertains (71a 16-29).35

Ross sketches the relation between the particular and the universal in the context of aitia in this concise but dense passage:

... Aristotle is convinced that if a particular subject C has an attribute A, it has it not as being that particular subject, but in virtue of some attribute B which it shares with other subjects, and that it is more really intelligible that all B is A than that C, a particular instance of B, is A. To pass from the particular fact that C is A to the general fact that all B is A is not to understand why all B is A; but to pass, as we may proceed to do, from knowing that all B is A to

35 Not all conclusions are particular propositions: indeed a universal demonstration, one that in its strictest form consists of three universal statements, is superior to a demonstration that has a particular as a conclusion (APo:85a 20-86a 30). (A “universal” as opposed to a “particular” demonstration is one in which 1) the premises are more universal, that is, they are a and e propositions as opposed to i and o propositions (“All S are P” or “No S is P”, as opposed to “Some S is P” or Some S is not P“); or 2) the conclusion is more universal, whether as an a or e proposition or as a more general a or e proposition. Aristotle uses sometimes one and sometimes the other of these meanings (See Barnes, 1993 p. 183).) Nonetheless, since in a demonstration the ground of the conclusion is being sought, and since aitia involve the relation of the major and minor terms through a middle term, the archai that contain the middle term must still be more universal, and thus better known, than the conclusion.
knowing that $C$, a particular $B$, is $A$, is to understand why $C$ is $A$ . . . (Ross: 1949, p.51).

Though perceived as a particular, a subject and its attribute is not known scientifically until it is understood in relation to the universal. This horse here can only be understood in its "reason why" by referring to its essence, that which makes it what it is. Any scientific explanatory judgment about this horse must be in terms of it as an example of horse, not as a particular individual horse. Scientific knowledge, knowledge of grounds, then has to do with knowledge of universals and essences, and the archai that reveal grounds, whether in the context of demonstration or not, must be universals.\(^3\)

Note that principles and grounds again seem identical: but in function they are not. The archē is not the formal ground as such, but as a universal that states the essence, is able to reveal the grounds. Archaí are universals that state the essence, and thus, in given applications, provide the formal grounds of what is to be grounded. Are all archai then just definitions?

b) The types of archai

In the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle lists two major kinds of principles (72a 15-25): 1) "axioms", also called "common principles" \([\text{axiōmata or koinai}\)
archai], and 2) "theses" [thèseis].

1) An axiom is an immediate indemonstrable principle common to all sciences, that be must grasped in order for any knowledge whatsoever to be gleaned. Axioms are the rules of logical thought that govern the formation of any correct syllogism, such as the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, and the principle that if equals are subtracted from equals, the remainders are equal. These axioms are necessary to any scientific understanding whatsoever, and are studied in the first science.

2) A thesis on the other hand is an immediate indemonstrable first principle peculiar to a particular science, and thus to the particular content of a demonstration. There are two kinds of thesis: 2a) the hypothesis [hypothesis]; and 2b) the definition [horismós].

Briefly, an hypothesis comprises a judgment of existence about the subjects that a particular science treats, whereas definitions define the subjects and attributes peculiar to a science (72a 22-5; 76b 35-6).

37 The language here is deceptive, as it seems to imply that the function of archai is primarily to provide epistemic explanations, as if there were a distinction between how we understand the world, and how the world is. In fact, archai, even though in the form of propositions, reflect what is truly the case in the world: there is no distinction in Aristotle between "subjective" and "objective" truth, or between knowledge of explanations, and knowledge of what is the case. This becomes clear in an analysis of existential propositions (see this section below); and in the discussion of epistêmē and nous as hêxeis (section V below).

38 These are the only three specific examples that Aristotle gives of axioms in the Posterior Analytics; See 77a 10-35.

39 In a sense then, Aristotle here anticipates the distinction between ei esti and ti estin questions posed at 89b 23-25, (discussed above).
2a) What Aristotle says about hypotheses is somewhat sketchy. Some commentators find that Aristotle uses the word both to refer to subjects within a science that require existence claims (for instance units in arithmetic; 76b 5), and subjects that need only a meaning or nominal definition (as for example triangles in geometry; 71a 14).\(^4\) I have argued that for Aristotle to say that something is, is to claim that a name corresponds to something real. This applies equally to the objects of mathematics, which are related to the material world in being abstractions from it, one step further away than the objects of physics. The geometer, for example, considers the objects of his science as attributes of solids or accidents of bodies.\(^4\)

It should be emphasized that any notion of “existence” is Aristotle is carried by the verb ɛιναι: there is no separate verb “to exist” in Greek.\(^4\) To speak of “existence” in Aristotle as a feature of things separable from their essence is already to distort the Greek notion of being. Existence for Aristotle is a reference to the real, to what is truly the case in the world. “There is an \(x\)” means that “it is the case that in the world there is found

\(^{40}\) See Mckirahan (1992) p. 49; Ross (1949) p. 55.

\(^{41}\) We can see this view expressed in book \textit{Mu} of the \textit{Metaphysics}: “the objects of geometry really are [estin]. For things can exist in two ways, whether in entelechy or as matter” (Meta: 1078a 30). Geometrical objects exist as intelligible objects, separated from the material substances in which they inhere by means of thought. As non-material, intelligible objects, they are more universal, and thus in a sense have more reality or are more fully apprehended as what they are, or as having filled their telos, than material things. Thus whereas the geometer studies this “intelligible matter” without reference to the material world that inspires abstraction, the “physicist, for example, is concerned with material objects, and the first philosopher with both intelligible and material reality.

\(^{42}\) See Charles Kahn’s extensive writings on this subject, some of which are listed in the bibliography below.
an x', or "there is something that corresponds to the name x'. But in order to know if there is such a thing in the world (whether materially or intelligibly as an abstraction from matter), we must know what x is. And we cannot know what x is if there are no particular x's (material or intelligible) about which we can form universal statements that describe x as a certain type of thing. Nor can we "prove" that there is an x by means of demonstration without using true universal propositions that describe x as a certain kind of something through use of a middle term. And this is impossible if we do not know whether there are any x's. An hypothesis breaks this cycle by positing that there are x's, that there is something that corresponds to a particular name. This permits knowledge of the essence, because it makes it possible that there is a ground.

2b) Definitions are the third kind of archē (the second type of thesis) that Aristotle mentions at 72a 19, and are treated extensively in book two of the second Analytics. In general, definitions are statements of essence or of what something is. Now Aristotle writes that to know what something is, is the same as knowing why it is (90a 31): thus the formal aitia, that of essence, is prior to the other aitiā. The formal aitia is carried by a middle term in a demonstration. The middle term appears in primary premisses, which are definitions of that which is to be grounded. In short, to be able to find a ground for something, we must know its definition.

43 See APo: 92b 12-20.

44 As S. Mansion writes, "le rôle de jugement d'existence dans la science est ... nettement déterminé par Aristotle: c'est de rendre possible la connaissance de l'essence" (S. Mansion, 1976, p.260).
There are four kinds of definition given in the *Analytics* at 93b 29-94a 10: 1) a nominal definition, that is, an account of the meaning of the name of something. Thus we might give a simple meaning of the word “thunder”, as “a noise in the clouds”. Nominal definitions do not solve the difficulty of knowing whether or not there is something that corresponds to the nomination, since they do not give a ground in universal terms.

Another type of definition is 2) the explanatory definition, which defines what something is in terms of why it is. Thus “thunder” is defined as “the noise of fire being extinguished in the clouds”. This kind of definition has the same result as a demonstration that provides a ground of why thunder is, but it does not prove anything. Third, there is 3) the conclusion of a demonstration; and lastly, there is 4) the indemonstrable definition of immediate or primary terms, or definitions of concepts or things, known through induction and *noûs* (intuition).

We have *epistêmê* if we have knowledge of the ground. This can be revealed through demonstration, or given in a definition. But Aristotle writes that nothing can be both demonstrated and defined. Definitions show what something is, whereas demonstration show that some attribute is true or not true of something (91a 1). Definition, in other words, is of the essence, whereas demonstrations assume essence as a given (90b 31) and use it to ground a relation between a subject and a predicate. Demonstrations do not *prove* the essence, then, but rather reveal it (93b 15-17), and this by showing why it is that some attribute is true of some subject, through an appeal to

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45 There is considerable controversy surrounding the number and types of definition (three or four?). See Deslauriers (1990) for an account of four types, and a discussion of the controversy.
what that subject is. Thus what the subject is, is assumed in the demonstration, and is indemonstrable. Following these criteria, only definition types two and four are true or scientific definitions: indemonstrable and explanatory. Types one and three do not provide grounds, but they make it possible to arrive at a ground through the rôle they play in the demonstration.

The second and fourth type of definition are clearly not demonstrable. Type four definitions express the essence of a thing or concept, they say what something is, are self-explanatory, and are thus indemonstrable. They are used as primary premisses in demonstrations. Type two are abbreviated forms of demonstrations that ground what and why something is. Since they already give some explanatory account, they, like type four, are not demonstrable. These are the definitions that we need in order for scientific knowledge to be possible.

The third type of definition (a conclusion) is obviously always demonstrable. But as the fact to be explained, it does not itself give us epistēmē. The conclusion of a demonstration states a relationship between two terms, but does not provide a ground of why the relationship holds. This relationship can be explained by seeking premisses from which the conclusion can be logically inferred. The third type of definition is then the demonstrative form of the second type, the explanatory definition. It occurs as the conclusion of a demonstration that grounds the essence. Thus, a syllogism could be constructed:

**Pr1:** Noise in the clouds is extinction of fire.
**Pr2:** Extinction of fire is thunder.
**Conc:** Thunder is noise in the clouds.
This demonstration is a syllogism that answers the question *ti esti*, as discussed above, and gives a ground.

This demonstration, however, also proves the nominal definition of thunder ("thunder in the clouds") by means of a middle term that displays the essence of thunder. Nominal definitions (type one) then are also demonstrable, which means that they do not themselves give us *epistēmē*. But nominal definitions are not always conclusions of demonstrations. We have seen that hypotheses, for instance, can be nominal definitions. However, since nominal definitions do not give an account both of the essence and the *aition* of something, these are not true, but preliminary or pre-scientific definitions. They are in fact preliminary to knowledge of type four definitions.

I have argued that to know what something is scientifically- that is, in relation to grounds- we must already know that it is. But nor is it possible to say we know that something is, without having some primitive notion of what it is.46 The nominal definition breaks this cycle by giving some account of what something is. From here, we can build inductively towards a definition. Obviously, the initial account, since it is non-explanatory, can apply equally to non-beings and to beings, unicorns and tables. How can we prevent nominal definitions of unicorns being used as *archai* in demonstrations? How can we distinguish between a nominal definition and one that is clearly of the essence of

46 We are talking about scientific knowledge here, and thus knowledge of universal grounds. We might well have a perception of something of which we have no knowledge (e.g. some unknown animal that we come across). But in order to begin the process of explaining why this animal is as it is, we must at least have a name for it, or some nominal description ("four legged mammal").
something? This can only be answered by showing how it is that we know type four definitions, or first principles.

The first line of the *Posterior Analytics* reads: “All teaching and all learning of an intellectual kind [dianoetikē] proceeds from pre-existent knowledge” (*APo*: 71a 1). This is true, as Aristotle notes, both of deduction and induction. For scientific deduction, indeed for any scientific knowledge, we must know the *archai*. And *archai* can be known through induction. But to know inductively, we must first know particulars. Even if *archai* are known by means other than induction, knowledge of them depends on perception of particulars.

**IV**

*Epagōgē* and *Noûs*

In a discussion of why it is impossible to have knowledge of particulars without sense-perception, Aristotle makes four points: 1) demonstration depends on universals; 2) it is impossible to study universals except through induction [*epagōgē*]; 3) induction depends on particulars; 4) sense perception apprehends particulars (*APo*: 81a 38–81b 5). Let’s pan this out.

Some scientific syllogisms use premisses that have been conclusions of other demonstrations. But since there is no infinite series of demonstration, we must begin somewhere with first premisses. We have seen that in the particular sciences, these *archai* are theses that are definitions, or universal statements of essence.
The universal is known through the process of induction \([\text{epagôgê}]\), which results in \(\text{nous}\), or intuition.⁴⁷ Just as \(\text{epistêmê}\) indicates the scientist’s understanding of grounds, which can be the outcome of demonstration, so \(\text{nous}\) is the grasp of universal principles, which can be the outcome of induction. Induction begins with sense perception of particulars. The problem of how we know \(\text{archai}\) then is the problem of how we go from knowledge of the particular to knowledge of the universal.

For Aristotle all knowledge begins with sense perception. Ross writes, “all knowledge starts with the apprehension of particular facts, which are the most obvious objects of knowledge” (Ross, 1949, p. 50-51). More accurately, all knowledge begins with the perception of certain particular things, \(\text{ousiai}\) or relations between or within \(\text{ousiai}\). As \text{De Interpretatione} makes clear, these perceptions are “affections” or impressions on the soul, which are symbolized by words, and put into apophantic form, “for combination and division \([\text{sûnthesis kai diairesis}]\) are essential before you can have truth and falsity” \((\text{De Int: 16a 12})\). In the \text{Posterior Analytics}, as elsewhere, Aristotle is concerned with propositional or apophantic truth, the kind of truth that is susceptible to true and false

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⁴⁷ Barnes, in his commentary on the \text{Posterior Analytics} argues for a translation of \(\text{nous}\) by “comprehension” (1994, pp.267-270), saying that \(\text{nous}\) stands to induction as \(\text{epistêmê}\), understanding, stands to demonstration. “Comprehension” however, has a ring of epistemic conceptuality, which \(\text{nous}\) manifestly is not. It indicates rather an “intuitive” insight or “flash” of understanding. Thomas Upton (1984) takes this a step further, seeming to argue back downwards again from \(\text{nous}\), and claiming that \(\text{archai}\) are only \text{understood} as first principles once they have been tested in dialectical practice. There are two forms of \(\text{nous}\), or rather two levels, according to Upton: immediate intuition, which by direct appeal can lead to “knowledge”, and systematic intuition, which can lead to “understanding”. He calls both of these \(\text{nous}\) (p.252). But this second form of “\(\text{nous}\)” is no longer \(\text{nous}\) at all; it should more properly called \(\text{epistêmê}\). This kind of understanding should be reserved for the end product of demonstration, that is \(\text{epistêmê}\), scientific knowledge.
judgement. Perception is not a judgement of truth; such a judgement can only be made of an apophantic statement. The judgement consists of whether or not the statement is in accordance with the perception. To perceive what is, and to perceive what is truly are identical. Truth, in other words, is the truth of being. Scientific knowledge, the explanatory grounds of what is truly, is founded on the apprehension of facts, but begins with simple perception. But is there such a thing as simple perception in Aristotle?

At 79b 29-31, Aristotle discusses a phenomenon of perception: “even if perception is of what is such-and-such, and not of what is a this so-and-so, nevertheless what you perceive must be a this so-and-so at a place and at a time”. This obscure passage seems to say that although what we perceive directly is colour, shape, sound, size, odour, etc., our perception is of (for instance) a neighing horse. We see perceived sensible qualities as a certain something. This is not, Aristotle is quick to point out, a sensible perception of the universal, for we are still only perceiving a particular thing.

As I discussed in the context of archai above, universals cannot be sensibly perceived. However, in the last chapter of the Analytics, Aristotle writes, “there is a

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48 See Chapter four, in the section on the meaning of “phénomeno-logy”, for a discussion and Heideggerian interpretation of apophantic discourse as Aristotle describes it in De Interpretatione.

49 Aristotle says that the capacity [dunámis] of sense perception discriminates [kritikós] (99b 35); this seems to mean that perception distinguishes between things it perceives, not that it judges, since judgement would require some conceptual apparatus not apparent at this stage. Again, since Aristotle discusses perception as common to all animals, and animals do not have a conceptual capacity, perception is not a capacity of judgement.
primitive universal in the soul; for although you perceive particulars, perception is of universals,-e.g. of man, not of Callias the man” (100a 17-18). This implies that for Aristotle, not only do we already see sense impressions as particulars, but we always already see a particular as a certain kind of thing. It is not that we actually “see” the universal, but rather that in perceiving a particular, we already have a primitive understanding of it as certain kind of thing. Let’s see how this works.

Knowledge then begins with perception of particulars. The second stage is memory, which is the retention of perceptions in the mind. Repeated memories of the same thing lead to the third stage of knowledge, experience [empeíría]. Experience gives one the ability to say that, for instance, “all the B’s I’ve ever seen have been A’s”, but is limited to past observed cases of this relationship. Experience is the beginning of propositional knowledge, and the starting point of the fourth and final stage of knowledge, which is grasping the universal principle, i.e. “all B’s are A’s”. This principle can either be used to ground what things are (epistēmē); or to show how things are made (téchnē). Téchnē or know-how concerns application of the principle; science uses the principle to ground what is. This four step process from perception to principle describes induction, or epagōgē.

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50 In *Metaphysics* book Mu (1087a 10-25) Aristotle argues that we have actual knowledge of the particular sensible individual, a combination of this matter and this form, and we have potential knowledge of the universal. See chapter two section III below.

51 See Barnes, 1993, p.264

52 This account of the stages of knowledge (APo: 100a 3-9) is very similar to that in the *Metaphysics* Alpha, 980a 28-981a 12.
Induction works, then, by grasping the universalizable element in a perceived object or event, what is, \(^{53}\) linking it to like elements in other perceived events or objects through memory and experience, and then coming up with a general universal principle that applies equally to the original particular and to other members of its genus.

We can also relate genera to larger classes that gather together genera according to an essential quality or attribute common to each genus member. Thus we can build from particulars to universals, and from these to wider universals, proceeding ultimately to the primary, most universal principles. Universal principles are not then known by demonstration, but through induction.

_Noûs_ is the primary source of scientific knowledge, the starting point of _epistêmê_. The term describes the way the mind is disposed after having grasped a principle. Perception being fallible, induction can be flawed, but _noûs_ itself is infallible (100b 12). Either we grasp the principle or we do not; _noûs_ describes the activity of intuitively grasping the principle, and not the steps leading to the possibility of making the intuitive leap. _Noûs_ is then a possible end result of induction: the inductive procedure must be accurate, and the person applying the inductive method must be astute enough to see through to the universal. _Noûs_ properly refers to the disposition (_héxis_) that follows the application of the inductive method: it does not describe a method, but a disposition of the soul.\(^{54}\)

\(^{53}\) As we will see in the context of the _Metaphysics_, this is the _eidôs_ or form.

\(^{54}\) See Lesher (1973, p.58): "There is one activity, grasping the universal principle, but it admits of various descriptions; to speak of it as an act of _nôêsis_ is to give an epistemological characterization, while to characterize it as _epagôgê_ is to speak of methodology."
Having said this, we can see how it is possible that there are some principles that though noetically comprehended, are not attained through inductive means. As epistēmē results from demonstration, but is not achieved solely through demonstration, so nous can be attained by induction, but not solely through induction. It will emerge that the first principle of first philosophy, non-sensible ousía or God, is a definition apprehended by the active intellect. But God cannot be known by induction, since he is not perceptible; nor does Aristotle offer deductive "proofs" of his existence. God's effects are perceptible, but these cannot be used inductively to apprehend God, nor can God be known to be through deduction, since he is a first principle. As we will see in chapter three, the arguments that lead to the first mover are transcendental. They are based on the perception of sensible phenomena, known according to the universal by induction. The arguments then seek the condition of the possibility of the these phenomena. The prime mover is then apprehended by nous as the first principle and aition of sensible phenomena. We come to comprehend the first principle of the science of the Metaphysics by means that are not strictly inductive or deductive.

There are no formal demonstrations or formal presentations of inductive arguments in the Metaphysics, but Aristotle himself obviously believes that the work describes a science: this has led to difficulties in the scholarship over what constitutes the "science" of being qua being. I argue in the next chapter that the study of being qua being is a

55 Though this point is not made in the Posterior Analytics. There Aristotle discusses nous as the apprehension of first principles, and induction as the method that prepares us to make the leap. However, it seems that there are other possible methods of disposing the mind such that nous is possible. See NE: 1098b 3: some principles are known by perception, others by induction, some by habituation, and others “otherwise”.
science. It is an aetiological study that begins with what is apparent to perception, ousía, and seeks an *aition* for the being of these *ousía* on the basis of principles comprehended by *noús*. *Epistēmē* is gained when grounds are understood, and we come to know grounds through the use of first principles comprehended by *noús*. If a discourse on a subject seeks grounds in this way, and thus leads to understanding of the phenomena appropriate to that subject, it can be called a science.

Whether a science uses formal demonstration or not is less significant than whether it seeks explanatory grounds on the basis of its primary definitions. The formal demonstration is a paradigm example of how *aitía* can be known certainly to hold, such that scientific understanding is assured. The exploration of demonstration above was thus a convenient means of explaining the constellation of terms and concepts that are related to scientific understanding (*aitía*, archai, horismós, *noús*). But *epistēmē* and *noús* refer to qualities of knowing, not the method of achieving such understanding.

*Noús* and *epistēmē* are both dianoetic dispositions, or potentialities of the mind to know truth. How these dispositions relate to the study of being as being remains to be seen.

**V**

*Epistēmē and Noús as Héxeis*

Aristotle recognized that there are different ways in which we come to truth. In discussing the "lógos" of the human psyche in book six of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, he writes:
... Let it be assumed that there are five [dispositions; héxeis] through which the [rational, lógon] psyche comes to truth by way of affirmation and denial, namely art [téchnē], scientific knowledge [epistêmē], practical wisdom [phrónēsis], theoretical wisdom [sophía], and noûs. Judgement and opinion are capable of error [and are therefore excluded from the list] ... (NE 1139b).

Héxis cannot be translated as “state” (as it so often is): it is a form of potentiality [dunâmis] (1143a 28). Let’s see what this involves for epistêmē and noûs.

For Aristotle there are three forms of affectivity in the soul: emotions [páthe], capacities [dunámeis] and dispositions [héxeis](1105b 20ff). The capacity to feel emotion and the natural capacities of the senses (1103a 27) are both dunámeis, potentialities given to us naturally [phüsei]. We have these capacities even if we are not engaged in exercising them; thus we are capable of seeing, even if our eyes are closed; we are capable of anger even if we are calm.

The same is not true of a héxis. Moral and intellectual virtues are héxeis. Moral disposition\(^{56}\) is the way that we ordinarily choose or are formed to act in relation to the emotion that we naturally feel. Moral virtues are not mere potentialities; they only come to be actual through use (i.e. we become just by doing just acts, etc), and are not given by nature (1103a 32). Likewise with dianoetic (“intellectual”) virtues. The soul has a natural capacity for lógos. The customary way that we express this rationality is through the intellectual virtues. But it is the specific exercise of the dianoetic héxeis\(^{57}\) that makes them come to be actual (i.e. we are not “naturally” wise, but become wise through the practice of wisdom). Disposition is a form of actualized (but not yet) potential that is

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\(^{56}\) Ross: “states of character”.

\(^{57}\) Ross: “states of capacity”.
strictly tied to its manifestation in action: in order to fulfill this potential, we must act in
a particular way that is not given by *phúsis* but comes about through desire, and activity.

In other words, in order to achieve knowledge, we must want to seek truth, and then
do something about it.58 The first line of the *Metaphysics* tells us that "all people desire
knowledge by nature" [*phúsai*] (*Meta*: 980a 22). To seek knowledge is the natural telos
of human being, and the soul has a natural capacity for truth. But to fulfill this capacity
needs *érgon*, literally work, or fulfillment of the potential.

*Epistêmê* and *noús* are ways of knowing that are product of an intellectual process,
respectively deduction and induction. Understanding and intuition are not given to us by
*phúsis*, but come to be through [intellectual] action on the basis of what is given to us by
*phúsis-* in this context, the capacity to be rational. We want to attain knowledge,
understanding and *noús*, and this we can do through the practice of deduction and
induction. But what is the work of *epistêmê* and *noús*?

In Aristotle’s conception, the rational soul has two given capacities (1139a 5-12):
1) the scientific capacity [*epistemikòn*] permits contemplation of necessary, non-contingent
objects. The dispositions of *epistêmê*, *noús* and *sophía* (as the unity of these two) are
based on this natural capacity; and 2) the calculative capacity [*logistikòn*] permits
knowledge of contingent things. *Téchnê* and *phrônêsis* are the corresponding dispositions.
The work or fulfillment [*érgon*] of each of these capacities is to attain truth.

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58 Aristotle’s remarks that “pursuit and avoidance in the sphere of desire [*órëxis*]
correspond to affirmation and denial in the sphere of the intellect [*dianoïa*]” (*NE*: 1139a
22). To desire knowledge is to desire truth.
There is also an activity [energeía] specific to each disposition, since dispositions are potentialities [dunámeis]. The activity associated with the dispositions of (1) the scientific capacity is theoría. This is the activity that fulfills the potential to contemplate eternal things: sophía, the unity of understanding and noûs is that potential. It is also the name for the excellence of the activity of theoría. Each of the two dispositions of (2) the calculative capacity have different activities. Poïēsis is the energéia of téchnē. It aims at a goal distinct from the action involved in achieving that goal; poïēsis is the production of things for some purpose (use or beauty). Praxis is the energéia of phrónēsis. It is an activity engaged in for its own sake, with the goal of acting well [eupraxía].

There are then in Aristotle three fundamental modes of activity, or energéia, corresponding to the three fundamental modes of acquired dunámis or disposition: theoría, poïēsis, and praxis, corresponding to sophía, téchnē, and phrónēsis. These are all ways in which the human being modifies its approach to beings in attaining truth, or different ways in which truth is attained. Aristotle sets theoretical apprehension above all other modes of human comportment (NE: 1177a 11- 1179a 31). Sophía is the most perfect mode of knowledge since it concerns the highest objects, or those of the highest, unchanging nature (NE 1141a 16).59 Epistêmē and noûs are then human capacities, capacities that come to be through activity, and which have as their object the understanding and intuition of eternal things.

59 Phrónēsis, as knowledge of the affairs of humans, and thus things that vary, is less high: it is concerned with action and particular things. Nor is the sophós necessarily prudent. (NE 1141b 7-22). Téchnē, the knowledge of principles of production, is lowest of all, as it not only deals with things that vary, and is not a virtue, but may result in something either good or bad (NE 1140b 22).
We have seen that epistēmē and nous are differing forms of universal knowledge: one of universal grounds, the other of universal principles that reveal grounds. We will see in the next chapter that universal knowledge is knowledge of form; and form in its universal aspect is, in an eternal universe, itself eternal. Sophia is the knowledge of form, and first philosophía will be the study of eternal form, whether in sensible or non-sensible ousía. First philosophy is the science that describes the primary subjects susceptible to understanding of aitia, ousiai; it also seeks the first principles that permit this understanding. Sophia is the unity of epistēmē and nous, as ways that human beings come to know eternal truth. Thus first philosophía is the pursuit of this kind of truth in relation to ousiai. I will turn to that subject now.

But first, since we are on the topic of the forms of knowledge, some foreshadowing. We will see that Heidegger emphasizes the practical and historical over the theoretical. I argue that his concentration on human involvement in a world is an interpretation of Aristotle’s poïësis (and not praxis) as the originary mode from which theoría arises. Heidegger’s goal, furthermore, is to find the unity in the three modes of energēía and dunámis that Aristotle laid out. This he finds in what I will argue is a “praxis” defined not by energēía but by kínēsis, or access to the world. Praxis emerges as authentic comportment, expressed in care. The shift from theoría to praxis, and from energēía to kínēsis permeates Heidegger’s thinking on all levels, as I will discuss in chapters four to six below.
CHAPTER TWO
The Science of First Principles and Grounds

What is the subject of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*? In book Alpha, the topic is wisdom, *sophía*, which Aristotle describes as a science [*epistēmē*] concerned with the primary [*prôtai*] *aitía* and *archai* (981b 28- 982a 3). In book Gamma, Aristotle introduces a science which, unlike any of the particular sciences that study some portion of being, studies being *qua* being and the attributes that belong to being (1003a 23-5). The primary sense of being is the “what” [*tò ti estin*] that denotes *ousía*, according to book Zeta (1028a 14). Thus the man of wisdom must grasp the primary *archai kai aitia* of primary being, *ousía* (1003b17-20). In Epsilon, the science of being *qua* being is named theology (1026a 19), as it is also in Kappa (1064b 3).

There is clearly at issue a science that, like all sciences, concerns grounds and principles, but it is particular in that it treats *first* grounds and principles. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is looking for a fundamental science, one that grounds what is in the most universal terms, and the *archai* of which could apply to all possible particular sciences. This science is named alternately wisdom, (or philosophy or truth), the science of being *qua* being, the study of *ousía*, and theology.
The science in the *Metaphysics* has not yet determined its first principles; indeed the determination of principles is the subject of the book.¹ The presentation of this science cannot then, strictly speaking, be demonstrative, since demonstrations are deductions from first principles. If the *Metaphysics* is the study of first principles, and principles are self-explanatory and cannot be demonstrated, it is clear that there can be no demonstrations that “prove” or ground the prime subject matter of the work.

I will argue that the first *aitía* and *archai* apply to being *qua* being, and specifically, to the form of *ousía*. Such principles include the axioms, but the primary principle, which is also, I argue, a ground of a rationally comprehensible cosmos, is God. Ontology and theology are inextricably united in the universal science of the *Metaphysics*.

The relation between theology and ontology in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is controversial. Among modern commentators, Aubenque (1962) argues that the science of being *qua* being is the study of what is later called metaphysics, distinct from and irreconcilable to first philosophy or theology. Aubenque maintains that neither metaphysics nor first philosophy can reach their object: there is no possible logos of the ἄν, nor is a conceptual determination of God possible. Natorp (1888) famously rejects the theological components of the *Metaphysics*, so that only ontology remains as the subject of the work. Owens (1951) argues that the theological and ontological dimensions of Aristotle’s thought are inextricably linked, that they are different perspectives of the

¹ Aristotle in book Alpha talks of “the science which we are seeking” (983a 21-3), in Beta of “the science we are investigating”, in Epsilon of the grounds and principles we are seeking (1025b -23) and of what the province of the science we are studying is (1026a 22ff); in Lamba he is again discussing the terms of inquiry to arrive at principles.
subject of first philosophy, and that theology plays the primary role. Giovanni Reale (1980) describes four aspects of the task of the *Metaphysics*: aetiology, ontology, ousiology and theology. These are related in a dialectical unity that centres on the theological component. This latter view is closest to the one I defend below.

In sorting out the different statements of what the subject of the *Metaphysics* is, my attempt is to find some coherent pattern or configuration that makes these various statements consistent. I work on the hypothesis that there is a unity of doctrine in the *Metaphysics*, even if the literary unity of the work is uncertain. The hypothesis should find support in the following two chapters, in which I expose a unity of theme throughout the books of the *Metaphysics*.² The *Metaphysics* can be read as a sustained argument with many tangents for the necessity of a God as a ground for why what is, is as it is.

In this chapter, I will argue (in section one) that aetiology, the search for grounds, is the methodological core of Aristotle’s work, and leads him to the exposition of the bare bones of ontology. In laying out the issue of first *aitía*, Aristotle asks the question of what these are the first *aitía* of; the answer is being *qua* being, and more specifically, *ousía*. In the second section, I will discuss being as a multivocal term, with four senses. The primary meaning of being, which I will discuss in section three, is *ousía*. *Ousía* is found to be primarily form. Seeking the grounds of form in sensible and destructible *ousía* leads to the issue of non-sensible eternal *ousía*. Theology and its consequences for the notion of being that emerges from the *Metaphysics*, and will be the subject of chapter three.

² I adopt the broad lines of Giovanni Reale’s position on this issue (1980). The thematic unity of the *Metaphysics* is a central thesis of his book, defended in every chapter. See Reale pp.1-17 for a general statement of the argument.
However, as I will try to show, theology is the glue cementing together the other aspects of the *Metaphysics*, the climax and the *sine qua non* of Aristotelian ontology.

The general aim of this chapter then is to show that the search for the most universal *aitía* must begin with the form of sensible *ousía*. But grounds for this can only be found by reference to non-sensible *ousía*- God.

I

Aetiology

The primary goal of a science is to establish grounds for phenomena that fall within its purview, on the basis of pre-established first principles. If there is a first science, it will be that which deals with first principles and grounds. But is it possible that there be one science with so general a field of inquiry? According to the *Posterior Analytics*, a science must have its own particular subject-genus, and it uses definitions and principles appropriate to the genus. These definitions are not transferable to other particular sciences (*APo*: 75a 38ff). Particular sciences are distinguished according to the portion of being they study (*Meta*: 1003a 25). But being itself is not a genus (*APo*: 92b 14; *Meta*: 998b 22-27), therefore how those grounds and principles common to all genera can be gathered together in one science of being poses a difficulty. Being is not a genus because it has no single determination; it is not a definition, and therefore not a principle. But beings can be studied with regard to universal *archai kai aitia*.

In resolution of this difficulty, I will begin with the general conception of first philosophy as the search for universal primary grounds. The formal *aition* here, as in the
Posterior Analytics, is primary. Then I will argue that the science sought in the Metaphysics is a universal science of being *qua* being, unified by the way that the meanings of "being" relate to ousía. Since the formal *aition* is primary, it is the form of ousía that must be grounded.

a) The general conception of the primary science

Wisdom [sophía], posed in book Alpha as the science under consideration, is the unity of *epistēmē* and *noûs*. It is thus a universal form of knowledge, an understanding of grounds and comprehension of principles. The wise man "knows all things as far as it is possible, without knowing each one individually" (Meta: 982a8-10); in other words, he knows the universal. He knows difficult things, for the universal as farthest from the senses is hardest to grasp, but with a more exact knowledge, since universals are definable. A person is wise insofar as he can teach, and it is knowledge of grounds that allows him to do so. Wisdom is the knowledge of that which is most knowable, and that which is most knowable are the first principles and grounds, "for it is through these and from these that other things come to be known" (Meta. 982b 3).³

Wisdom is not a productive science: it is knowledge for the sake of knowledge and not for any practical utility. One who loves wisdom, a philosopher, begins with wonder, with being perplexed: he does not understand the ground of something being as it is. He then asks questions about why things are as they are, for the simple sake of knowing why they are and escaping ignorance, but not for any extrinsic advantage (982b 11-21).

³ Knowledge of *aitía* and universal knowledge are equated here.
Since philosophy exists for its own sake, it is an independent science. Inasmuch as the science of wisdom knows the universal ground, it will know the aitia particular to each science, since these fall under the universal (982b 5-10). It is thus supreme over the other sciences because it knows the end of each of the sciences: the end is the good of a thing, and this is one of the primary aitia.

We saw that sophía is the disposition and excellence associated with theoría; theoría is the energeia of contemplating eternal, non-contingent things: forms and pure form. Wisdom is then a divine science, because 1) it is concerned with divine matters and God, pure form, is one of the grounds and a principle, and since 2) God is the sole or chief possessor of wisdom (983a 6-11), since humans can probably not know all the forms.4

Wisdom is a disposition to theoría, and the object of theoría is truth (as opposed to the object of practical knowledge which is action). Thus Alpha Elatton says that "philosophy is rightly called a knowledge of truth" (993b 20-21).5 But we cannot know truth if we do not know the ground (993b 24). The first principles are explanatory of the truth of everything that follows from them. Now since what gives something a certain

4 This seems to contradict the traditional characterization of God in book Lambda as self-thinking thought, concerned then only with his own being. But as the first principle and universal ground that knows itself, God is the primary formal aitia. In this sense only does God "know" the forms.

5 Book Alpha Elatton is often considered to be external to the structural unity of the Metaphysics. In particular, the concluding lines of the book (995a 14-9) imply that it is an introduction to natural science. But there is ample evidence supporting both the authenticity of the book and its essential role as a part of the Metaphysics. As far as content goes, it is consistent with the doctrines found elsewhere in the Metaphysics. On this view, the reference to natural science at the end of the book is given by way of example and not as an indication of the subject matter at hand. (See Reale 1980, pp 43-45.)
character has that character in a higher degree, the principles are the most true. They are always true, and the source of truth in other things. There is no ground of their being, but they have the most being, and therefore the most truth, since “as each thing is in respect of being [eînai], so it is in respect of truth” (993b 30-32).

This passage identifies the being of things and the truth of things: to know the truth of something is to know what it is. This means knowing why it is. Sophía is a way that the mind achieves truth, and as the combination of noûs and epistêmê, the truth it achieves is knowledge of the archai kai aitia of something. To seek truth is to seek the grounds for the being of something. Thus from the first books of the *Metaphysics*, we can conclude that wisdom, philosophy and the search for truth are identical, and they are all further identical with knowledge of first principles and aitia. This kind of knowledge is universal, because knowing the ground means knowing universally. Knowing the universal aition means knowing the particulars that fall under the universal.

The science of wisdom conforms to the notion of science as outlined in the *Posterior Analytics* in that it is a search for grounds and principles. However, Aristotle does not discuss demonstration of the primary archai or aitia, nor does he formally engage in their demonstration. Again this is consistent with the *Posterior Analytics*, since 1) the aition of something must be demonstrated on the basis of principles; and 2) first principles are not demonstrable. If we do not know the first principles, we cannot

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6 The truth Aristotle speaks of here is clearly ontological truth, the truth of things and aitia of things; this is not the predicative truth he discusses in book Epsilon when he discounts being in the sense of being true from consideration by the primary science. (See section II below.)
demonstrate first *aitia*. In fact we will see that the primary *archē*, God, is itself an *aition*, so that no demonstration is possible. I turn now to the *aitia* in the context of the *Metaphysics*. Since wisdom is looking for the truth of what things are, the formal ground will be primary.

b) The *aitia*

In the third chapter of book Alpha, Aristotle discusses the four kinds of *aitia* (983a 25- 83b 1). These are those I have discussed above in the context of the *Posterior Analytics* (the formal, the material, the efficient and the final). As in the *Analytics*, in book Alpha, the emphasis is on the formal *aition*, here called the *ousia* or the *tò tì én eînai*. Not only is it mentioned first, countering the order of their listing in the *Physics* (to which Aristotle makes specific reference), where the material precedes the formal, but Aristotle gives it explicit preeminence. He writes that “the reason why” of a thing is ultimately reducible to the formula of the definition, and the ultimate “reason why” is an ground *and* a “principle” (983a 28-30). The definition is a statement of the essence of something in universal terms. The formal *aition*, which provides a definition or statement

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7 This is the first occurrence in the *Metaphysics* of the word *ousia* (983a 28).

8 We saw in the previous chapter that in the *Posterior Analytics*, all grounds are ultimately dependent on the formal ground. Also in the passage of the *Physics* to which Aristotle refers, Aristotle writes that three of the four *aitia* in many cases reduce to one (*Phy.II* 198a 24-7): what something is formally or essentially is ultimately identical with the final and the efficient ground of that thing. I discuss this passage in the first section of chapter three below.
of essence, shows why something is as it is in all respects. The ultimate "reason why", the first *aition*, is also a principle, that is an essence: it must then be a formal ground.

The other types of *aitía* use the formal definition to provide grounds with regard to: that from which something came to be (material ground); the source of a thing's kinetic being (efficient ground); and that for the sake of which something is (final ground). These three *aitía* are dependent on a prior definition of the essence of a thing. Let me explain.

To know the essence, the what it is, one must grasp the form or the *eidos* (981a10), "the unchanging element in the individual thing".9 Particulars are defined by reference to the universal; the form of a particular is shown to be identical to that of many other individuals. Relating the particular to the universal is achieved by reference to the identity of form in this individual and many other individuals (though the form of a particular is this form in this matter). What links them is the form, which can be seen as particular to an individual, or expressed as a universal, the common element in a class of things.10 The formal *aition* reveals the relation of the particular to the universal by defining the particular as a member of a class of things which have the identical form. The definition of something is then a universal, as is the ground.11

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9 Owens, (1978) p. 179. For a further discussion on this point, see Owens (1978), pp.177-180.

10 The notion of *eidos* "form" will receive more detailed treatment below in the context of *ousía*. In Alpha, Aristotle's critique of the positions of previous philosophers' views of the *aitía*, clarifies his own view of the meaning of *eidos*. Particularly he criticizes Plato for separating the *idea* from the real thing and postulating a separate world, instead of seeing it as immanent form.

11 We saw how this is true in the context of demonstration in the previous chapter.
Now efficient, final and material *aitía* can ground the particularity of a thing, without grounding the universal aspect, or without recourse to the form. Thus an efficient *aition* can show how some individual acts or changes, the final can show the end of a given particular, and the material refers exactly to the particular physical make up of something. In fact matter cannot even be entered into the definition of the essence of something (1037a 24-5). But Aristotle insists in the previous sections of book Alpha that the knowledge sought by wisdom is universal. In order for the other *aitía* to be universal, they must have recourse to the universal expression of the essence of something: it follows that the formal *aition* is primary amongst the first *aitía*.

It is important that the essence, in the passage treating the four *aitía*, is identified with *ousía* (983a 28). *Ousía* is principally determined by the immanent *eidos*. To understand an *ousía*, we must know the *eidos*. This understanding of the form of a particular *ousía* allows us to formally ground it. But since there is no demonstration of essence possible, and since the essence of what is, is that to be grounded (through the formal *aitía*), no demonstration of *ousía* will be possible.\(^{12}\) Grasping the universal essence of *ousía* and grasping the ground are one and the same activity.

It seems then that *aitía* and *archai* coincide in the first science. The four *aitía* are universal, and they must apply universally to all beings. They are not physical principles of material things, since they apply as well to the form, or universal aspect of things, and since God, who is not material, is posited as one of the *aitía*. The four *aitía* are universals

\(^{12}\) So called “demonstrations of essence” do not in fact demonstrate the essence, but reveal it; the essence is not the conclusion, it is the middle term. See chapter one.
in that they are principles of everything that is sensible, or that becomes sensible: through grounding the sensible, the nonsensible is posited.\textsuperscript{13}

In Alpha Elatton, Aristotle again discusses the number and nature of \textit{aitía}. Aristotle argues here against the notion of an infinite chain of any of the \textit{aitía}. If there were an infinite number of grounds, then it would be impossible to know anything, since knowledge depends on understanding grounds, and since we have a finite amount of time to seek them (994b 29-32). There is a serial arrangement within each type of \textit{aition}, such that \textit{A} grounds \textit{B} and \textit{B} explains \textit{C}, but the intermediate term must always be in reference to a final term, whether we go through the series forwards or backwards. If there were no first or no ultimate ground, the series itself could not exist, and there would be no ground at all.

Moving forwards in the series of \textit{aitía}, Aristotle notes that there are two ways of something being derived from something else: 1) something develops into another thing, as when a child becomes a man. Here there is an obvious terminus of the series in the result. The second is when 2) there is a transformation that involves the destruction of the preceding term in the series, as when air is destroyed in the formation of water. In this latter reversible process, there are no intermediate terms, and thus again, no infinite series possible (994a 1-994b 7).

Aristotle here enters into an appeal to the nature of the first \textit{aition} to show the impossibility of an infinite series of grounds. The first \textit{aition}, he notes, (moving in the

\textsuperscript{13} Owens treats the "causes" as physical principles. See Reale pp. 31-34, for a full refutation of this conception, summarized here in my text.
backwards in the series) is not subject to destruction and transformation because it is eternal and independent of any other ground (994b 7-9). Because there is no infinite series possible, any appeal to grounds for Aristotle is always and at the same time a reference to a first and a final ground.

This being so, in all processes of becoming and acting there must always be a final aitión, an end, a ‘for the sake of which’. The good is the end of all things, and in this sense it is a final ground. If we were to admit an infinite series of final aitia, there could be no telos as such, and hence no such thing as the good, or an ultimate final ground. Nor, without a terminal final aitión could there be any such thing as rationally comprehensible action, since those who act rationally act for some end (994b 10-17).

The formal aitión must also have a terminus. It is impossible that the formal ground be seen as an infinite expansion of the definition. For although a complex definition may contain more detail, it is always only an elaboration of the definition that preceded it in a series, and is thus dependent upon that one for its veracity. (Thus as a definition for human being, “bipedal, sensible, featherless rational animal” can only be understood if the more concise “rational animal” is intelligible.) If the formal ground were infinitely analyzable through the definition, scientific knowledge would be impossible, since it is dependent upon reaching ultimately analyzable terms (994b 17-27).

There must then be a first formal and final aitión. We have seen that the formal aitión is primary⁴: we will see that the first final ground, characterized as the good, will coincide with the primary formal ground.

⁴ I will add substance to this argument in the last section on ousía below.
Since the formal *aition* is primary, definition is an essential part of science. This means that we must for each science know first what the subject matter is. Thus, writes Aristotle, in the case of natural sciences, for example, we should know what nature is before proceeding (995a 18-20).\(^{15}\) In the science of wisdom, we must ascertain the subject matter before we can define it. We can do this by looking for a science that can treat all of the first *aitía* and principles. The first four aporiae of book Beta (repeated in shorter form in book Kappa I and II) which I now turn to, are particularly pertinent to this topic.

c) The aporiae

Briefly stated, the first four aporiae are: 1) does the study of all the *aitía* belong to one science or several?; 2) is there one science that treats both the principles of demonstration and those of *ousía*, or is there a science of each?; 3) is there one science of all *ousíai*, or more than one?; and 4) does the science of *ousía* also treat the attributes of *ousía* or are these separate sciences? Aristotle indirectly answers these aporia in book Gamma. I will present each aporia followed by its (partial) solution in turn.

The **first aporia** (996a 18-996b 26) arises because it seems that all four types of ground would have to belong to one genus in order for them to be the object of one science. But they seem not to belong to the same science, since first of all, different things can only belong to the same science if they are contraries, which the *aitía* manifestly are not. Secondly, there are things to which all four *aitía* cannot apply: for example immovable things cannot have a source of motion or a final ground. They are

\(^{15}\) I take the last two lines of little Alpha to be authentic. See Reale (1980), p.45.
in themselves good, and cannot thus tend towards a good. But if there are different sciences for the different grounds, then which one is the science of wisdom?

In the first chapter of Gamma, Aristotle says that there is a science that studies being qua being, and that it is of being qua being that we must grasp the first aitia and archai, and more specifically, of ousia. The highest principles and grounds “clearly must belong to some nature in virtue of itself [dèlon hós phúseōs tinas autàs anagkaíon eînai kath’haustên]” (1003a 28-9). The science of being qua being treats all beings universally. Any particular instance of a ground of being qua being will involve being itself. The aitia then pertain to being as being, that is to one single nature, and this assures their unity. The grounds that pertain to that science are different and not contraries, but they are studied in relation to one same thing that unifies them non-generically.

Highest principles and grounds are thus principles and grounds of being qua being: this is then our subject matter. But being has several meanings, and it is not a genus; nor can the aitia, which are not contraries, belong to a genus. This is resolved when we see that the grounds and principles apply to ousia. All significations of being relate to ousia, but not genericly. In fact, the aitia relate to the eidos of ousia, and are unified through this relation. Ousia, and more specifically the form of ousia, is the prime focus of the study of being qua being.16

The second aspect of this aporia is that all four aitia are not present in all instances of being. Aristotle does not formally answer this difficulty posed by the aporia. However, this problem can be solved through the recognition that although all ousíai are not

16 This leads us to prós hên relatedness, which I shall treat in the next section.
identical, and though all the *aitía* do not pertain to all *ousía* (non-sensible *ousía*, for instance, does not have a material ground), all *ousía* belong to a single science. Thus the four *aitía* can belong to the same science even if not present in every individual subject of that science.\(^{17}\)

The science that studies first principles and *aitía* then is being *qua* being. But the study of *ousía* is primary in the science of being. The first *aitía* and archaí thus relate to *ousía* (1003b 15-19).

The **second aporia** (996b 26-997a 15) treats whether the principles of demonstration, such as the law of non-contradiction and excluded middle, belong to one science, and if so, whether this science is the same as the one that studies *ousía*. Since all the sciences use the axioms it seems impossible that there could be one science, that which studies *ousía*, which studies them. On the other hand, if all sciences studied the axioms, then all sciences would have the same object, which is absurd. A second related problem is that it is impossible to have a demonstrable science of such axioms, for they are known immediately and not defined by any science. If they were demonstrable, there would have to be a genus of which they were attributes, in order to prove them, and this would itself demand unproven axioms, since every science is based on something indemonstrable. Yet every science uses the axioms as premisses, and since each science treats a particular subject-genus to which its conclusions and premisses belong, then if axioms were demonstrable, every demonstrative science would treat the same genus, and this is absurd. Yet again, since “the axioms are the most universal and the principles of

\(^{17}\) I am indebted here to Reale: 1980, p.135; see also Owens, 1978, p.221.
everything” (997a 12), how can the science of ousía be separate? If the two are not the same, how can we decide which is more authoritative?

The first question of the second aporia is taken up again and resolved in book Gamma (1005a 19ff). Axioms hold for all kinds of being, not just a particular class of being. This implies that they are axioms of being qua being, and so of course belong to the same science as ousía. Thus “the investigation of these axioms ... will belong to the universal thinker who studies the primary reality” (1005a 34- 1005b 2). The philosopher will study the whole of reality, and the principles of syllogistic reasoning, since in order to have scientific knowledge [epistēmē] of the nature of being qua being, (now clearly emerging as a name for the fundamental science), primary archai kai aitia must be known. Thus “one who understands the modes of being qua being should be able to state [légein] the most certain principles of all things” (1005b 12).

In Gamma four, Aristotle resolves the problem of the indemonstrability of axioms, reaffirming that it is impossible that everything be demonstrated, since such an attempt would enter us upon an infinite process, “so that even so there would be no proof” (1006a 10). But some axioms can be proved by the impossibility of refuting them, since one who tries to refute such axioms must use these very axioms in the refutation, and would thus beg the question.

First philosophy then treats the axioms as well as the principles of being qua being. I will argue in chapter three that the first principle of being qua being, God, is higher than the principles of the axioms, since he is the principle of rationality.
The **third aporia** (997a 15-25) treats the question of whether there is one science of all *ousía*. If more than one science, how do we know which kind of *ousía* the primary science studies? But if only one science studied all *ousía*, there would only be one possible science. Here is why: a science studies a particular subject matter, starting with accepted beliefs and inquiring into the essential properties and accidents of that subject.\(^{18}\) Hence if one science studied all *ousía*, there would be one subject matter, and all properties and accidents would be studied by the same science. Whether there is one science of axioms and one of *ousía* or whether these are compounded and form one science, (i.e. whatever the solution to the second aporia) still, all attributes will be lumped together for study by either one or two sciences.

The solution to this problem is again found in book Gamma, with more detail provided in Epsilon. In Gamma two, Aristotle writes that “there are just as many divisions of philosophy as there are kinds of *ousía*” (1004a 2): but among these, one is primary. Being is divided into genera, and different parts of philosophy correspond to these genera, yet they are arranged successively such that one is more universal than the next. In the first chapter of Epsilon (1025bff), Aristotle specifies that there are three theoretical sciences that study the three sorts of *ousía*: physics studies sensible kinetic *ousía*; mathematics studies non-kinetic *ousía* present in matter;\(^{19}\) and theology studies

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\(^{18}\) This characterization of scientific methodology suggests that we start with accepted facts and use them as conclusions in demonstrations, seeking premisses from which the conclusion can be deduced.

\(^{19}\) Aristotle claims uncertainty here about whether the objects of mathematics are separable from matter and non-kinetic, and ends up saying that some branches of mathematics study objects as separable and some as present in matter. He argues in the
nonsensible non-kinetic *ousía.*$^{20}$ Theology is the proper subject of first philosophy, but as
the most universal, it embraces the other two.

It is important to remember the solutions to the first aporia, where we saw that there is
one science of being *qua* being, focused on *ousía*. The study of primary *archai kai
aitia* studies the grounds and principles of all *ousiāi*. However, the study of non-kinetic
nonsensible *ousía* is specific to first philosophy, and it is there that we find the first *archē*
and *aition* of *ousía*. In this way, it incorporates knowledge of the other *ousiāi*.

The **fourth aporia**$^{21}$ asks whether the science that studies *ousía* also studies its
accidents. If it does deal with essential accidents as well as *ousía*, it must be a
demonstrative science, since the science of attributes is demonstrative. But it is not
possible to demonstrate *ousía* or essence [*tò ti estin*].$^{22}$ The solution is given at Gamma
2, where Aristotle states his position unequivocally: “clearly then, it pertains to one
science to study being *qua* being and the attributes inherent in it *qua* being” (1005a14-5).
This is the conclusion of an argument that occupies most of this second chapter of
Gamma. The study of being *qua* being is primarily the study of *ousía*. The attributes

$^{20}$ Cf. book Lambda, where Aristotle lists three kinds of *ousía*: sensible and eternal;
sensible and destructible; and non-sensible and eternal. Physics studies the first two,
“some other science” studies the third (1069a 30-1069b 1).

$^{21}$ In Ross’ numeration it is the fifth, according to its initial listing.

$^{22}$ Ross mentions that there is an obvious fallacy in the argument, since in fact the
first science defines *ousía* but demonstrates their attributes (Ross: *Metaphysics*, 1970,
p.231). As Owens points out, however, even if we admit the fallacy, we do not solve the
aporia, which concerns what Owens calls the “science of the firsts”. The firsts are *ousiāi*,
discussed in this section are properties or determinations of being. All determinations and meanings of being are understood according and in relation to one central meaning, however, (*pròs hèn*) and this central meaning is *ousía*. And there is no demonstration of *ousía*.

Here we have the final argument of why the science of the *Metaphysics* is not demonstrable. That science seeks principles of being *qua* being, and particularly of *ousía*. There are no demonstrations of *ousía*, since 1) *ousíai* are understood in terms of their *eídos*, or their indemonstrable essence, that which grounds what they are; and 2) attributes of *ousía* are determinations of the essence of *ousía*, and thus cannot be demonstrated. Not only has the *Metaphysics* not established first principles (which are always indemonstrable) from which to begin demonstration, but also these first principles are themselves *aitía*, since the essence of an *ousía* is its ground. Demonstration uses principles to demonstrate *aitía* of phenomena in its purview; but if the phenomena to be grounded are *ousía*, and the *aitía* of *ousía* are principles, and if further, principles have not been ascertained, then demonstration is clearly impossible.

From the perspective of aetiology, we can lay out the entire thematic structure of the *Metaphysics*. The *Metaphysics* constitutes a search for first principles, which are identical to first *aitía*. The unity of primary *aitía* is assured by the fact that each *aítion* has a relation to being. Being has various meanings, but each meaning relates in some way to *ousía*. The primary grounds then pertain to *ousía*. *Ousíai* are conceived in terms

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23 Or of unity. Unity and being are convertible, insofar as they can be predicated in identical ways (1105a 1-12).
of the *eidos*, which is universalized in the formal definition or statement of essence. To find the ground of an *ousía* is to give a statement of the essence, the universalized form. The primary study of *ousía* is that which studies nonsensible and eternal *ousía, ousía* that, as we will see, is pure form. But this study incorporates studies of other types of *ousía*, since the unity of first *aitía* in the primary science demands that all *aitía* be studied, and non-sensible *ousía* does not have a material or efficient ground.

Although being *qua* being is that to which the first *aitía* and *archai* pertain, only in books Gamma, Epsilon and Kappa is there explicit discussion of being *qua* being as the subject of the science in the *Metaphysics*. In Zeta, Eta, Theta, Lambda, and Mu, *ousía* is taken to be that of which the *archai kai aitia* are sought. How do being *qua* being and *ousía* relate? I have so far only sketched the argument. In the following section, I will look at the study of being *qua* being and the several senses of being showing how it focusses on *ousía*, before inquiring specifically into *ousía* in the final section.

II

**Being *qua* Being**

In book Gamma of the *Metaphysics*, we come to the categorical statement that “there is a science [*epistēmē*] which studies being *qua* being [*tò ὀν ἥ ὄν*], and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature [*kath' hautó*]” (1003a 21). What do *qua* [*hēi autō*], and *kath' hautó* (generally translated as *per se*, or “in virtue of itself”) indicate? Book Delta defines *kath' hautó* as the essence of a particular; everything contained in the
definition; that which is directly attributable to something; and that which belongs to something alone and *qua* alone (1022a 25-35). In the *Posterior Analytics* we are told that an attribute or property that holds of every case and is *kath'hautó* and *hei autó* is universal, and that “a *kath'hautó* attribute is identical with that which belongs to the subject *hei autó*” (*APo*:73b 29-30). *Hēi autó*, a reflexive term, thus means according to the essential nature of something. 24

The science that studies being *qua* being and its *kath'hautó* attributes, then, examines the essential nature and universal attributes of being itself. As a scientific endeavour, it seeks the grounds and principles of that nature and those attributes. But before we can discuss the essential nature of being, we must know what “being” means.

Being is said in many ways: this phrase is itself said in many ways throughout the text of the *Metaphysics*, and contains one of the core problems of the work. How is it that being can have so many senses and yet be the object of one science? Is there any unity possible among the diverse senses of being?

The various senses of being cannot be unified as particulars to a universal since being is not a genus, as Aristotle argues in the context of the seventh aporia in book Beta (*Meta*. 998b 21-27; see also *APo*:92b 14). This aporia develops one possibility presented in the previous aporia, which inquired whether the principles of beings are genera or material constituents. Aporia seven asks whether if the genera are principles, they would be the highest (*summa genera*) or lowest genera (*infimae species*). Aristotle shows that both possibilities lead to absurd consequences, such that ultimately we must conclude that

24 See also the discussion of being as accident below.
the first principles of being *qua* being are not abstract universals at all. I lay out his argument below.

First, if the highest principle were the most universal, then being and unity, as the most universal attributes—those predicated of all beings—would be the first principles. But a genus encompasses more than one species, and each of these *differentiae specifcae* "is". Now species cannot be predicated of their differentiae, and nor can a genus, taken apart from its species, be predicated of its differentiae. Yet if being were a genus, it would be predicated of its differences, since every difference "is". Being is therefore not a genus.

To make this more concrete, let us take the example "humans are animals that are rational beings". "Human" is the species, "animal" the genus, and "rational beings" the differentia. We cannot predicate a species of its differentia ("rational beings are human"); this would be to make the differentia a sub-species, rational beings a type of human in every case (excluding God, angels). Nor—more significant for the argument—can we predicate a genus of its differentiae ("rational beings are animals"), which would make the differentia a sub-genus, rational beings a kind of animal in every case. In fact both the differentia and the genus are wider than the species; they are not sub-species (cf. *Top.* 144b 5-11; 144a 36-b3). Rather, the genus is correctly predicated of the species, and the differentiae are predicated of the species ("humans are animals"; "humans are rational beings").

Let’s take a more obvious example: “Porcupines are animals that have quills”. Now it is incorrect on the basis of this definition to claim either that “having quills is being a porcupine” (this excludes, for example, sea urchins and pens); or “having quills is being an animal” (again excluding non-animal quilled things, e.g. pens and sea urchins). However it is correct to say that “Porcupines have quills”, and “Porcupines are
Now if being were a genus, its differentia would have being (since every differentia is, or has being); and would also not have being (since no genus can be predicated of its differentiae). Therefore, being is not a genus, and consequently it is not a first principle.\textsuperscript{26} To add to the argument, were genera predicable of differentiae, those intermediate terms constituted by the genus combined with successive differentiae would also be genera, right down to individual indivisible species; and the differentiae would be more truly principles than the genera (as more universal); thus we would have an infinite number of principles.

If the \textit{infimae species} were principles, there would also be absurd consequences. A principle has to exist apart from that of which it is a principle. But nothing exists apart from an individual unless it is predicable of many things (999a 18). Yet if this were the case, whatever is more universal will be more a principle, and we are led back to principles as \textit{summa genera}, and the consequent absurdities of this thesis. Being, it seems then is neither a principle nor a genus; and nor are \textit{infimae species} first principles.

We are left with two problems: one is the problem of what the first principles of the science of being \textit{qua} being are. The second arises when we see that the legitimacy of discourse about being is jeopardized if being is not a genus. How can we discuss “being” if the term does not have one unified subject? In question is the very meaning of “being”, that is, what “being” signifies: if it does not refer what is common to a stable class of animals”; this is in fact what the definition states.

\textsuperscript{26} For a highly analytic study of the argument, see Sheldon Wein, (1983). Though I omit it here, Aristotle applies a similar argument to unity, as indivisibility.
particulars that we can then study universally, what is the subject matter of a study of being? If "being" has various significations, how are these related if not through a genus?

Aristotle writes that being is always said in relation to one thing and a certain nature, and not homonymously (1003a 32-3). Homonymy (*homónuma*) as defined in the *Categories* is said of things that have a common name, but differing definitions (*Cat*: 1a 1-4). Thus, for example "port" is an homonymous term: "port" refers to a place where ships dock, and also to a type of sweet liquor.  

But "being" is not an homonymous term. Although the same word "being" is used to signify different things, these meanings are related in that they all refer to an identical principle. Gamma two introduces the discussion of the focal meaning of "being" [*tò ḍn*], wherein Aristotle argues that this meaning is distinguished from and unites other possible meanings of being, yet is not a genus. The uses of "being" are united *pròs hèn*, "towards the one", or in reference to one principle to which they all bear some relation. "*Pròs hèn*" refers to a relation between terms, which, like spokes on a wheel, are tied to one central principle to which they all relate. The various senses of being are all related to the single term *ousía*.

In the famous discussion at 1103b 35, Aristotle shows how the term "healthy" has meanings related *pròs hèn*, focussing on the single principle of health. "Healthy" can mean something that preserves, produces, indicates or possesses health. Thus, to use my examples, eating regularly is healthy (preserves health); taking the right medicine is

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28 See also Zeta four.
healthy (produces health); clear eyes and fresh complexion are healthy (indicate health); and Socrates is healthy (possesses health). Likewise, things that are said to be are either ousíai, modifications of ousía, processes towards ousía, destructions or privations of qualities of ousía, productive or generative of ousía or of terms relating to it, or negations of some of these terms or of ousía itself (1003b 6-10). All the meanings of being then all relate to one principle [archē], and this is ousía. Terms that relate to one “nature” [phúsis] in a sense have one common understanding, thus they can form the subject of one science (1003b 15). The study of things that are qua being then are the subject of one science, and this science is chiefly concerned with ousía, as that which is primary.29 The first principles and grounds of ousía will then form the study of the science of being.

The meanings of being relate to ousía, but it is not yet clear what these meanings are. In book Delta and again in Epsilon, Aristotle gives a definition of ‘being’ that shows four senses of the term. It means 1) accidental being as opposed to being in itself [kath’ hautó]; 2) being according to the figures of the categories; 3) being in the sense of being true; and 4) being as actual being and potential being (1017a 8- 1017b 9; 1026a 33-1026b 2). In the following pages, in which I will look at each of these four senses of being, it will emerge that neither accidental being nor being in the sense of being true are the object of the primary science with which the Metaphysics is concerned.30

29 “… everywhere science deals chiefly with that which is primary, and on which other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names” (1003b 17).

30 As Aristotle clearly specifies in Epsilon (1027b 35): “tò mèn hos sumbebēkös kai tò hos alēthēs òn aphetéon” (we may dismiss the senses of being as accidental and as truth).
First, being as accident \([\textit{katà sumbebēkós}]\). In his treatment of being as accident (1026a 33-1027a 30), Aristotle presumes but does not specify the distinction developed elsewhere between three different kinds of attribute (\(\textit{sumbebēkóta}\)): 1) essential \(\textit{per se}\) \((\textit{kath' hautó})\) attributes; 2) non-essential \(\textit{per se}\) attributes; and 3) accidents that are neither \(\textit{per se}\) nor essential. In Epsilon, he discusses only the latter two, concluding that there can be no science of such accidents, and that therefore the study of them does not belong to first philosophy. But without understanding these distinctions, his argument seems forced, and it becomes difficult to understand why being according to the categories is included in the study of being \(\textit{qua}\) being.

To start with the third meaning of “accident”: 3) “accident” is defined in Delta as “that which applies to something and is truly stated, but neither necessarily nor usually” (1025a 14-15). Thus a cultured person may be white, but since it is not necessary that he be white, we say that being white is accidental to that person. The being white of the cultured person is not \(\textit{kath' hautó}\); it is not in virtue of being a cultured person that he is white; nor is it a part of the essence of a cultured person to be white. Being white is a purely contingent feature of a given cultured person.

Now on the other hand, it is possible that 2) an attribute belongs to something in virtue of itself \((\textit{kath' hautó sumbebēkós})\), yet without being a part of the essence of that thing. \((\textit{Per se} attributes are a larger class than essential attributes; the larger class divides into essential and non-essential accidents.) Thus, for example, having the sum of its angles equal to two right angles is an attribute of the triangle, yet it is not part of the
essence of the triangle that it have this attribute (1025a 30-33).\textsuperscript{31} Such attributes or accidents, unlike type three attributes, necessarily apply to that to which they are attributed, but they are not part of the definition of that of which they are predicated; in other words they are properties, not included in the formula of the definition.\textsuperscript{32} In Zeta, Aristotle gives the example of “snubness” as a \textit{per se} attribute of the nose (although here he calls it here non-accidental), since it belongs necessarily to some nose, and describes the nature of the nose (and cannot be understood without reference to the nose), yet it is not the essence of “nose” to be snub. Likewise “male” belongs to animal in virtue of the animal, but is not part of the essence of animal (since an animal can also be female) (1030b 14-28). “Male” and “snubness” cannot be explained apart from the \textit{ousía} in which they inhere, but nor are they part of the essence of that \textit{ousía}.\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, proceeding upwards in the list, there is 1) the essential \textit{per se} attribute. Such an attribute is not easily distinguishable from one that is \textit{kath’hautó sumbebêkós} and not

\textsuperscript{31} This example is misleading, since it is certainly true of every triangle that the sum of its angles is 180 degrees. In Aristotle’s conception, a triangle is not defined in this way, (a definition being the statement of essence) but it nonetheless flows from the nature of a triangle that it has this attribute.

\textsuperscript{32} This seems to accord with what Aristotle says in \textit{APo} 73b 13 in the context of \textit{per se} attributes: “something that happens to something else in virtue of the latter’s own nature is said to happen to it \textit{per se}”. See also \textit{APo} 75b 1; 76b 12-15: the demonstration discloses \textit{kath’hautá sumbebêkōta}; therefore they are “eternal”, that is, not generated or destructible and not, therefore, a modification of matter alone.

\textsuperscript{33} This is part of a larger argument, by which Aristotle shows that only \textit{ousía} is definable; definition of \textit{per se} attributes always involve recourse to that substrate (\textit{ousía}) in which they inhere (1030b 14-1031a 5). The difficulty is whether \textit{ousia} are definable as individuals within a species, or only at the level of species, i.e. whether form is individual. See section three below.
of the essence of something; Aristotle seems often to ignore a distinction which at other
times he maintains.  

His equivocation on this leads to difficulties in determining what
Aristotle considers to be the nature of essence itself. As I discuss below, it is not
immediately clear whether individuals have their own essence (the essence of Socrates),
or whether essence is only given at the level of species (the essence of human being).

In Zeta, Aristotle defines the essence \([tò tì ēn eînai]\) as that of which something is
said to be \(per \ se\), such that your essence is that which you are said to be of your own
nature (1029b 14-16). But he is careful to point out that “not all of this is the essence”;
thus a surface might of its nature be white, but “being a surface” and “being white” are
not identical. Essence belongs ultimately only to the species of a genus (1030a 12), since
only in a species is the predicate \(not\) related to the subject by participation, affection or
as an accident.  

Thus “rational” in the definition or statement of the essence of human
as “rational animal” is an essential and \(per \ se\) attribute of humans. But there is no essence
of a compound expression such as “white man”, where “white” is not definitive of “man”.

Essential accidents are those that individuate species, or which define species in relation
to genus; they are not those that individuate on the level of individuals within a species.

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34 Thus at 995b 20, he asks whether the science under investigation is concerned with
the attributes \([tà \ sumbebēkōta \ kath'\ hautá]\ of \(ousîa\), and the attributes of “same”, “other”,
“like”, “unlike”, etc. It is hard to understand Aristotle here as referring to non-essential
attributes; but he is not specific.

35 Again, Aristotle often uses “accident” in direct contrast to “essence”, while in other
places admits “essential accidents”. That essence is not specific to individuals is not
always clear in the \(Metaphysics\); I discuss the ambiguity of essence, as individualized at
the level of species, or at the level of individuals within a species, in section three below.
It follows that the categories (apart from ousía) are not necessarily essential predications. Since they require a substrate in which to inhere, they necessarily form compound expressions (taking quantity and quality, for example, we have "a big man"; "a kind man"). In their abstract form (as Locke's primary qualities), clearly they are per se attributes, since every (sensible) ousía must be subject to predication according to the categories in some form. But the specific instantiation of the category in an individual is not essential to the individual. It is not of the essence of a man that he be big, though it is in virtue of being a man that he is of a particular size. Essential accidents then are those that provide the definition of species in relation to genus; and the categories are the list of possible ways in which this species difference is manifest.

All this being said, in the discussion of being as accident in Epsilon, Aristotle says that to be katá sumbebēkós refers, first of all, to an attribute that is not part of the essence of an ousía— an attribute that is not kath' hautó- and which is therefore particular and not universal. He is referring to type two and three attributes. Now grounds can be given only for that which occurs necessarily and always in the same way: they must refer to a universal. Type two and three accidental attributes, as non-universal, admit of no grounds, and since science is the clarification of grounds, accidents cannot belong to a science.\(^{36}\) Secondly, a subject can be said to be accidentally, if its ground is also accidental (1027a 9-10). Clearly, there is no possible ground of the purely accidental event, for example of

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\(^{36}\) The characterization of per se attributes (types two and three above) as eternal, and thus universal and demonstrable, assumes greater significance here. It would seem that there can be a science of per se attributes, those which belong either to the nature of a substrate either as essential to it, or as flowing necessarily from the nature of it. Science is of essences; the first science is of the essence of the primary "substrate", ousía.
cold weather during the dog days, or of the purely contingent phenomenon such as the
whiteness of the cultured person.

Since “all scientific knowledge is of that which is always or usually so” (1027a 21-
2), then that which is accidentally and contingently and admits of no ground cannot be
the subject of any science, whether practical, productive or theoretical. Being as type two
and three accident is therefore not the subject of the primary science. Type one accidents
do belong to the primary science, inasmuch as they make it possible to define a species.

The second sense of being is being in the sense of being true [hos alēthēs]. This is
also eliminated from the study of the primary science. The recognition of something as
either true or as false is dependent upon 1) a connection and division (sūnthesis and
diairesis) of concepts in an apophantic statement, and 2) the affirmation or denial of the
truth of the resultant predication. The judgement of the truth or falsity of the predication
is itself dependent upon whether or not it mirrors the way that things are in the world.
In relation to the mental process of sūnthesis and diairesis, Aristotle writes “falsity and
truth are not in things- the good, for example, being true, and the bad false- but in
thought” (1027b 26-8). Being as truth, since it occurs and exists only in thought, is not
a real quality intrinsic to the being of things, but a judgement concerning the
correspondence of a predication to reality.

In book Theta, where Aristotle treats the same subject, he says: “it is not because
we are right in thinking that you are- white that you are white; it is because you are white
that we are right in saying so” (1051b 7-9). This statement, which seems initially to
contradict the previous one, is in fact clarification of the criteria for a “correspondence”
theory of truth: the ultimate justification of the truth of a statement is things; that is, in whether the statement reflects how things are.\textsuperscript{37} The fact that the criterion is grounded in ousiai however, has no bearing on the issue of whether the judgement of truth or falsity is essential to the being of ousiai. The judgement is an “affection of thought”, and the being of such judgement, since it does not exist in things, is not a subject of the primary science. There is a logical scientific study of truth possible, but this study is not part of the primary science.\textsuperscript{38}

Aristotle’s famous definition of truth and falsehood in book Gamma is as follows: “to say of what is, that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false; but to say of what is, that it is and of what is not, that it is not, is true” (1011 26-28). Thus, Aristotle continues, whenever we say that something is or is not, we say something that is either true or false. Book Delta repeats the definition of falsity as it applies to statements (1024b 25-27); but “false” is also here defined in relation to “things” [hos pragma pseūdos as opposed to the lógos pseudēs (or alethēs)] which is discounted from the science of being qua being.

\textsuperscript{37} See chapter four section five below for Heidegger’s discussion of “correspondence theory” in Aristotle.

\textsuperscript{38} At 1027b 28 Aristotle says that an inquiry should be made into the nature of being in the sense of being true. Truth will be the affair of logical study as in the Prior Analytics. As we saw in the first section, Aristotle also uses “alēthēthia” in the sense of ontological truth, as a virtual synonym of being. This different use of the word refers to the truth of things, which grounds the truth of statements about things. But this is distinguished from to ὅν hos alēthēs. Clearly, the truth of things is primary, and is exactly what the study of being qua being is seeking (cf. Meta: 83b 3). Truth as judgment, however, is secondary, and not essential to the being of ousiai.
There are two classes of things, as opposed to judgements, that are false; 1) those that are the objects of false opinion, and 2) those that represent themselves as something other than what they are. The first class of false things, as Aristotle’s examples in Delta show, are ultimately nonexistent things. Thus an object $S$ which is such that $P$ applies to $S$, is a false object if there is no such object. Nonexistent things do not belong to any science, as we saw in the discussion of $eί ésti$ in chapter one. The second class of false things includes imaginary objects, dreams, scene-paintings: all those things that show themselves as something other than what in they are. Such things are, but they are not that of which they create the impression (1024b 23). Again, these are things that do not exist as such, but only in the guise of semblance. There can be no grounds for such things $qua$ themselves. Truth as applied to things means simply that grounds can be given for things (1024b 17). It is a precondition for, as well as an object of first philosophy. But being in the sense of truth as Aristotle formally discusses it applies to judgements, and the study of these does not belong to the primary science.

The remaining two senses of being are intrinsic to the primary science. Third on the list in Delta is being according to the figures of the categories, treated in more detail in Zeta (1028a 10- 1028b 8). “Being” means first the what of a thing [$tí esti$], and then the quality, quantity, relation, and all the other categories. The “what” or $ousía$ is the

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39 Compare to Heidegger on seeming [$Schein$], as discussed in the first section of chapter four below. Things that show themselves as other than what they are, are not the phenomena to which the $lógos$ attains in phenomenology.

40 This is not to say that the mimetic arts falsify. The purpose of mimesis is to reveal what things are, by revealing the universal in the particular (Poetics: 1448 16-17). Thus though mimesis represents by means of false things, its object is to reveal truth.
primary sense of being, since none of the other categories can be said to be if ousía is not. Thus “it is by reason of ousía that each of [the other categories] is” (1028a 28).

Opinions differ on whether the categories describe real concepts, real divisions in being as present in beings, or whether they are merely a function of language representing possible ways of describing reality.\(^4\) If the latter were true, then being according to the categories would fall from inclusion in the primary science, for the same reasons that being as truth is not included: they would describe “affections of thought” and not what is. The modes of necessary predication are dependent upon the categories of being, as real divisions in the nature of ousía, and not the other way around. This is supported by the fact that Aristotle includes being according to the categories as an appropriate subject for the primary science.

\(^4\) Brentano (1975 trans.) sees them as real concepts, not just as a framework for concepts (p.56); S. Mansion (1976) writes that they are “les classes de réalité obtenues en examinant ce qui signifient les différents attributs possibles des choses (p.221); O’Farrell (1982) argues that the categories of being ground the modes of predication, and not vice versa (p.130). Aubenque (1966) famously sees them as reducible to the different modes of predication (p.170). In his typically aporetic manner, he sides both with Heidegger and Brentano on the relation of logical and ontological truth in Aristotle. On the one hand, he agrees with Heidegger whom he characterizes as maintaining that logical truth is a “pâle reflet” or “forgetting” of ontological truth; on the other hand, he thinks Brentano is right in seeing ontological truth as a “retrospective projection” into being of the truth of discourse (p.168). The truth of things is given through discourse, and only comes to light through discourse (p.167). The categories then, potentially infinite in number, are ultimately modes of predication that have their ground in the being of things; but the being of things, Aubenque seems to argue, is not without predicative expression. This is easily refuted by APo 83b 13-32, where Aristotle explicitly argues that the categories are limited in number; there is thus no infinite series of predication upwards or downwards. There must be a first subject of predication (a downwards limit); and there is a highest genus of predication (the upwards limit).
The categories describe ousía as the hupokeimenon or substrate, which is susceptible to real conceptualization dependent on the way in which ousía manifests itself. However, the secondary categories (quality, quantity and the like) can be studied only in relation to the primary category, ousía, since their existence, separate from ousía, is accidental. Here "accidental" is clearly used in the sense of type one per se essential accidents. To understand an ousía in its individual character, we must have recourse to the categories in their particular manifestations (big, white, last year). But to understand an ousía even according to its species and genus, we rely on the categories in their formal character (quantity, quality, time), as well as specifically or genetically applicable instantiations of their formal character (two-legged, rational, oviparous). The categories are essential predications, in that they are part of the account of what something is, in the formula of the definition. Being according to the categories is primarily ousía, the prime focus of the science of being qua being. However, the other categories, as essential attributes of ousía, are necessary to the study of being qua being, insofar as they define ousía on the level of species.

The fourth sense of being is being as potential and actual [on dynámei kai energéiain]. Theta treats the subject of the meaning of potentiality and actuality specifically, and there (as in Delta 1019b 35-1020a 6) Aristotle describes the primary sense of potency as the principle of change, which is either in the thing that changes, or in some other thing (1046a 10). However, "potentiality and actuality extend beyond the sphere of terms which refer only to motion" (1046a 2). Motion is defined in Kappa as the
actualization of the potential as such (1065b 16; also *Physics* III 201a).42 But it is potency and actuality not *as such*, but in regard to *ousía* that is the study of the primary science.

Throughout book Eta, Aristotle clearly discusses potentiality and actuality in relation to matter [*húlē*] and form [*eídos*] in an *ousía*. Matter is potentiality, whereas form is the actualization of matter, or in the case of pure form, pure actuality. The distinction between matter and form as potency and actuality plays a large role in the distinction of the primary object of philosophical study, nonsensible *ousía*, from sensible *ousía*. A short discussion of the meaning of potentiality and actuality will clarify why this is so. It will also begin to clarify why the primary principle and ground of being is nonsensible *ousía*. The two questions that arise in regard to being as potential and actual then are 1) whether being as actuality and potentiality is a subject of the primary science; and 2) the relation of act\potency to the matter\form distinction, and to the difference between sensible and nonsensible *ousíai*, and whether the study of both these belongs to first philosophy. I begin with the former.

Potentiality [*dunámis*] is a given capacity within beings to be other than they are. Potential being is that which is susceptible to change, whether the source of change is in the thing itself, or comes from something other than itself or from a part of itself. Actualization is the process of bringing the potentiality of a being into *entelécheia*, that is, bringing a being to fulfillment of its telos through realization of its potential. Actuality [*energeía*] is a concept so basic, writes Aristotle, that it can be understood only

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42 Though even here, motion is studied in relation to *tà phúsei*, that is, *ousía* that have a principle of motion. See chapter three below.
inductively and analogously. It is the presence [hupárchein] of a thing, but a presence not in the sense of potentiality (1048a 32-3). Actuality is to potency as waking is to sleeping. It is related as movement to potency. Actuality is entelécheia, the end of a process of motion. To be in motion is to be in the process of becoming, of changing from what is merely potential to the actual realization of this potential. Everything moves towards its telos (or in the case of pure form or God, is its telos), and activity is the telos of potency, "for animals do not see in order that they may have sight, but have sight in order that they may see" (1050a 12).

Actuality is prior to potency, prior to any principle of motion or rest (1049b 10-11). It is prior: 1) in definition: something is defined in terms of its actuality, not its potentiality. Something is potential because it is possible for it to become actual; 2) in time: there must first be chickens for there to be eggs, (though of course a particular chicken must be an egg before it is a chicken); and 3) in ousía: "man is prior to boy and human being to seed; for the one already has its form [eidos], and the other has no" (1050a 5).

To study act and potency is to study a determination of being (Meta. 1045b 32; 1017a 35-b1); and this is because act and potency are grounded in ousía and that which constitutes ousía. In the Physics, tà phüsei are determined as ousíai that have within themselves a principle of movement and rest (Phy. 192b 13), where movement is the actualization of potentiality. That actuality is prior to potency assumes enormous significance in the characterization of individual ousíai within a species as instantiations of one and the same actuality (form). Since actuality precedes potency, a given individual
ousía, as in movement, or on the way towards actualization, has an already given telos, or terminus of the movement from potentiality to actuality.

But all ousíai do not have a principle of movement: the first aitia, as the unmoved mover, does not admit of potency. The ousía that is pure act is not a coming to be, but is already fully itself. The primary science, which studies the causes and principles of being qua being, studies act and potency in relation to ousía, and it also studies the ousía that is pure act.

The second question at issue in the discussion of being as actuality and potentiality concerns the relationship between act\potency and matter\form, as well as the distinction between sensible and nonsensible ousía. Are all ousíai studied by the primary science? This question takes us to the heart of an issue that troubles readers of the Metaphysics (and which I take up in the third chapter below)- that is how ontology and theology relate in first philosophy.

Actuality is determined as form, and ousía is primarily form (1050b 2; also Eta 1042b 10ff; and my next section). Matter, on the other hand, is conceived as potential (1042a 28; 1042b 10), and as that which is subject to change. As potency and actuality, the matter and form of a particular sensible ousía are not separable (1045b 17-19). However, it is the form of an ousía that is what ousía actually is [tí esti]; the unchanging essence of ousía [tò tí en éinai]. Because Aristotle identifies potency with matter, and actuality with form, and because actuality is prior to potency, an individual sensible ousía as a combination of matter and form must be posterior to ousía as form. Form as actual
is prior to any of its individual material instantiations. Individual things come to be and pass away, but the form that an individual instantiates is eternal. The form defines that which a sensible (hylomorphic) ousía is en route to becoming; it thus defines the actuality of ousía. As I discuss in the context of ousía below, an individual ousía that admits of potential (is material) is the coming to be of a given actual form; and any given individual within a species is the coming to be of one and the same species form.

There is one type of ousía that has form but no matter, nonsensible ousía. Since it is matter that is potential, ousía as pure form is clearly the ousía identified in the Physics as pure actuality without potentiality. Form is the essence of an ousía, thus the primary aitia, pure form, is pure essence. As such, it is a primary focus of first philosophy. The relation of theology and ontology is determined on the basis of form.

The division of ousíai into primary classes of sensible and non-sensible is itself sustainable on the basis of form: though they do not all have matter, all classes of ousíai have form. Since knowledge is acquired on the basis of perception, however, the inquiry into ousía as form begins with a discussion of sensible ousía. But the inquiry concentrates on the form of sensible ousíai, as that which defines them. The study of ontology, focussed on ousía, and beginning with the study of sensible ousía, leads to the determination of nonsensible ousía as its aitia and arché. Otherwise stated, the study of hylomorphic ousíai leads to the examination of pure form as its ground. The study of actuality and potentiality, approached from Aristotle's aetiological perspective, must include both matter and form, sensible and nonsensible ousíai.
The study of being *qua* being leads implacably to the study of *ousía*. The various meanings of being are related through reference to *ousía*: accidental being and being as truth through their ontological dependence on it; being according to the categories as *ousía* itself and its primary determinations; and being as actuality and potentiality as essential characteristics of its nature. In the next section, I will turn to the study of *ousía* itself, as that of which Aristotle is seeking the primary *archai kai aitia* in the science of the *Metaphysics*.

III

*Ousía*

I begin with the word itself. There are several translations in circulation for the word "*ousía*". To choose a translation, or to invent a new one, is to make an important conceptual decision. In deciding to use the Greek term, I do not mean to shirk the responsibility of the conceptual decision. It is rather that the term is complex, and the possible translations so misleading, that to translate *ousía* is only to seriously distort its meaning.

"*Ousía*" is a noun, formed from *oûsa*, the feminine singular participial form of "to be", *eînai*. Etymologically speaking, then, the correct translation of the word should be "beingness", giving us *eînai*: to be; *on* (m) or *oûsa* (f): being; and *ousía*: beingness. This would preserve the correct etymology of the word; but apart from being awkward, it is too abstract to carry the way in which *ousía* is often used to refer to a concrete thing.
“Ousía” was used popularly in Aristotle’s time to mean something of one’s own, one’s property or possessions; Owens suggests that Aristotle may have preserved some of the popular meaning in his technical use of ousía, such that the ousía of something must be its own, as if its own property (Owens, 1978, p.152). But “property” does not fit Aristotle’s philosophical meaning.

The traditional translation of ousía in English is “substance”, a carry-over from the Latin “substantia”. Etymologically, “substance” signifies “that which stands under”, which is appropriate since ousía is a “hupokeímenon” of sorts, as “subject” of qualities and attributes, or as that in which the categories inhere. But ousía is also used to refer to a concrete being complete with attributes. Furthermore, the material associations of substance are misleading, and Aristotle himself abandons “hupokeímenon” as a misleading characterization of ousía (1029a 7-30); nor is “substance” related to the verb “to be”, and thus carries no hint of the ontological significance of ousía.

“Essence” is a frequent choice of translation, and as a carry-over from the Latin “essentia”, it is more faithful to the etymology of ousía. Although it does allow for the abstractive sense of the beingness of the object in question, “essence” does not capture the meaning of ousía as a concrete thing, combination of matter and form, and makes it

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43 Among those who use “substance”, or its equivalent in another language, are Cooke, Tredennick, Ross, Suzanne Mansion, Reale, and Le Blond.

44 Among major commentators, Aubenque uses “essence”.
difficult to understand ousía in the context of the categories. To choose essence for ousía would also complicate the translation of τὸ τί ἐν εἶναι and τὸ τί ἐστιν.45

Joseph Owens presents an etymological argument for the use of “entity” to translate “ousía” (Owens 1978, pp.137-154). But etymological considerations aside, the material connotations of “entity” make it hard to read the word as referring to anything other than the materially present concrete object, a combination of form and matter.46 The formal signification of “ousía”, primary in the Metaphysics, is obscured here.

In the end, I have chosen to leave ousía as ousía, which allows me to employ the same term for the several senses in which Aristotle uses it. Enough, then, on the translation of the term. Now for the meaning.

In book Delta, Aristotle defines ousía as: 1) individual things not predicated of anything else, (e.g. simple bodies, such as the elements, plants and animals; but also he lists the divine); 2) the internal ground of the being of things; 3) the essential component of a thing; and 4) the τὸ τί ἐν εἶναι, the essence (1017b 10-23). These last three are virtual equivalents, since the ground of the being of something is its essence (and since to know

45 “Τὸ τί ἐν εἶναι” with its peculiar use of the past tense of “to be”, translates literally as “the what it was to be” and refers to the formal and enduring character of an object, as opposed to the τὸ τί ἐστιν, which can denote the matter, or the composite of form and matter. Though I use “essence” for both these phrases, I also supply the Greek where confusion might arise.

46 Owens’ argument is in part etymological: “entitas” is a Latin participial noun formed on the basis of the participle ens, and the infinitive esse (corresponding then to εἶναι; οὐσα; ousía). He argues that “entity”, with its abstractive suffix “ia” preserves the abstractive derivation of ousía.
what something is, is to know why it is). Aristotle summarizes by saying there are two principal meanings of *ousia*: the ultimate *hupokeimenon*, which cannot be further predicated of something else (the first definition above); and the shape and form (*hē morphē kai tò eîdos*) of each particular thing (1017b 24-5). This latter determination seems to identify form, essence and ground of *ousia*. In book Zeta this constellation of concepts becomes clearer.

In Zeta 2 (1028b 8-20), Aristotle says that *ousia* is most obviously present in bodies, this time listing only sensible and natural bodies (animals, plants, fire, water, the visible universe, the stars). But he raises the question of whether these are the only kinds of *ousia*, noting that many believe that there are eternal beings. It is in part towards resolution of this question that Aristotle in Zeta 3 lists the four senses in which *ousia* is generally used: as 1) the substrate [*tò hupokeimenon*]; 2) the essence (*tò ti ēn eînai*); 3) the universal; and 4) the genus (1028b 34-36).

The central problem in determining what “*ousia*” means is that Aristotle describes *ousia* both as individual (as *tôde ti*), and as universal (as species). The problem is particularly focussed around the question of essence, which is identified as the form of *ousia*. Aristotle uses “form” as peculiar to an individual (such that Socrates’ form is unique to Socrates); and as common to all individuals in the same species (such that Socrates and all other human beings have the same form). The difficult is not easily resolved. But I will lay out the ambiguity through discussion of the senses of “*ousia*” mentioned in Zeta: first I will look at *ousia* as substrate; and then as essence. *Ousia*
considered as universal and as genus are treated as problems within these determinations; just as in Delta, the four meanings of *ousía* are reducible to two.

1) Is *ousía* a substrate [*hupokeímenon*]? Now substrate can be understood as matter, form, or a combination of both (1029a 3-4). If we think of *ousía* as a substrate, then matter first seems to fit, since *ousía* is the primary category, that in which attributes inhere. If by a mental process we take away all the attributes of a concrete thing one by one, then all that remains is matter. An account of this kind of substrate as *ousía* would not, however, allow for the individuality of a concrete *ousía*. Matter is in itself undifferentiated, but *ousía* refers to the separability (*tò choristòn*) and individuality (*tò tóde ti*) of an *ousía* (1029a 27). Therefore, form is more truly said to be *ousía* than matter (or than the combination of form and matter). Aristotle concentrates his inquiry into *ousía* on form, though he seems to abandon the attempt to qualify form as a substrate. 47 I will look therefore at the possibility that *ousía* is form, before continuing with the discussion of essence.

The above passage, in which matter is eliminated as substrate, clearly implies that

1) *ousía* refers primarily to an individual, or to the “thisness” of something (*tóde ti*); and

2) the form of an *ousía* is that which gives it its individual character. That form is the principle of individuation clearly goes against the “traditional” view that it is matter that makes any one individual different from any other within a species. Form, on this

47 Aristotle equivocates on whether *ousía* can be understood as substrate. He does not entirely reject the notion of *ousía* as substrate; it is rather that “*hupokeímenon*”, as a multivocal and ambiguous term, is a confusing characterization, so he abandons it. On this point see Gérard (1992), pp.451-454.
traditional view, is that which differentiates between species, but it is matter that differentiates on the level of individuals within a species. If individual ousíai have individual forms, it is only because they express the species form, but somehow individuate this form by instantiating it materially.

Form is the unchangeable element in changeable sensible ousíai. As we saw, in book Theta, form is plainly described as actuality (entelécheia, energeía) (1043a 28), and matter as potentiality (dunámis) (1042a 28). Form actualizes matter, or determines it as an individual thing. It is thus form which most describes the essence of an individual ousía, what it is in virtue of itself, but it is matter (in sensible ousía) that lends it its character as something becoming its (species) form. Aristotle does write that form is “prior” to the matter and “more truly existent” (1029a 7); if form is seen as differentiated on the level of species, this makes sense. The species “man” is prior to any material instantiation of this form, given that individual men and women come to be and pass away. Actuality is prior to potentiality; the form, as the active principle in an individual thing, is prior to the coming to be or attainment to form, of its matter. However, if an individual has its own form, which would then pass away with the destruction of the individual, it is more difficult to see how form is prior.

Whiting’s article (1986) is significant in arguing that matter cannot be used to distinguish between individuals of a same species synchronically and diachronically; I will thus use her article as a way of presenting the issue. Form, she argues, is the principle of unity of matter at and across time. Individuation presupposes unity, and it is form that
provides unity to matter. Form is then a necessary condition for individuation. Whiting argues against the view that spatio-temporal continuity of matter can account for the unity of an individual: continuity of matter in an individual is always that of informed matter. Spatio-temporal unity of matter is a necessary but not sufficient condition for individuation. By unifying matter, form individuates matter (p.372).

But “form” (*eidos*) is used to apply both to individual and species forms (e.g. 1031b 7 equates knowledge of form or essence with knowledge of the individual; 1030a 11-13 refers to essence as species; 1071 a 26-29 admits both). Aristotle is clear that two individuals embody the same form, and that form is one and indivisible. Referring to Iota 1058a 29- 1058b 27, Whiting argues that at the level of species, form is one and indivisible because “there is no contrariety in its account”. In this passage, Aristotle is answering the question of why “woman” is not different in species from “man”. “Male” and “female”, he replies, are attributes of an animal that apply not in virtue of its *ousía*, but in virtue of matter. Thus though “male” and “female” are contraries in respect of matter, they are not contraries in respect of definition (which is a statement of essence). Form can be said to be the principle of individuation on the level of species.

Now on the level of individuals within a species, Whiting argues on the basis of 1052a 25-26 that form is one and indivisible, but in respect of place and time. This passage gives a definition of “one”, as a thing that is whole and that has a definite form. If its motion is one and indivisible in respect of place and time, such a thing can be called a unit. Now motion is not in the form, but in the thing being moved (*Phys*: 224b 25): this

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48 See Whiting pp. 362-364.
would seem to indicate that an individual is called “one” not because of its form, but because of its matter. The argument would go like this: matter is moved, movement is one and indivisible, therefore an individual is one and indivisible by reference to its matter. Whiting’s argument becomes rather obscure at this point: she seems to say that the individual form of sensible ousía cannot exist apart from some matter, but that it is nonetheless the individual form that is one in movement and indivisible in space and time. Spatio-temporal continuity is dependent on the unity of form; thus it is this form in this matter that is responsible for individuation on the level of individuals within species.

Accepting form both as individual and as species solves a lot of problems in interpreting what Aristotle says about ousía, since he himself seems to characterize it in both ways. But how it can be argued coherently that the form of Socrates is both individual and universal, without appealing to language as universalizing what is ontically individual (which Aristotle does not do) is troubling. I will return to the difficulty in examining essence as the meaning of ousía. For now, it is clear that Aristotle eliminates the possibility of matter being a substrate that would capture the meaning of ousía.

2) The essence, tò tí ἐν εἶναι, is, according to book Zeta, what each thing is said to be of its own nature [kath’hauto], or in itself [hēi autō]. Accidental predications do not describe the essence of something. At 1030a 4-5, Aristotle writes that the essence is an individual type [tòde tì], but if a subject has something else predicated of it, it is not a tòde tì. Thus “white man” is not an individual type [ho leukòs anthropos ouk éstin hoper tòde tì] (1030a 5). “White” does not describe what a man is according to his nature, since a man could be not white and still be a man. Nor do per se attributes or per se
composites (like snub nose) have essences. The "thisness" of something is not defined at the level of individuals within a species, but at the level of species. This is rather confusing, since it would seem that "Socrates" (this white man) should be construed as an individual. But Aristotle's point in this difficult passage seems to be that the form of man is not further individuated than at the level of species. This promotes the view that matter is the individualizing factor in a given individual.

Further evidence that essence is specific to an individual (as opposed to being universal) is found in the passage immediately following. There, Aristotle writes that "definition is the account [lógos] of the essence" (1031a 13). Something is a definition when it gives an account of something primary, such that the predicate is related to the subject kath' hautó and not kata sumbebekós. Of course the "what" can refer to each of the categories, but primarily, and in an unqualified sense, it refers to ousía. Thus definition in the primary sense applies to ousía. Essence, then, belongs primarily to ousía (1030a 30).

Now essential definition can only be of the species of a genus, since only in defining species do we use kath' hautó predication. "Female", for example, cannot be explained without reference to "animal", and thus is only secondarily an essence. Thus essence, tò tí ēn eînai, is primarily ousía, and ousía refers to species. Essence, writes Aristotle famously, belongs to nothing that is not a species of a genus (1030a 11-13).

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49 See my discussion of definition in the context of the Posterior Analytics (chapter one above).
In another telling passage in book Zeta (1035b 28-32), Aristotle writes that terms like “man” and “horse” that are predicated universally of individuals are not *ousía*. Socrates, as a combination of this matter and this form is “a kind of concrete whole”; as composed of “universal” matter and form, an individual is not properly speaking an *ousía*. The concrete individual is not definable, but can be known only by *noûs* (in the case of intelligible individuals like this circle) or perception (in the case of sensible individuals like Socrates). It is only the form (and Aristotle writes here that “by form I mean essence”){50} that is included in the formula of the definition of something, “and the formula refers to the universal”.

Halper (1987) suggests that all that Aristotle has shown in these passages is that essence must be one in formula, and not that essence is universal. Species, he argues, is *ousía* because since it has no material or formal parts, it is one in formula; parent and child are one in formula and are thus are one in species. On the other hand, Aristotle also argues that form must be one in number. This has been used as evidence that form or essence is individual, or that individuals have individual forms. The confusion arises when we understand Aristotle to be saying both that form is universal (father and son have the same form); and that form is individual (Socrates has his own form). In fact, Halper contends, Aristotle argues that the form of Socrates is *numerically* one; and the form of father and son is one *in formula*, as it expresses the definition. Form is then in a sense both “universal” and “individual”. But Halper argues that rather than as universal and individual, Aristotle conceives form as one in number and one in formula.

{50} “... *eîdos dê légo tò tí én eínai*” (1035b 34-5).
In sensible things, Halper says, “form is one nature inevitably manifested in a plurality” (p.672). He defends his thesis on the basis of form construed as actuality. Actuality is the function that makes something what it is. In sensible things, form necessarily occurs in matter; more, “form inevitably individuates itself in matter” (671). Matter decays and must thus reproduce itself, hence there must be a plurality of manifestations of the same form if it is to continue to be actual. The first mover, on the other hand, lacking matter, and thus fully actual must be one in number and in formula.

Before pursuing this line of thought, which requires some re-thinking of the meaning of “form”, I will look at some passages that seem to imply that there are individual forms. At 1042a28-29, Aristotle refers to a hylomorphic individual as a τόδε τί; at 1017b25-26 he discusses the form as τόδε τί; likewise at 1049a 35-36. But that a form is a “thisness” does not mean that the “thisness” is determined at the level of individuals within species, as we saw above. Rather, the thisness of the individual could be determined by it being this species form, but one that is present in this matter.

At 1031b 19-22, Aristotle says that a thing is the same as its essence, because “to have knowledge [ἐπιστήμη] of the individual is to have knowledge of the essence” (1031 b 19-22). This is ambiguous, since “thing” [hecaston] could refer either to the composite of matter and form, or to the form of the composite. But essence clearly cannot refer to matter, since essence refers to what is per se and primary. Essence then seems here to refer to the form of an individual ousía. However, we must be careful not to identify two

51 It also brings in epistemological rather than purely ontic considerations; and the determination of form as individual or as species does not depend on our understanding, as I develop below.
distinct notions: "the form of an individual ousía", which does not specify that an ousía has its own individual form, and "the individual form of an ousía", which does admit individual form in ousíai.

In another passage, Aristotle says that ousía is that which is peculiar to each thing, and which does not apply to anything else. On the other hand, the universal, he says, is common to many things. It could not then be predicated of an individual ousía, unless it were predicated of them all, and this would be to reduce all ousía that fall under the universal to one, (since all things that have the same ousía are identical) which is absurd (1038a 2-8). Further, ousía cannot be predicated of a subject, whereas the universal can be. Universals describe a "such" [toiónde], (i.e. that something is of such a kind) whereas an ousía is a "this" [tóde ti]. Universals are composite; they encompass particulars. Form, on the other hand, is one; it cannot encompass any divisions or parts.

This argument seems to determine that ousía is primarily construed as an individual, and this on the basis of its individual form or essence, which cannot be shared by any other individual. However, it can equally be construed as arguing that the form of an ousía as a concrete individual is one: it is the same form, numerically one, that is manifest in several individuals at the same time. The concrete ousía cannot be put into a universal class, or predicated of anything, precisely because it is a concrete individual, that manifests, in different matter, the same form, and not an "instantiation" of form. How can we understand this? How does it solve the problem of Socrates being Socrates and not any other man?
Although knowledge begins with perception of the concrete individual, and builds from knowledge of the particular to knowledge of the universal, it is not at all clear that Aristotle defends a purely inductive theory on the level of individuals relation to species. By this, I mean that it is not evident that we have at the outset knowledge of individual forms, and then understand these as belonging to a universal class, that of species. Rather, knowledge of universals, which is as we saw is acquired on the basis of noûs, is knowledge of the individual as a member of a species, and this species as belonging to a larger genus. But understanding this individual as a member of a species is to perceive the form as already the same as in other members of the same species, and not as one manifestation that is equally instantiated in other individuals. Since form is individuated at the latest on the level of species (as opposed to on the level of genus or some wider class), a more strictly inductive theory works for the relation of species to genus.\textsuperscript{52}

On this view, the form of Socrates is one and the same as that of Callias. The form of Socrates is one numerically, but also one in formula. The “thisness” of Socrates is not

\textsuperscript{52} Aristotle never completely resolves the difficulties of individual versus species form. He does acknowledges them, however, and offers a partial epistemological solution in book Mu (1087a 10-25): “the doctrine that all knowledge is of the universal, so that the principles of existing things must also be universal and not separate ousiai presents the greatest difficulty that we have discussed.” He suggests that “knowledge” can mean either potential or actual knowledge. Potential knowledge is of the universal, whereas we actually know the individual. Thus, to use his example, although we actually see an individual colour, say green, in seeing green, we “accidentally” see the universal “colour”. How “accidental” relates to “potential” here is not clear, though it seems a non-technical usage. Perhaps he means that we always only actually perceive individuals, but we are at the same time indirectly perceiving a given individual in relation to others. To extrapolate: the point seems to be that the form of an individual thing is this definite form, that we know actually. But we can potentially see this form as belonging also to other individuals.
strictly determined by his matter, but by the way in which the species form actualizes this matter. Form is the manifestation of itself in a plurality of material instances. The material instances, the combination of this matter with this species form, exhibit the characteristics of the form in a variety of material ways, but always in the same formal way. Thus although Socrates has a snub nose and Callias has a roman nose, both individuals have noses, both grow from baby to adult, both are rational beings, and both die. The formal characteristics of Socrates and Callias are those which are identical to both. The way in which the potential of form to realize itself is carried out (e.g. the shape of their noses, the specific path which growth towards adulthood takes, the way rationality is developed in both, the age each live to) is a function not of the "individuality" of their forms, but rather of the material possibility of form to actualize itself in any individual instance.

In the case of the nonmaterial ousía, form has no need to manifest itself as process, which is purely an effect of its material instantiation. As fully actual, non-material form is what it is at all times. This would seem to render impossible the plural expression of a given non-material form.

The above is an attempt to reconcile two seemingly contradictory theses found particularly in book Zeta. Whether or not the reconciliation works, it is important for my larger purpose to understand that ousía is primarily understood as form or essence. However form is construed, as species or as individual to members of a species, or somehow as both, it is nonetheless clear that form describes what ousía primarily is.

The four ways of looking at ousía all bring us to the conclusion that ousía is primarily form. The question now will be, what is the primary ground of the being of
sensible things? More specifically, what is the ground of the form of sensible *ousía*? Sensible things are changeable, and the unchangeable form is found in sensible things, and is identical to them. Yet as unchangeable it has somehow to be prior to its appearance in sensible things. How can form subsist when sensible things pass away?

The last chapter of book Zeta begins with a “fresh start” to the question of what *ousía* is, from the perspective of the *archai kai aitia* of *ousía*. This was to be the primary inquiry of the *Metaphysics*. He reminds us that when we are asking “why” something is, we are not asking, for instance, “why a man is a man”, a clearly pointless question. Rather, to ask why is to seek a ground, as in the question “why does it thunder?” (or in other words “why is a noise produced in the clouds?”) The essence or the formal ground is the true reason why things are, and the other *aitía* can be understood in consequence.

If we ask why these materials make a house, the answer is because they form the essence of a house. “Thus what we are seeking is the ground (that is, the form) in virtue of which the matter is a definite thing” (1041 b 8). The form then is the primary ground of the being of a material thing. Form is the *aitión* of the determination of matter, such that this matter is flesh, and that other matter is wood.

Likewise with the other *aitía*. The final and the efficient *aitía* must be understood in relation to form.\(^{53}\) The formal ground is primary. The essence of *ousía*, as *eídos*, is thus

\(^{53}\) See 1041a 28-33: “Clearly then, we are inquiring for the ground (logically speaking, this is the essence), which is some cases is the final ground (as in the case of a house or a bed), and in the others, the prime mover. We look for the latter kind of ground in the case of generation and destruction, but the former also in the case of existence.” Here we have a hint of the prime mover as the formal *aitión* of sensible
a ground of why sensible things are. *Ousía* is the primary ground of being [*aition prôton toû einai*], and as such, it is a primary *archê* (1041b 28-32). The answer to why form subsists in sensible things, that which grounds the form of sensible *ousía*, cannot then be a “higher” *archê* than that of *ousía*. It must be found in *ousía* itself; but in a type of *ousía* that is free of matter, free of potentiality, and thus not subject to generation and corruption, or to any other kind of material change.

There must be a first and a final *aition*, since, as we saw, Aristotle does not permit an infinite concatenation of grounds. The individual *ousía*, that to be grounded, is the terminus of the forwards concatenation of grounds; as pure form, we will see that the prime mover, that which grounds, is the terminus in the series backwards. The study of the *archai kai aitia* of *ousía*, the forwards terminus, leads us to a study of theology, with God as the backwards terminus.

The discussion so far has brought us from the search for the meaning of science to the discussion of the science that is under examination in the *Metaphysics*. We found that Aristotle is looking for the first science, and thus for the first *archai kai aitia*. This science is not demonstrative, since first principles cannot be demonstrated, and primary grounds are themselves principles. However, the *Metaphysics* remains an attempt to identify principles and grounds of the primary subject of study. Being *qua* being is the most fundamental study, and the subject of the first principles and grounds. The primary form of being to be investigated is *ousía*; and *ousía* is, in the most primary sense, form. In the following chapter, I will study the nature of the primary manifestation of form, and *ousíai*, a formal *aition* that is identified with a final *aition*. 
relate it again to the study of first *aitía*. It will then become clear how the *ousía* named God is the first *archai kai aitia* of being *qua* being focussed on *ousía*. Theology will finally be shown to be inextricably linked to ontology in Aristotle, because of his methodological search for grounds.
CHAPTER THREE
Theology in Aristotle

To set up the discussion of Aristotle’s theology, I will review the argument so far. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is seeking the first principles and grounds of being *qua* being. Since all senses of being are unified in a *pròs hèn* relation that centres on *ousía*, the study of these first principles focusses on *ousía*. Knowledge begins with perception, so Aristotle begins his study with an analysis of sensible *ousía*, and seeking the essence of *ousía*, finds that it is the particular form, *eîdos*. The form, what something is, is at the same time a ground of why it is, since the formal ground is primary amongst the *aitía*. Scientific knowledge, knowledge of grounds, is always universal. We can achieve universal knowledge by noting that the form, though particular to the individual in which it is originally perceived, can potentially apply to other individuals. Thus we have universal knowledge of the form of *ousía* as the *archai kai aitia* of being *qua* being.

But the problem of first principles and grounds is not yet solved. The question of the persistence of form in sensible *ousía* still remains. Form is actuality, and actualizes the matter that makes up an individual *ousía*. Matter can potentially assume different forms; but this matter is formed into this individual. Individuals come to be and pass away, and yet the form, understood now universally, continues to be manifest in individuals. Form is somehow separable from matter: we understand it apart from matter.
Further, form is *entelécheia*: the achieving of the telos, of the complete reality of an individual when the matter attains to the form. What is to explain this shift from potentiality to actuality in sensible things? Form is the principle of universality, since knowledge of the universal begins with apprehension of form. But what can ground the continued manifestation of form?

The answer to this question will occupy this chapter. God as pure actuality grounds the motion from potentiality to actuality, and as pure form provides the solution to the comprehensibility of universals, and is thus the first principle of the science of being *qua* being.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{54}\) It is interesting to note that nowhere in the *Metaphysics* does Aristotle explicitly characterize God as pure form. However, the prime mover is very clearly described as an *ousía* (cf. 1069a 30ff; and passages too frequent to mention). The existence of an immaterial and eternal *ousía*, and its relation to sensible *ousíai* confronts us with the problem of the relation between ontology and theology. For this reason, I have inquired into the characteristics of *ousía*, and argued that it is primarily understood as form (cf. ch 2, sec. III). (See book Epsilon for further characterization of *ousía* as “that which is”, the essence; see Gamma on the relation of *tò ón* to *ousía*, and *ousía* as the primary object of the primary science.) There is no doubt that *ousía* must be understood either as 1) matter; 2) form (or *phúsis* or entelechy or *energeía*) or as 3) the combination of these (1070a 10ff); no alternative is offered anywhere in the text of the *Metaphysics*. Now since the prime mover is an *ousía*, is immaterial, and is characterized over and over as pure *energeía*, it clearly follows that God is form.

The identity relation between form and *energeía* is drawn out in book Theta, as well as Kappa (see chapter 2, sec. II), although this identity is not foreign to other books of the *Metaphysics*. Thus the characterization of God as actuality leads us to suppose that God is pure form. (Cf. 1071 b 20-22: The essence of the prime mover is actuality; it is immaterial, eternal, actual, an *ousía*; cf. also 1072b 14-5: as pure actuality, God has the highest activity, thinking. Passages throughout the last chapters of book Lambda (particularly 6,7, 9, 10) clearly and explicitly support the characterization of God or the prime mover as actual, immobile (and therefore immaterial), as pure act, as an *ousía*. See also books seven and eight of the *Physics*, and my discussion of these books in chapter three.)

As we will see, book eight of the *Physics* establishes that the prime mover is neither of finite nor infinite magnitude; it has no magnitude at all, thus it is immaterial and it is
In book Epsilon of the *Metaphysics*, the word *theologike* is used to describe the primary science. This science treats those things that are separable from matter and immutable [*choristà kai akínêta*], since “if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in this kind of nature” (1026a 20). Only here and in the summary of this chapter in book Kappa, (1064b 3) does Aristotle specifically identify the primary science as theology, although the references to non-sensible *ousía*, and the study of such entities, are plentiful.

It is book Lambda of the *Metaphysics* that treats non-sensible *ousía* explicitly and in the most detail, and expressly as something divine. But before looking at the prime mover as it appears there, I will turn to the *Physics*. Aristotle writes that unless there is an unmoving *ousía*, physics will be the primary science (*Meta*: 1026a 29). To understand how non-sensible *ousía* necessarily emerges from the study of sensible *ousía*, it is important to grasp the character of sensible *ousía* as kinetic, and the prime mover as not in space (267b18-27). This argument is repeated in Lambda seven, where apart from stating that the primary *ousía* has no magnitude (and therefore no matter), Aristotle also writes that “there is some *ousía* that is eternal and immovable and separate from sensible things” (1073a 4-13). Now this notion of *chorismós* (separability) is specifically related to form in a passage from chapter five of Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*: “actuality and potentiality also fall under the causes as already described; for the form exists actually if it is separable” (1071a 9).

As for the way in which God has been characterized as form in the literature, it seems that the characterization is so common, that the burden of proof rests rather on one who argues that God is *not* construed as form. None of the authors mentioned in my bibliography (nor indeed, any literature of which I am aware) claim anything other than that God is pure form. Nonetheless, the fact that Aristotle does not make this claim explicitly, at least not in any passage that I have encountered, is worthy of note.

There is also an argument to be made in support of God as pure form on the basis of Aristotle's notion of *aitia*. In chapter one, I argued at length for the priority of the formal *aitia* (see my discussion of *aitia* in ch. 1, II and ch. 2, I b and of definition ch. 1, IIIb). Characterization of God as form (or as essence) permits the establishment of a primary formal *aitia*; this, I argue, is most sought in the determination of the cosmos as comprehensible.
immobile. The physical background of the necessity of the prime mover in Aristotle's metaphysical thought and the meaning of phúsis, will then be the subject of the first section of this chapter. I will show how Aristotle's conception of kinetic sensible ousía necessarily involves recourse to an eternal immobile and non-sensible being, and how this entailment is once more established on the basis of aetiology, the search for grounds.

There are two kinds of “necessity” to the prime mover or (as it is called in Lambda) God: logical necessity and metaphysical necessity. Logically, Aristotle argues that given certain premisses concerning the nature of the physical world, a prime mover with a particular extra-physical nature must exist. These arguments are transcendental in the sense I described above, rather than strictly inductive or deductive. Aristotle cannot deduce the existence of a prime mover, because the prime mover is an indemonstrable principle, and anyway existence cannot be demonstrated. Nor can he use inductive argument, since the prime mover is non-sensible, and thus not subject to perception. He is transcendent, and thus, unlike abstract geometrical objects which are inductively known on the basis of their inherence in matter, is not subject to intellection based on perception. The arguments found in books VII and VIII of the Physics and in book Lambda of the Metaphysics are dans leurs grandes lignes, transcendental and aetiological. I treat these, respectively, in sections two, three and four of this chapter.

The logical arguments in the eighth book of the Physics, and in book Lambda of the Metaphysics rest on premisses that are not simply empirically descriptive of the physical world, but which entail metaphysical postulates. That there is movement in the world, for
instance, is not merely an empirical observation, but also a metaphysical postulate that the being of ousía is describable as an eternal shift from potentiality to actuality.¹

My argument here is that given Aristotle’s method of seeking explanatory grounds, and given his metaphysical postulates, God is a necessary part of his ontology. His ontology begins with the sensible world, the subject of the Physics: we find that also there a first aitia, divinized in the Metaphysics, is necessary.

I

Phúsis

The emergence of the prime mover in the Physics is dependent on Aristotle’s notion of movement in the physical cosmos. There is no general discussion of ousía in the Physics: that work is specifically concerned with sensible moved ousía and the internal principle of movement- phúsis. Since the Physics treats the physical realm, the work does not discuss the non-sensible unmoved mover in detail, but only insofar as it is a ground of the principle of movement.

Although usually translated as “nature”, we must be careful not to understand “phúsis” in the static sense in which the Latin word is used today, indicating a world of things, animate and inanimate, that exists in contrast to the human world. In Physics Beta, the word “phúsis” is defined by reference to things that are “by nature”, tà phúsei, which

¹ This is argued both in the Physics and the Metaphysics. It does not enter into the formal arguments for the logical necessity of a first mover in Physics VII, but plays a role in the determination of things that have “natural movement” in book VIII; and is primary in Lambda.
are those ousíai that have within themselves a principle of movement and rest [archēn kinēseōs kai staseōs] (192b 13).\(^2\) Phúsis is “an archai kai aitia of movement and rest in that in which it resides primarily, in virtue of itself [kath’ hautó] and not by accident [katà sumbebēkós]” (192b 20-22).

All things that have this principle, or “have a nature” are ousíai, since phúsis inheres in a substrate [hupokeímenon], and ousía is a substrate (192b 33-35).\(^3\) Phúsis then coincides with ousía, as the principle of change in (sensible) ousía.\(^4\) Natural things are such as animals, plants and simple bodies; whereas things that exist as a result of téchnē, such as beds and coats, although made from natural materials which have such a principle of change (e.g. the wood from which the bed is made might rot or sprout) do not have such a principle in virtue of themselves (e.g. from a wooden bed would sprout a tree, not a bed). “According to nature” applies then to ousíai that have a principle of movement and rest, and to their essential attributes (192b 35). The principle of movement and rest

\(^2\) Aristotle says that it would be ridiculous to try to prove that such a thing as phúsis exists; it is quite obvious that there are many natural things (192b 3).

\(^3\) As we saw in the previous chapter, ousía is a substrate in that it is the hupokeímenon in which inhere the other categories; and in that it is form, the unchangeable that persists through its various physical or material manifestations. But in the Metaphysics Aristotle seems to abandon this characterization of ousía (Meta: 1029a 7-30).

\(^4\) But this does not entail that it is matter (ousía is not a material substrate: see ch. two section III above). Rather, phúsis is the coming to be of form that each individual sensible ousía, as a concrete (material) manifestation of an identical form, must go through. This process is what it means to be an ousía as having a given species form, while being material. Phúsis then describes the form of ousía coming to be itself, the drive of ousía to become what it already is “naturally” determined to be.
is a dynamic principle that is operative in the world of natural things, because operative in each natural thing.

The *Physics* attempts to determine the first principles of all things subject to change. *Phúsis* itself is a principle, but it is a principle of change in *ousía*; since change occurs in sensible *ousía*, it is the grounds and principles of change in sensible *ousía* we must seek.\(^5\) *Phúsis* means both “the things of nature”, and the “nature of things”: both the things subject to change, and change as it affects things, are subjects of physics.\(^6\)

There are three principles of the science of nature, that is, three principles that relate to sensible *ousía*: matter, form, and privation (191a 7-21), but form is primary. Aristotle writes that the nature (and *ousía*) of natural things is not primarily its material substratum but “the shape or form that is specified in the definition of the thing” (193a 30). He presents four reasons for this. First, just as no one would say that a potential bed is a bed, since it is not yet achieved, so no one would say that what is potentially flesh and bones has its own nature, until it reaches the form that corresponds to its definition (198 a 28-5). Secondly, something is when it exists actually, and it is the form— inseparable except by definition— that is actual (192b 5-8). Thirdly, the form is what persists through generation: man comes from man, but from a wooden bed (were it to sprout) comes wood (193b 8-12). Fourth, form is that towards which something tends. A seed grows into an oak tree,

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\(^5\) See also *De Caelo*: “We may say that the science of nature is for the most part plainly concerned with bodies and magnitudes and with their changing properties and motions, as also with the principles which belong to that class of *ousía*; for the sum of physically constituted entities consists of a) bodies and magnitudes, b) beings possessed of bodies and magnitude, c) the principles or grounds of these beings” (268a 1-6).

\(^6\) At 193a 10, Aristotle identifies the *ousía tôn phýsei* and *phúsis*. 
into its form. *Phūsis* is the process of generation, which tends towards form. Things proceed, through growth and generation, to the fulfillment of their form (193b 12-18).

Privation, the third principle, is also in a way form, since privation describes that which an *ousía* has not yet become, but is determined to become (191b 15; 193b 18-20).\(^7\) The nature of things is thus expressed primarily in their form, but *Physics* studies form as it is in combination with matter in concrete individuals.\(^8\)

The defining principle of natural *ousíai* (material *ousíai* subject to *phūsis*) is movement. But what is movement? Motion is defined as the actualization of the potential as such, or the bringing to entelechy of what was potential (201a 9). Every movement is a change (225a 34), and change is from something to something: from a thing to its contrary; between one contrary and an intermediate; or between contradictories. Movement is not [always] synonymous with change, however: movement is a subset of change, since not all change is movement. Change between contradictories, for example, is not movement.\(^9\)

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7 *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; rather, things come to be from things of like kind; form is eternal, and eternally recurring in individuals. Privation is the “yet to be” of physical *ousía*, the positive absence of the full development of form in entelechy.

8 This distinguishes physics from mathematics and first philosophy, as is argued in 193b 22- 194b 15.

9 The distinction between *kínēsis* (movement) and *metabolē* (change), is not made clear until book five of the *Physics*, in the passage under discussion here (225a 34-225b 3). In book three, the two terms seem to be used interchangeably, though in book five it is apparent that Aristotle treats movement as a particular species of change. Movement takes place between contraries or intermediates between contraries, and not between contradictories. The change implied in generation and destruction is not, properly speaking construed as movement, since the two are contradictories. In book Kappa of the *Metaphysics*, the same distinction is made at 1068a 1-5, (extracted from book five of the
Something can be said to change i) from a subject into a subject (its contrary); ii) from a subject into a non-subject (its contradictory); iii) from a non-subject into a subject (its contradictory); or iv) from a non-subject into a non-subject (225a 3-5). The last of these is manifestly impossible. The middle two are respectively generation and destruction; since they involve the coming to be or passing away of a subject, and thus change between contradictories, they cannot properly speaking be called movement.

Movement then is change from a (potential) subject to an (actual) subject: this is what is to be grounded. Movement can exist in respect of only three of the categories: quantity (increase and decrease); quality (alteration); and change of place (locomotion) (225b 5-7). As well as these three kinds of movement, there is a fourth type of change which is not movement: generation and destruction. Locomotion, as we will see, is the primary kind of change, as implied in all the others.

Clearly change affects sensible ousía as a combination of form and matter, and the matter is that which undergoes physical change. But the ground of the change is found in the form of ousía, in what an ousía essentially is. We know that phúsis is the principle of movement; we know that movement is change from a subject to its contrary; we know that sensible ousíai, tà phúsei, is what changes; and that it is the form of tà phúsei that

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10 There can be no movement in the category of ousía, since there is no contrary of ousía; nor in the category of relation, as movement of one out of a pair in a relation destroys the relation; nor in the category of agent and patient. There cannot be movement of the mover and the moved, since there is no movement of movement or becoming of becoming. See 225b 10ff.
define them. Now to determine the principles and grounds of change, we need to know how form and movement relate.

In the previous chapter, we saw that in a sensible ousía, form is actuality, and matter is potential. Motion is “the fulfillment of what is potential as potential” (201b 5); that is, motion describes the actualization of possibilities that are already determined to unfold towards a given telos. Motion is the shift from a potential that is already present in an ousía towards the realization of that potential in actuality; insofar as an ousía is in motion, its given potentiality is not yet completely actualized, but it is en route to actualization. In other words, motion is the process of coming into, or fulfilling the form, which is already there, potentially, in an ousía. The formal and final ground of motion are the same here, since tending towards an end or fulfilling potential is fulfillment of form. The form, that which determines the essential nature of a thing, is not subject to movement in that it comes to be, since it is already present as potential in an ousía. Rather, it is the ground or principle of movement in an ousía, which tends towards fulfillment of potential, towards actualization, towards entelechy.

Nature, as the internal principle of the shift from potential to actualization, is the ground of this movement only in that “phúsis” is the word that describes this very movement. Why do things move? Because it is their nature to do so. So Aristotle writes that “it is plain then that nature is an aítion, and a final aítion” (199b 32). “Phúsis” is the name for the eternal process that is at work in the world, the process of sensible ousíai attaining their form. Processes are ordered to a last term, here the attainment of form. Nature is thus teleological: it describes both the process and the telos, and in this sense
is a final ground. But the process of nature is describable only in terms of the things that undergo this process. Physics is dependent then on a study of the form of ousía.

Phúsis is descriptive of the movement in ousía: but this movement relates to form, and is grounded by the form of an ousía. Nature cannot be defined without reference to ousía: thus though phúsis is a final aíttion, this final ground is dependent on the formal ground, ousía. Form contains within itself the principle of the motion of ousía, the principle of moving towards what it must become, its telos; at the same time, this telos is already given in the form, because it is the very nature of the form to achieve its telos. It seems movement is ultimately grounded by the form of ousía: this ground can be appealed to by physics, but as itself non-sensible, the study of its grounds is beyond the scope of physics.

What of the other aíttia? In the Physics, knowledge is again defined as the understanding of the grounds.11 We have seen that the question ‘why’ has four possible answers, listed most famously here: 1) the matter (if the question concerns generation; technically this ground applies to metabolē and not kínēsis); 2) the form; 3) the mover; and 4) that for the sake of which (198a 22-25). As we saw in the context of the Metaphysics, these last three often coincide. Aristotle writes that, first, the form and the “for the sake of which” are the same, since the form of something is that towards which it tends. Second, the efficient ground of a thing is the essence, present in another member of the same species. Something comes to be from something of the same species, thus,

11 “... our study has knowledge as its object, and we do not know a thing until we have grasped the ‘why’ of it (that is its prôtēn aíttian) ... ” (194b 18-21).
for example, man generates man (198a 24-27). The form of the parent is responsible for the presence of form in the offspring. The efficient ground is therefore the form; but as it is the form as present in another member of the same species, the efficient is not entirely identifiable with the formal ground. Thus it seems that the answer to the question “why is there motion” is found by referring to the matter, the form, and also the moving aitión.\(^\text{12}\)

Aristotle describes two kinds of principles that are explanatory of natural movement. The first is in things that move by being moved, that is, physical things that are part of a concatenation of aitía. Such things are the proximate grounds of movement in something else, but the movement of these things themselves also needs explanatory grounds. (The son might come from the father, but where does the father come from; and the father’s father ... and so forth.) The other kind of principle is not physical since it has no principle of motion in itself. This latter principle is found in 1) the unmoved mover; and 2) the formal ground of each natural thing (198a 35-b 4). The second of these is the immanent ground of movement; as we saw, form is the ground of movement, since it is that which an ousía is, and that towards which it tends. The form is responsible for movement in an individual ousía, without itself moving: as individual, however, it is

\(^{12}\) The formal aitión may be primary, in that it must be known in order that the other aitía be known, but it does not in itself ground the material and the moving cause. The form of an ousía is that which persists through change from one individual species to another of the same species, but what is the ground of this continuous movement? The change in matter may be grounded in the process of the form coming to actuality, but what grounds this movement? All things tend towards their end, a process called “phúsia”, but what grounds this drive towards the end? These questions concerning form are not physical, but metaphysical questions. Physics asks for the ground of movement in sensible things, and is not concerned with whatever might ground sensible ousía as movemented.
subject to destruction. The unmoved mover, on the other hand, is the transcendent aitia of movement, since it grounds the shift from potentiality to actuality in all sensible ousía, without itself being sensible. It is the primary aitia, as first in the concatenation of grounds, which puts an end to the series.

Aristotle mentions that things that cause movement without themselves moving are not strictly the subject of physics, since they do not have a principle of movement in themselves. The prime mover is thus not properly a part of the physical science. Nor, strictly speaking is form, as the unchanging element in sensible things. We will see that the arguments for the prime mover in the Physics do not explain the shift from actuality to potentiality, but rather explain movement primarily as locomotion. Though form is the primary ground of movement in sensible things, it is not itself subject to change, and thus not a subject for physical grounding. However, the need for a highest ground of change is explicit in the text; in physics, as in all other sciences, we must search for the highest aitia, which is the most perfect (195b 21-25). In order to answer the ultimate why of the physical world, that is, why there is motion in a sensible ousía, the prime mover must be

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13 Thus individual form is not subject to movement, but it is subject to change. The individual form is the basis for the construction of universals, as I argued in the previous chapter. As a universal, form is not subject to destruction. Aristotle does not recognize extinction of species, and holds that the cosmos is truly eternal (no beginning or end).

14 There are three areas of study: the unmoved (theology), the moved but indestructible (cosmology), and the destructible (physics) (198a 27-30). This division is repeated in book lambda of the Metaphysics, 1069a 30ff, where it is applied specifically to the types of ousía (see section IV below). The study of first philosophy of course is concerned with all types of ousía, but because it looks for the principles of ousía, it is primarily theology. Theology, as the most universal science, incorporates knowledge of these other two.
brought into the picture. Aetiology drives physics towards theology, but physics does not encompass theology. In the following two sections, I will look at the physical arguments for the necessity of a prime mover.

II

*Physics Book Seven*

At the beginning of book seven of the *Physics*, Aristotle gives a short (and rather unsatisfactory) argument for the necessity of a first mover (*Phy*: 241b 24- 243a 2). I present here the bare bones of the argument, which comes down to this: since everything that moves is moved by something, and since no infinite series is possible, there must be a first mover.

The argument begins with the claim that whatever is moved, is moved by something. Now movents either do not have a source of movement in themselves, and must thus be moved by something; or else they do have a source of movement within themselves (animals, for example). In this latter case, however, it must be that one of the parts moves another, and movement of a part involves movement of the whole. Since everything that is in movement is therefore moved by something else, there must be an unmoved mover at the end of the concatenation, or else we would have an infinite series.

There follows a *reductio ad absurdum* argument of the thesis that there is no first mover, and that there is thus an infinite series. The argument seems to focus on locomotion; it is difficult to understand in respect of the other forms of motion. Everything is moved by being moved, and the movement of mover and moved is
simultaneous (i.e. concentrating on the point of contact, your movement away from me and my movement of pushing you happen at the same time). Therefore, in a series of movers and movents, all movement will be simultaneous. Nonetheless, each individual in the series has an individual movement, since all movement is from something to something, and is not infinite in respect of extremes. The movement of a given individual being limited, the time in which each movement takes place (even if our movements happen in the same time) must also be limited. But we have assumed that there is an infinite series. If movement is simultaneous between mover and moved as we have assumed, then we will have an infinite movement in a finite amount of time, which is impossible. Therefore there must be a first mover.

Aristotle himself points out that this argument is perhaps not valid, since it may be possible for there to be an infinite movement in a finite time if there are a number of moving things in the series. The sum of the movements of the different members of the series may be infinite, though the movement is in a finite time. This would of course still be impossible for one individual. Aristotle therefore looks at the possibility that each subject within the series has its own movement. Even so, he points out that the series is made up of individuals which form a unity, since the mover and the moved must be continuous or in contact.\textsuperscript{15} If the sum of the parts of this series when added together are infinite, so also must the movement be infinite, over a finite amount of time. This is impossible, therefore our hypothesis is impossible, therefore there must be a first mover.

\textsuperscript{15} He discusses contact between mover and moved later on in book VII, beginning with the statement of the thesis at 243a 3-10, and analyzing its validity for the three kinds of movement- local, qualitative and quantitative- in the passages following, to 245b.
There is some debate as to the validity of this argument. Ross for example argues that this argument is not valid, since there is no such thing as a single movement of the series taken as a whole. Even though members of a series are in contact, still, each member will play out its own movement (see Ross: 1955, p.670). But logically flawed or not, we should note its transcendental (not inductive or deductive) form: it starts with an empirical fact (movement; or more specifically, that everything that is moved is moved by something), and looks for the condition of the possibility, the ground, of this fact (the prime mover). What emerges is a first mover, (not an unmoved mover) which in Aristotle’s eyes, is a logical necessity. What kind of aitión this mover is, is uncertain. Aristotle calls it a “source whence” of motion [hóthen hé archē tēs kinēseōs], and not a final ground (243a 3), which seems to indicate it is an efficient ground.

III

Physics Book Eight

Book eight of the Physics draws together the theses explored in the first seven books of the Physics. On the basis of the sensible natural world, Aristotle offers another transcendental argument for the necessity of the prime mover. He also gives some characterization of what in the Metaphysics he names God.16 This argument begins with

16 James McNiff (1992) argues that in this book of the Physics, Aristotle does not demonstrate God’s existence, but presupposes it. He claims Aristotle’s argument is ascriptive and not existential, ascribing immobility to the first mover rather than proving its existence. I agree that the argument is clearly not a demonstration, nor could it be, since God is a principle. But nor does Aristotle explicitly or logically presuppose the existence of a mover, except insofar as he does not admit an infinite series, and insofar as he posits the eternity of movement. As I will argue, the prime mover (not God)
the thesis that movement is eternal: the first mover that emerges from the argument is the ultimate reason why motion must be eternal.

That there is movement is an empirical fact, as self-evident as the existence of nature; and movement is once again defined as the coming into actuality of what is potentially. The thrust of the argument for eternity of movement is as follows: since there is movement, there exist things capable of motion and things capable of being movers. Now if we allow that there was a first motion (as opposed to eternal movement), then before this change there were things capable of being moved and capable of moving. These things themselves must either have been engendered, in which case there must have been a prior change to bring them into being; or they pre-existed without change. If the latter is true, then a change must have occurred to put them into the condition of changing (251a 8-28).

Another similar argument for the existence of eternal motion is based on the notion of the mover and the moved. These must be in a certain condition to be capable of movement- that of reciprocal proximity- and something must happen for the condition then to be changed in favour of movement. Thus there must be an anterior movement to any movement posed as first (251b 1-9).

A third argument is based on the eternity of time, time being the measure, or the ‘number’ of movement. That time is eternal is clear from the fact that any given moment has time preceding and following it (251b 10-27).

emerges as a ground of, or condition for the possibility for, physical phenomena given these metaphysical constraints.
Movement then is eternal: this is the first step of the argument concerning the prime mover. In the course of answering certain objections to the thesis of eternal motion, Aristotle takes the second step: in the cosmos, some things are always in movement, others are always at rest, others are sometimes in movement and sometimes at rest (253a 22). He then argues at length for the thesis that everything that is moved is moved by something.

Aristotle begins the argument by looking at things that move. Disregarding things moved accidentally, he looks at the remaining "essential" kinds of change or movement: 1) things moved unnaturally or by violence, (such as stones thrown upwards) and 2) those moved by nature. This latter group of self-moved things includes: 2a) self-moving things, such as animals, and 2b) things that have a natural movement, such as fire moving upwards, and earth moving downwards. Self-moving things, as was argued in chapter seven, require some part that is moved by another part. But the part that does the moving itself requires a mover. For the case of things that have natural movement (2b), Aristotle enters into a discussion of act and potency (254b 33- 255a 29). 17 Ultimately, it turns out that such things move to fulfill their essence, to actualize their potential. Thus, for example, fire moves upwards because it is its nature to do so; and it must do so in order to be what it is. But this movement also demands a mover, and that is whatever grounds the need for things to become what they are.

Since a mover is required in all cases of things that move, it transpires that all tà phûsei are moved by something. In order to avoid an infinite regress (and no infinite

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17 Thus introducing metaphysical postulates into his argument.
series is possible, as was established in book seven) a first mover is required. Ultimately, the argument then is: since there is movement, there must be a first mover. The next question is, what is the character of this mover?

a) The character of the prime mover

The first mover must cause movement without itself being moved, since if it were moved by something, this would only add to the concatenation: it must therefore either be self-moved, or unmoved. If it were self-moved, however, a part of it would have to move, acting on an unmoved part. Some unmoved thing must then always be present. Thus, the first mover must be unmoved (257a 31-258b 9).

Aristotle now seeks to prove that the unmoved mover must be eternal, and single. Since we showed that there is eternal movement, there must be at least one eternal prime mover (258b 10). There may also be more than one, although "we ought ... to suppose that there is one rather than many, and a finite rather than an infinite number" (259a 8), because of an Aristotelian Ockham's razor. It is sufficient that there be one. Furthermore, it is better for things to be simple and finite, and what is better ought to be present in the cosmos.

But why must the unmoved mover be eternal? There are clearly some non-eternal self-movers, and non-eternal unmoved movers. These seem to be, respectively, animals and plants, and the vital principle or souls that direct them.\(^{18}\) Could we not find grounds

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\(^{18}\) See here 258b 20, where he mentions unmoved movers subject to destruction; also and more specifically 259b 1 ff. The soul although unmoved itself, moves the body, and thus is itself accidentally moved.
for the eternity of movement thus, without recourse to an eternal unmoved mover? Aristotle argues that non-eternal self- or unmoved movers are not sufficient to ground the eternity of movement since they cannot account for the continuity and perpetual generation of all things. Since they are themselves subject to generation and destruction, they require at one time or another, a ground of their own being. Nor would a succession of such movers account for the continuity and eternity of change, but only for a successive series of changes (258b 25- 259a 6).

This latter passage is somewhat obscure, but is key to the understanding of the role the unmoved mover plays in the physical universe. Why is it not enough to argue that change being eternal, there is an endless concatenation of changes, grounded in the succession of non-eternal unmoved movers, the souls of animals and the vital principle of plants? Reason enough is found if we look at the consequences of positing an infinite series. If there were no first aitia, then all of our explanations, and all the alleged grounds for these explanations, would be groundless. The cosmos would be inexplicable. In a methodology that is focussed on seeking grounds, and explanations on the basis of these grounds, a first ground is required. The possibility of the cosmos being incomprehensible is anathema to Aristotle. Some sort of first mover is required in order to “start the series”, and to permit that the cosmos is intelligible.

But also significant here, and revelatory of the nature of the prime mover, is the argument (based on observation of the celestial spheres and not on deductive reasoning) that the sort of eternal movement that exists must be continuous and in a direct line from mover to moved. This characterization of the eternity of movement as continuous has not,
up to this point, been proven. Aristotle has only demonstrated that there must be eternal motion, in order to avoid an infinite series. There is no reason why eternal motion could not, according to this reasoning, be played out through a chain of successive movements. However, Aristotle does not permit this, for reasons I explain below.

Aristotle has argued (at 243a ff) that the mover must be in direct contact with the moved, such that there is nothing between them. This is clearly the case between souls and bodies, and is also the case between elements in a succession of aitia. However it is not the case that successive motion is continuous, according to Aristotle's own definitions of succession [ephexês] and continuity [sunexês] (227a 6-17). Something is successive to another if it comes after the starting point of the other (this point determined by position or form or otherwise), and if there is no intermediary of the same kind separating it from that which it succeeds. Successive motion involves a discontinuity at least of subject or of kind. On the other hand, something is continuous if the limiting extreme of two things, the point at which they touch, are one and the same. Successive motion then involves a disjunction between two things; continuous movement requires that if there are two things, they be considered the same, or that they share the same boundary.

Motion that is unqualifiedly one and continuous must have a specific identity, unity of subject (in fact it must be the same subject that moves), unity of time; in this way there are no lacunae in the movement, and thus no periods of rest (228b 1-11). A series of non-eternal unmoved movers does not qualify here: such movement involves various subjects, diverse identity, and (possibly) a stop-and-go temporal sequence (because,
following Aristotle’s notion of succession, there is one subject and then another in motion).

The observable movement of the celestial spheres does however meet this description. Furthermore, locomotion is the only continuous motion, and is thus primary over movement in respect of quantity and quality. Aristotle gives three arguments for the logical, chronological and ontological primacy of locomotion at 260a 26-261a 26. Briefly they are these: 1) locomotion is necessary for the existence of growth and change; no sensible thing could experience change of quality or quantity were it not for the primary local movement caused by the prime mover; 2) eternal things are subject only to locomotion; all other movements are related to generation, and the eternal must precede that which comes to be and passes away; 3) anything that is in a process of becoming is imperfect, since it is a “not yet”; local movement does not involve coming into form. Of all movements, locomotion removes the subject least from its essential nature.

Circular motion is the primary form of locomotion, since it is the only kind that, being one and continuous, can be eternal and perfect (262a 27- 266a 10). In the Physics, Aristotle argues for the necessary existence of circular motion on the basis of the notion of movement. In fact, he seems to prove merely that such motion is possible, and then to point to its empirically verifiable existence, in the motion of the heavens.19

19 See also the argument in De Caelo, starting with the three premisses that: 1) there is such a thing as simple motion; 2) simple motion is circular; and 3) simple motion is the motion of a simple body. From these he concludes that there is a simple body that moves in a circular motion- the outermost aitherial sphere (De Caelo, 269a 2-7).
In book eight of the *Physics* there are thus three arguments for the necessity of one eternal unmoved mover, as opposed to many non-eternal such movers: 1) perishable immobile movers cannot ground the continuity of generation of animals and plants; 2) the nature of eternal movement, which is continuous and one, demands one mover and one moved; 3) non-eternal unmoved movers can move things only in a non-continuous way, since they are themselves subject to change, and such movement is not, strictly speaking, eternal.

An eternal unmoved mover could not be said to have direct contact with terrestrial things, since terrestrial things are subject to periods of rest. These periods would be inexplicable if that which moves them is itself unchanging. Therefore, the unmoved mover moves something— the spheres— with a continuous direct movement. These spheres in turn are responsible for the movement of terrestrial things; since the spheres are physical entities, and themselves subject to movement and therefore change, the stop-and go-movement of terrestrial things finds a ground (260a 1-20).

In the last chapter of the *Physics*, Aristotle expands on the character of the first mover. It has no parts or magnitude. Nothing finite can account for motion over an infinite period of time, and in a finite magnitude there is a finite force, therefore nothing infinite can have a finite force (266a 11-266b 6). Something infinite must thus have an infinite force, and a non-finite magnitude. But there is no such thing as an infinite magnitude. Therefore, the first mover, which, since it imparts infinite movement over an infinite period of time, has infinite force, is without magnitude (267b 18-26).
Aristotle repeats that because of the existence of continuous motion, which, as continuous, is one motion (as opposed to a consecutive series of motions which are several) we can conclude that the mover is one (267a 21-23). It must be unmoved, because it should not change with what it changes, otherwise, it will be merely part of a series of movers. For the motion to be uniform, the mover must not change position in relation to the moved. It must therefore be in one place. Circular movement must originate either from the centre or the circumference. Aristotle finds the prime mover must be on the circumference of the universe, since whatever is nearer the mover moves fastest (the impetus fading with distance) and the outermost sphere moves fastest (267a 25- 267b 8).

So far we have gone from the eternity of movement, and the fact that everything that is moved is moved by something, to the necessity of a first mover. This mover must be unmoved, eternal and single; it must have no parts or magnitude. Now locomotion is the primary type of movement, and the only continuous kind of movement. Only circular motion can be continuous and infinite, so the primary kind of locomotion is circular. The prime mover moves the spheres, which exhibit this kind of motion. The prime mover is then a ground of the eternity of movement. How the mover moves the spheres is not discussed (whether it is a final or an efficient ground is unclear); it is in fact not relevant to the purpose of the argument here, which seeks only to show how movement is eternal.

20 It seems strange that something that has no magnitude would actually be in a place, given that place is defined as “the first unmoved limit of the container” (Physics 212a 20), meaning the boundary between a body and that which envelopes it. There is no hint of God’s physical situation in Lambda, where God as pure form appears to be transcendent, as well as immanent in the world through the order found there.
The argument in its general structure is transcendental, looking for grounds of ascertained facts. But not only *how*, but also *what* the mover movers is obscure. Some Greek cosmology will render this clearer.

b) **Excursus on Aristotelian cosmology: What the prime mover moves**

In order to understand why the mover is said to move the spheres, we must know something of Aristotle’s cosmology. This is passed over very quickly at *Phy* 260a 1-10, but without it, Aristotle’s argument fails. It is too easy for us post-Copernicans to miss his argument.

Apart from the four earthly elements, earth, water, fire and air, there is a fifth element or natural body, aither. Natural bodies must have simple motion, of which there are only two: up and down, and circular. The aither, unlike the other elements, moves in a circular fashion, and therefore has no contrary, and is unceasing. The body made of aither, an element that is neither heavy nor light, and neither generated nor destructible (*De Caelo* 269b 18- 270a 35) forms the outermost boundary of the finite universe, beyond which there is no time, body, void or place. If there is anything outside the boundary of the universe, or beyond the first aitherial body, it would certainly, notes Aristotle, be the highest divinity (*De Caelo* 279a 11-b 3).  

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21 The existence of a transcendent mover in *De Caelo* is the subject of much debate. There are passages which seem to imply the necessity of such a mover for the heavenly system, and other passages which contradict such necessity. For a neat synopsis of these passages, see W.K.C. Guthrie’s introduction to *De Caelo*, edition cited in the bibliography below. It does seem agreed that this early work is not incompatible with the workings of one or more divinities.
does, in book eight of the *Physics* "place" the prime mover on the circumference of the universe.

This outermost sphere contains within it the fixed stars, which are then moved by the motion of the aither in rotation. In concentric spheres within the boundary of the first heaven are the spheres containing each of the planets, each planet being fixed in a number of spheres, which accounts for the irregularity of planetary motion. The planets themselves do not move, then, but are subject to the motion of the spheres in which they are fixed. These spheres are in turn moved by the more quickly moving outermost sphere. From the most outer region, and approaching the centre of the universe, we pass from the most unchangeable eternal movement (the sphere containing the stars), to that which has irregular movement (the spheres containing the planets and the moon), through the regions of the four elements, subject to rectilinear motion, and then to the fixed earth at the centre.\(^\text{22}\)

This being said, it is perhaps clearer what it is that the unmoved mover in fact moves. It is responsible for the turning of the outermost sphere, that moves in a regular and eternal motion. This in turn moves the outermost spheres of the sun, moon and planets. The innermost spheres controlling the motions of these latter are moved by other

\(^{22}\) There is a neat argument here with a transcendental turn: Everything that rotates must have a fixed centre, hence the earth is fixed in the centre of the outermost sphere. Earth has a contrary, fire (which moves up in contrast to the earth's downward motion). Air and water are intermediaries, and together the four elements are responsible for coming to be and passing away, since they have motions that are not circular, and thus not eternal. The ultimate explanation of generation is however the secondary motions of the inner planets and the sun and moon: which must be since there must be generation-and generation must be since it is a necessary consequence of the being of the earth, which in turn must be, if there is to be eternal motion (*De Caelo* 286a 3- 286b 9).
unmoved movers, which by the movement they inspire are responsible for terrestrial changes. The prime mover then excites the primary form of motion, that is, eternal circular motion of the outermost sphere, which moves the other outer spheres. The planets, sun and moon also have their own eternal unmoved movers, which causes their special movements. These movements inspire terrestrial change. 23

The Aristotelian vision of the physical world as a constant process of change is powerful. The incessant movement within all natural things, affecting all natural things, is an ongoing shift from potentiality to actuality. The implications of this movement for theology are drawn out in the *Metaphysics*, but appear already in the *Physics* with Aristotle’s definitions of *phûsis* and *kînēsis*, and in his use in *Physics* VIII of the act\potency relationship to account for movement in natural bodies. Otherwise, the arguments for the prime mover in the *Physics* are quite independent of metaphysical notions. They are focussed on the ground of movement conceived primarily as locomotion.

The continuing cycle of generation and destruction, the eternal movement of *ousîai* reaching entelechy, becoming what they are as dictated by their inherited form, is the true

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23 The existence of a plurality of unmoved movers is taken here from a reading of *De Caelo* (esp. 286a 3-286 b 9) and *Metaphysics* Lambda. It is not clear in the *Physics* that there is more than one unmoved mover, although it is certain that there is one primary unmoved mover (238 b 10-12). The *Physics* does not discuss how the unmoved mover imparts movement. In *De Generatione et Corruptione*, it is the annual elliptical rotation of the sun that acts as the efficient explanation of terrestrial change. The perpetual and uninterrupted coming-to-be of terrestrial change is “the closest approximation that God could make to eternal being” (336b 35). Thus God is the (efficient?) explanation of change on earth.
natural movement of terrestrial beings; but this remains largely unexplained in the
*Physics*. *Phúsis* there is a principle that is described as the eternal movement [kínēsis] of
becoming, a becoming that is what it means for sensible *ousía* to be, as natural beings.
Physics does not need to explain, but only to identify, its principles. Thus it does not
focus on why there is movement in *ousía*, but on why there is movement as such. But the
essential characterization of *tà phūsei* as kinetic raises the question of the direction
towards which the process unfolds.

The response necessitates a step outside the physical processes of becoming, to a
being that is static. The movement of becoming, a movement that is jagged, interrupted
as it is by death and reproduction, is maintained by an eternal smooth and continuous
motion, the movement of the celestial spheres. This latter movement is grounded in the
*Physics* by an eternal unmoved mover, situated in a place, yet without magnitude or time.
The physical realm is, we saw, at its root determined by a non-physical component. This
non-physical being is shown in the *Metaphysics* to ground the form of *ousía*. The search
for grounds within the physical realm, the aetiological thrust ever-present in Aristotle’s
writings leads to a being that we will see is developed in the *Metaphysics* as divine.\(^\text{24}\)
Aetiology leads again to theology.

I will now look at book Lambda of the *Metaphysics* to see how the non-physical
being of the *Physics* is conceived as a part of the metaphysical grounding of the cosmos.

\(^{24}\) Physics argues from the occurrence of motion to a primary explanation of that
motion. The prime mover turns out in the science of theology to be God, but the being
of God cannot be developed within physics. On this point see Lang (1978) p.516:
“Theology completes physics without destroying the status of physics as an independent
theoretical science”; also de Corte (1931) p.106 ff.
I will argue that as explanatory of *ousía*, the prime mover or God is essential to Aristotle's science of being *qua* being.

**IV**

**God in Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics***

The discussion of the *Metaphysics* in chapter two left us with the question of how to find grounds for the continued appearance of form in individual sensible *ousía*, a question that has recurred in the context of the *Physics*. I will argue that as the prime mover, God, is an *aition* of the eternal shift from potentiality to actuality, the attainment of form, that characterizes sensible *ousía*. As pure form, God is the formal ground of the continued manifestation of form in the cosmos. As the good, that to which all things tend, God is the final ground of movement. Also, as pure actuality, God is in a sense the efficient ground of generation. Since knowledge of universals begins with the apprehension of form in particulars, God is also explanatory of the possibility of universal knowledge. As such, God is the first principle of the science of being *qua* being, and knowledge of God is prior to knowledge of the axioms.

We have seen that seeking grounds of the physical world leads to the logical necessity of a prime mover. The argument in book Lambda is not different in its general structure, but it focusses more explicitly on *ousía* and its attributes, and incorporates metaphysical postulates. It grounds the movement of *ousía* not as locomotion, but as shift from potency to actuality. Since the *Metaphysics* is not restricted to seeking grounds of the physical world, it is also able to name the first mover "God". In Book Lambda, the
prime mover is no longer conceived only as an abstract aitia of the workings of the physical world on the periphery of the universe. Here it appears explicitly as an ousía: and ousía and its archai kai aitia is expressly said to be the subject of the Metaphysics.

The three kinds of ousía listed in Lambda are: 1) the eternal sensible; 2) the perishable sensible; and 3) the non-sensible and immutable. The first is the subject of cosmology, treated in De Caelo; the second is the subject of physics, and the last belongs to "some other science", clearly the first science under study in the Metaphysics (1069a 30-1069b 8). But the study of being qua being must incorporate a study of all three. And, since knowledge begins with perception, we begin with the study of sensible ousía, and looks for its grounds.

Now sensible ousía is subject to change [metabolē]. As in the Physics (book five), change is always between contraries; something changes from one thing into its contrary, and some substratum -matter- changes and remains when the contrary remains. All change is from what is potentially to what is actually. Generation, we saw, is a type of change. Ousíai are generated by something that has the same name, either by nature (as the parent begets the offspring and thus is in a sense the same), by chance or spontaneously, or by téchnē. All generation is then the product of a change in something

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25 What Aristotle says about change here is consistent with, and even a repetition of what he said about change in Physics five and Kappa. Here, however, he discusses change [metabolē], and not movement [kinesis], thus he includes the generation and destruction of ousía in his discussion.
that was already there.\textsuperscript{26} In fact Aristotle does not believe that there was ever a time in which all things came to be; apart from his explicit statements to that effect,\textsuperscript{27} this is clear on the basis of the eternity of movement and time. The prime mover, God, is therefore not, for Aristotle, a creator. He is not the proximate cause of generation. However, we will see that the prime mover is indirectly an efficient \textit{aïtion}, a ground of the eternal cycle of generation and corruption, by being a final and formal ground.

At Lambda 1071b 3, Aristotle begins his argument for the necessity of the eternal prime mover as a ground of sensible \textit{ousía}. It begins with the eternal cycle of generation and corruption. Sensible \textit{ousía} are of course perishable, since matter is subject to change. But if all \textit{ousía} were perishable, then all things would be perishable, given that \textit{ousía} is the primary reality. But neither time nor motion can be generated or destroyed. It is impossible that time were generated, for then there would have had to be a time before time; equally, time cannot be destroyed, for this would involve there being a time after time.\textsuperscript{28} Now time is either the same thing as motion, or an attribute of it; motion must therefore be continuous, as is time. The only form of continuous motion is local motion,
and the only continuous form of local motion is circular. There must therefore be an eternal circular motion.

Since there is eternal motion, there must be an eternal *ousía* that produces motion. The Platonic forms, which are eternal *ousía*, do not work as explanatory of motion since they do not have a principle of motion that can ground change. Now the eternal *ousía* that produces motion must do so not only potentially, but actually, since something that has potentiality may not exercise it. Also the essence of such an *ousía* must be actuality, because if its essence were potentiality, then it could potentially not be. But there is eternal movement, so there must then be something (or some things) of which the essence is actuality. Such things must be immaterial, since matter is potentiality, and thus subject to change; that is, generation and destruction. If eternal *ousía* were subject to this kind of change, we would have to posit something that is responsible for the change, and would then be returned to the beginning. Actuality must precede potentiality, otherwise, it would be possible that all things not yet be, whereas it is manifest that there are things. There must then be an actual ground prior to potential being, a prime mover whose essence is actuality prior to the potentially moved.

Turning to empirical evidence, we can see by the motion of the celestial objects that there is in fact unceasing circular motion. There must therefore be something that moves the heavens without itself being moved, something eternal, that is an *ousía*, and actual

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29 See *Phys*: 261a 31-263a 3; 264a 7-265a 12.

30 Aristotle shifts to the plural at this point in the argument, (1071b 21) anticipating discussion of the movers of the spheres.
[energeía] (1072a 25). The prime mover is pure form, pure actuality, non-sensible, eternal.\textsuperscript{31}

Let's analyze the argument. It is transcendental in form, since it starts with that which has to be grounded: the eternal cycle of sensible ousía coming to be and passing away. The first question is, how can form persist through generation and destruction? In other words, since all sensible beings have the potential not to be, why is this potential not realized all at the same time, so that all beings are extinct? The answer is that time and motion are eternal; these cannot not be. The eternal form of motion is motion in a circle; this requires that there be something eternal that moves in a circle. These are the spheres.

The second step of the argument looks for a ground of eternal motion. This is found by positing eternal movers that move the spheres. These movers, to be eternal, must be immaterial, since matter is potential, and is potential to not be. The third step of the argument looks for a ground of the movement of the movers. The prime mover must be pure form, since matter is potential; it must be fully actual, since if it were potentially, then it could potentially not be; it must be eternal, in order to ground eternal movement.

\textsuperscript{31} Aristotle argues that there is more than one unmoved mover, although there is only one prime mover. The prime mover explains the primary form of eternal motion, which is one and continuous, that is, the movement of the first heaven containing the fixed stars. But every eternal motion requires an eternal explanation, and since the planets also revolve in eternal motions, there must be an unmoved mover for each of the simple motions that move them. Each of these must be an essential unmovable and eternal ousía, since 1) the heavens are eternal moved ousía; and since 2) what moves is prior to the moved; and since 3) an ousía must move an ousía. Astronomical calculations ostensibly report there are 55 or 47 of these unmoved movers.
And unlike the other movers, it must be unmoved, since otherwise it will require a mover, and we will have an infinite series of movers, which is impossible.

The prime mover, as pure eternal form that grounds the eternity of motion, grounds the continued manifestation of form in sensible things, and is thus a **formal ground** of sensible *ousía*. The prime mover is also a **final ground**, explanatory of the shift from potentiality to actuality in sensible *ousía*. The way in which the first mover moves things is by being the object of desire and comprehension [*tò orektòn kai tò noētòn*]. The primary objects of desire and comprehension are the same: the real good, object of the rational will, as opposed to the apparent good, object of appetite. Desire thus depends on thought, and thought is moved by the intelligible. The objects of *noûs* are positive and intelligible objects. Primary amongst these is *ousía*, and the primary amongst *ousía* is that which is simple, not combined with matter, but immaterial and actual. Thought is primarily moved then by simple and actual *ousía*, the telos of desire, and thus good. The primary unmoved *ousía* as the good is a final ground since it is the object of thought and desire, that which moves thought and desire without itself being moved.\(^{32}\)

Things that are moved are subject to potentiality, since they can be otherwise than they are. The unmoved mover, on the other hand, cannot be otherwise than as it is. It therefore exists necessarily, and as necessary, is good. Since things tend towards the good, the good is a principle of movement (1072b 10-12). It moves by being the object of love,\(^{32}\)

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\(^{32}\) The movers of the spheres incite a form of desire in the spheres themselves, since they are final explanations of the spheres (1074a 25-8). This seems to imply that the stars are capable of desire, and thus have life; this is indeed said to be the case in *De Caelo* 292a 21. Amongst the movers, there is one primary unmoved mover, however, that as pure form, is the final explanation of the sensible world.
unlike other things which cause motion by their own motion. The prime mover is thus “the first principle on which depend the sensible universe and the world of nature” (1072b 14).

In a limited way, the prime mover is also a material ground; not in that it grounds the presence of matter in the universe or insensible things, but that as pure form and actuality, it grounds the continued presence of matter, potentiality, and prevents, by its presence, the unified mass annihilation of all things. It grounds eternal motion, which itself means there must always be things that move. These non-sensible movers in turn ground the continued cycle of movement of sensible things.

The prime mover, itself an ousía, is thus primarily a formal and final ground of ousía. But now let’s look at the character of the prime mover, and why Aristotle calls it God.

Aristotle writes that the prime mover, having no matter, is in complete actuality, and is therefore one in number and definition. In consequence, there is only one universe, that which is eternally in continuous motion. Many universes would involve many moving principles, and this is impossible, since they would then have to have matter to be distinguished one from the other (1074a 32-38).³³

³³ This argument does not hold, since in fact Aristotle has said that there are other unmoved movers which are free of matter. However Ross convincingly suggests that we can still maintain that there is one universe by recourse to the concept of intelligible matter, which is what unites species in a genus. The intelligible forms would, as a plurality, contain this form of matter, and thus not be pure forms (Ross: 1970, p.cxi). As well, since the intelligences are moved by desire for the first mover- something that is other than what they are- they contain potentiality. They are therefore not wholly actual as is God.
The "course of life" [.diagôgê] of the prime mover is like ours is at its best, perpetual wakefulness and thinking [noûs].\(^{34}\) The prime mover is always in the state of pleasure that results from engaging in the most perfect activity, since it is always in actuality.\(^{35}\) The best or highest form of activity is active contemplation [theoría], and the highest form of thinking is of what is best. The prime mover therefore, being pure actuality, and thus the highest of all things, engages in thought. The best object of thought is the prime mover itself, therefore, the prime mover thinks itself: it is its own object of thought through participation in the object of thought. Thought and object of thought are thus one in the prime mover.

Aristotle names this prime mover which has thought of itself as its eternal activity, God (1072b 29), since activity, not potency, is the divine aspect of thought; and God is fully active. He also argues that God must also have life [zoe]. The actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality, which has continuous eternal existence, and which is separate from sensible things. He has no magnitude: the prime mover cannot have a finite magnitude, since it would then not have the infinite power to account for eternal motion, nor can it have an infinite magnitude since there is no such thing. It is unalterable and impassive, since such change would imply movement, and potentiality.

\(^{34}\) On diagôgê see Brague (1988), pp. 437-446.

\(^{35}\) Cf: Nichomachean Ethics: The most perfect activity directed to the best of objects is always the most perfect and most pleasant (NE. 1174b 15-24); also 1154b 24-8: "If any man had a simple nature, the same activity would afford him the greatest pleasure always. Hence God enjoys a single simple pleasure perpetually. For there is not only an activity of motion, but also an activity of immobility, and there is essentially a truer pleasure in rest than in motion".
The supreme intellect that grounds movement is also named *noûs* (1074b 15-16). Since it cannot change, or be dependent on anything but itself, the comprehension of this supreme *noûs* is directed at itself as thinking. Its thinking is thus a thinking of thinking [*éstin hê nóēsis noēseōs nóēsis*] (1074b 35). If it thought nothing, it would be no better than one asleep. If its thought were determined by something else, then its essence would be potentiality, and it could no longer be considered the best reality. If it were potentiality, it could equally actualize the worst as the best of things.

How can it be that the object of thought and the thought itself are one? This strange notion becomes clearer if we recall the epistemological theory of *De Anima*. In his study of human psychology, Aristotle notes that passive *noûs* becomes its object in the moment of knowing. The agent intellect grasps the form of the object of cognition, and in a sense becomes that form, leaving behind the object's matter. Thus actual knowledge and the object of knowledge are identical (*DA* 430a 20). The mind itself has no character of its own. Similarly, in the realm of sensation, the activity of the sensation and the sensible object are one and the same (though their essence is not); thus the sound heard and the actual sound are the same (*DA* 425b 27).

With regard to the prime mover, the activity of thought and the thought that is thought is identical, although in this case the essence of both, actuality, is also the same. There is only one thought: it is both the thought being thought, and the thinking of the thought: thinking constitutes its own object. "Thought thinking itself" does not mean that there is a split between subject and object, as in self-reflection "I" think about "me". It means rather that there is only thinking about the highest and most perfect principle and
the good. But since God is the most universal principle, and most perfect, then for him knowing himself as principle means knowing what comes under the principle.\textsuperscript{36} The thinking proceeds through eternity.

As the supreme good, God exists both separate from the universe, and as the immanent pervading order in the universe. 1) His separateness is similar to the way that the good of an army depends on the general, and not vice versa, the general himself being separate and independent, and of a greater order of good than the army (1075a 12-17). 2) God’s immanence in the world is possible only in the sense that the working of the cosmos, the order found there, is in some way effectuated, or at least maintained, by his being as telos. Because God is, the cosmos is rationally comprehensible to human beings; as first cause, God prevents the disaster of the infinite series, which would result in an incomprehensible universe. On the other hand, since Aristotle has effectively argued that God is an \textit{ousia}, God cannot be “present” in the world as an abstraction. Order in the world can be traced back to him as actuality and object of desire and emulation, but cannot be identified with him. As pure form and telos, God is transcendent to the world.

\textsuperscript{36} See De Koninck, 1994: De Koninck argues that as perfect, where perfect is defined as “that from which nothing is wanting”, the thinking of thinking must be not merely knowledge of the good, but of all the effects of the good also. God, he argues, is not a “heavenly Narcissus”, but is aware of his own effects. This notion of perfection, however, has scant grounds in Aristotle’s text, (actuality involves perfection in kind rather than perfection \textit{per se}) but is a graft from Medieval thought. Given Aristotle’s characterization of the prime mover\textsuperscript{4} God, the question of whether God can be passive with respect to his finite and material effects is uppermost in deciding his relation to material beings. God cannot be aware of change (and thus of finite beings) without undergoing some change in himself, which is impossible; this has always been a troubling aspect of Aristotle’s God for Christian theologians.
Aristotle’s metaphysical grounding of the physical world demands a non-physical being, and is in fact permeated through and through with this requirement. Though this God might be rather disappointing from a religious standpoint, it is entirely satisfactory from the standpoint of ontotheology. In the preceding pages, I have argued that God is an essential part of Aristotle’s ontology by drawing out the ways in which ontology necessarily involves theology at every step. Because ontology is focussed on ousiology, and because of Aristotle’s method of epistêmê as aetiology, I was led to the study of the grounds of ousía. This in turn led to the primary ground of ousía, which is the unmoved mover, or God. God is an ousía, and thus belongs to the study of being. Ontology, unlike physics, does not need to step outside of itself in order to ground its archai kai aitia. Rather, God is brought into ontology, or is an essential part of ontology. Aristotle’s ontology is ontotheology, because it requires a notion of an eternal, non-sensible, immutable, transcendent being to ground its subject matter. The study of ontology and theology in Aristotle are unified.

For Aristotle, God is the ground, aitia, of the workings of the physical universe, but he is also an indemonstrable principle, an archê. Principles relate to scientific and universal knowledge; they make possible knowledge of universal grounds. God is an archê since the existence of pure form makes universal knowledge of form possible. Universal knowledge is based on the apprehension of form in an individual ousía, which we then relate to its potential occurrence in other ousíai. As the primary formal ground, God is responsible for the continued presence of form in sensible ousía, and consequently for the possibility of universal knowledge. As the supreme object of thought, and the
ultimate final ground, God attracts us towards our rational telos of understanding. God is thus the principle of comprehensibility of the rational cosmos. Therefore, the axioms, those *archai* common to all sciences and which make scientific reasoning possible, are subservient to the supreme principle of God. If universal knowledge were not possible, then nor would demonstration, which requires the axioms, be possible.

We know God not through induction or deduction, but by a noetic leap from his effects that we see in the world, to God as the ground of these effects. We comprehend him, as we comprehend any principle, that is, we have some grasp of his necessity, given the existence of observable *ousia*. But we cannot explain him, or have knowledge of his grounds. As a supreme *archē* that is itself an *aition*, God does not admit of grounds, since then that ground would require ground. As the ultimate ground, and as that which makes grounding possible, God is both primary *aition* and *archē* of being *qua* being.

In the second division of my dissertation, I will discuss Heidegger’s ontology, an ontology that, though it has drawn from Aristotle, no longer has recourse to a God. I will argue that Heidegger’s ontology is godless because of his method, which no longer seeks explanatory grounds. In the place of the eternity of movement, which as that to be grounded, drives Aristotle’s arguments, we will discover radical finitude- and its consequences for Heidegger’s conception of human being.
PART TWO

HEIDEGGER

The Why has a primordially practical sense.¹

Throughout part one of this dissertation, I argued that the search for grounds, and
primarily the search for the formal ground or essential nature of ousía, drives the science
of being qua being and unifies Aristotle's ontology by unifying the various ways in which
being is said. The structure of the cosmos as Aristotle sees it requires a primary ground,
which emerges as the necessary outcome of a scientific, transcendental questioning of the
being of entities. The discussion of Aristotle's methodology in chapter one was aimed at
demonstrating the importance of theoretical epistêmē for Aristotle's conception of
ontology. In chapter two, I argued that it is Aristotle's preoccupation with the search for
grounds that leads him to describe the many ways in which being is said as gathered in
a pròs hèn unity focussed on ousía. Chapter three focussed on how the kinetic structure
of sensible ousía, its presence as movement and change, is itself grounded in immobile
ousía, a prime mover, a first cause, God.

In this second part, I turn to Heidegger's attempt to find some kind of unity in the
meaning of being. The question of the unity of modes of being took hold of Heidegger

¹ Heidegger: Phenomenological Investigations with Respect to Aristotle 1922 (PIA): 40/385.
through his famous reading in 1907 of Brentano’s dissertation on the several senses of being in Aristotle. Heidegger gives a phenomenological turn to the Greek question of beingness, a turn he claims was already there, though not thematized, in Aristotle. On this view, Aristotle focussed on the ways of manifestation of phainómena, tá ónta, and interpreted these according to the ways in which they are seen to appear: as being true, as act and potency, as according to the categories, as accidental. They manifest themselves to human being through the modes of lógos, which is thus the letting-be-seen of phainómena. Tò òn légetai pollachôs: by this phrase, Aristotle concentrates on the diverse modes of being, and seeks their unity through the expression of theoretical lógos: episthēnē, noûs, and ultimately sophía, as the unity of these two.

According to Heidegger, Aristotle’s error, which prevented him from asking the question of being in a radical way, was that he did not think outside the bounds of categories of being and the totality of beings, this latter gathered through the logical-conceptual and actual existence of God. And the reason for this is that he did not examine the unity of the understanding of being, that is the unity of the modes of lógos as involved in the revealing of what entities are. The complex linkage between the revealing of entities and entities as revealed is grounded, for Heidegger, in a kinetic understanding of being, that complements the kinetic presence that (sensible) ousía in Aristotle implies.

In Being and Time Heidegger translates the Greek phrase to òn légetai pollachôs thus: “an entity can show itself from itself in many ways, depending in each case on the kind of access we have to it” (SZ 28/51). The second part of the sentence is key for an understanding of how Heidegger transforms Aristotle’s project, by transforming his very
approach to the question of being. Heidegger’s question is no longer simply, “what is the unity of these ways that being (τὸ ὄν) is “said”? , or “what are the grounds of ousía?”. The question for Heidegger concerns rather what ousía, as the analogical unity of all ways of being means. Since lógos is a reading of phainómena, and since it is human beings who do the reading, the question is, “what does the being of beings mean for human beings?” Since for Heidegger, being is the meaning or intelligibility of the unity of beingness, in questioning being, we must ask about the structure of human access to being.

For Aristotle, to seek the condition of possibility of being is to look for a ground of beings as eternally in movement. Aristotle’s primary ground, which serves also as a principle of universal knowledge, is God. For Heidegger, on the other hand, the question is not why we understand beings or why beings are as they are. Rather, to look for the condition of the possibility of being is to find how it is that we understand beings. He seeks the possible horizon for the understanding of being, and his answer is time: human beings’ kinetic access to beings as kinetic.

Heidegger’s transformation of Aristotle’s question provokes the thematization of a form of truth that, though present in Aristotle, was not developed in his thinking of being: it invokes both sides of the equation entities and access, and unifies them. At the same time, it is the thematization of disclosure, or αλήθεια, that guides Heidegger’s inquiry, and opens the way to an understanding of being that permits justification of Heidegger’s bold assertion that the question of [the meaning of] being has long been forgotten. Perhaps it is not so much that Heidegger’s question has been forgotten, as that it has never before been asked.
The main thrust of this second part of the dissertation is not Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle. However, certain aspects of it will necessarily emerge, particularly as I want to show how much of Heidegger's thinking in the period that I treat here is a "destructive retrieve" of Aristotle. My aim, however, is not to show what Heidegger thinks about Aristotle, so much as to show how the two thinkers compare on the question of being and the relation of being to a notion of God. I argue that the difference in outcome is largely a product of a different methodological approach to the question of being. Method transforms the question itself, from one of grounds of the unity of ways that being can be said; to one of description of how human discourse about being is possible.

The three chapters of this second part thus follow the structure of the first chapters: they deal respectively with method, being and God. In chapter four, I discuss Heidegger's phenomenological method and its essential relation to his conception of ontology. Phenomenological method in Heidegger's conception necessarily involves thematization of the one who is questioning. In chapter five, I look at the structures of human being that reveal its radical finitude. I show how Heidegger, because of his thematization of the role of finite human being in disclosing the truth of being, transforms certain of Aristotle's notions. For Heidegger possibility has primacy over actuality, the finite over the eternal, and praxis over theory. In my final chapter, six, I argue that the "metaphysical" God, an eternal pure actuality, has no place in Heidegger's ontology. But in the final section of that chapter, I explore possible directions for a re-integration of the concept of God into phenomenology through a revised notion of the infinite.
CHAPTER FOUR

Heidegger’s Method
Phenomenology as Ontology

My main topic in this chapter is how Heidegger’s methodological approach to the question of being affects the outcome of his research. This question must be asked in order to contrast his ontology with that of Aristotle from an external point of view. Answering such a question involves discussion of what Heidegger means by “phenomenology”, and in particular, what the application of this way of thinking means for his area of study.²

Since Heidegger identifies ontology and phenomenology, this chapter cannot be concerned with methodology without at the same time exposing the outlines of Heidegger’s understanding of ontology. Heidegger starts Being and Time with the assertion that we must ask the question of the meaning of being. The reason why the question is necessary can be seen to emerge from a hard look at the meaning of phenomenology. The relationship between phenomenology and ontology will necessarily lead me to outline the general task of the analytic of Dasein. Such an inquiry will also

² I restrict myself here as elsewhere to Heidegger’s published works and courses up to the early 1930’s. His summer course of 1925, published now as the Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time [GA20] is where the most explicit outline of the sense and task of phenomenology is to be found; this is treated also in Being and Time (1927). Some other courses from around this period also reveal the link between phenomenology and ontology.
make it clear that “being” in Heidegger is neither hypostatized nor seen as teleologically dependent on a supreme instantiation.

I begin the chapter then with a discussion of the meaning of the term “phenomenology” and how it relates to apophansis; I follow in section two with a short exposé of basic concepts of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. This will make it easier to understand what Heidegger means by “hermeneutic”, the topic of section three. A résumé of what Heidegger calls the three major discoveries of phenomenology follows in section four. Finally, in section five, I close with a discussion of truth, alēthéia.

Throughout the chapter, I will attempt to show how Heidegger’s thematization of the human pre-understanding of being and the pre-predicative comportment related to it represents a shift from Aristotle’s privileging of the theoretical understanding towards a privileging of practical comportment. This will clear the way for a discussion in the next chapter of the way in which the theory\practice distinction finds a unified ground in the authentic praxis of finite kinetic transcendence. The finite field of transcendence will explain why Heidegger’s ontology is no longer ontotheology, as we will see in chapter six.

I

Phenomenology

In his course of summer 1925, Heidegger writes that phenomenology itself has become unphenomenological, remaining within the limitations of the old tradition, and
therefore not following its own maxim, “to the things themselves” (GA20: 178\128).\(^3\) It has suffered from two fundamental neglects: that of the question of being as such; and that of the being of the intentional. This does not mean that there has been some chance blindness on the part of thinkers throughout history. It is rather the case that the omission of these questions is a result of the very constitution of human Dasein, through the mode of being of falling [Verfallen]. It is, in other words, quite natural to us to be absorbed in the traditions that we inherit, to be a product of our times and our historical roots, and thus to no longer be able to see outside the paradigm that has been handed down to us. The only way of escape, if indeed there is one,\(^4\) is by rebelling against the tendency to fallenness.

Such a rebellion does not consist in throwing away the tradition, a move that is certainly impossible, since “wir sind diese Vergangenheit selbst” (Sophistes GA19: 10) but in approaching it again, seeking to find the possibilities within the “matters themselves” (including ourselves) that have been obscured by the tradition (and by received opinion). Keeping these possibilities open constitutes the work of phenomenology. The radical work of phenomenology involves then a repetition of the ancient questions, in particular a “retaking of the beginning of our scientific philosophy” in Plato and Aristotle (GA20: 184\136). The reason to ask the question of being is not

\(^3\) Cited pagination of Heidegger's texts give the German page number first, followed by the corresponding page in the English translation. A single cited number refers to the German text.

\(^4\) Heidegger writes that the alternative to being condemned to, or called by, the power of the historical Dasein is “perhaps even ... no longer a genuine one” (GA20: 182\131).
just because the Greeks asked it, or because it opens a new path for phenomenology, however. It must be asked because it is a possibility of our own being, one that phenomenology, as a methodological concept (GA20: 185\136), as “the name for the method of ontology” (Basic Problems of Phenomenology, GA24: 27\20), opens up by opening up our awareness of the pre-understanding of being that is foundational to our being what we are. The question of being arises not as “an optional and merely possible question, but the most urgent question inherent in the very sense of phenomenology itself”(GA20: 158\115). Heidegger writes that there is no ontology alongside a phenomenology. Rather “scientific ontology is nothing but phenomenology”(GA20: 98\72).

Reduction, construction and destruction constitute the three essential and inseparable components of phenomenological method (GA24 29-32\21-23). Reduction in the Heideggerian sense is the movement back from the original apprehension of a being to the understanding of the being of this being: unlike Husserl’s reduction, it does not involve retreat to an ego removed from the practical world. Like Husserl’s, however, it requires a step back from the “natural attitude”, in this case the received tradition, towards meaning discovered on the basis of the phenomena themselves. Construction is the work of bringing being to view from the entities in which it is manifest; but it is at the same time a de-construction of the traditional concepts that block our view. Destruction is the name for this critical process of finding the original sources of concepts handed down by the tradition. Heidegger’s task is “to destroy the traditional content of ancient ontology”

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5 CF. SZ: 35\60: “Only as phenomenology is ontology possible.”
This destruction is not a wholesale burning of the tradition, but an attempt to get to the original experiences that set the tradition in motion. So let us look at what the word “phenomenology” means when we follow Heidegger in retrieving it from its Greek origins.

Discussion of the two parts of the word “phenomeno-logy” and its composite meaning refers us to section seven of Being and Time as well as section nine of the 1925 course. The Greek word *phainómenon* is a participle of *phaínesthai*, meaning, in the middle voice, to show itself, make itself manifest, be visible in itself. This word has its root in the noun *phós*, light. *Phainómenon* can therefore be said to mean *what shows itself*; the Greeks called the totality of such things *tá ónta*, beings or entities. The way in which something shows itself is dependent on our access to it; phenomenology is thus “a mode of encounter of entities in themselves such that they show themselves” (GA20: 112\81). Now an entity can either show itself as it is, or else it can show itself as something it is not. This second way of showing, which is a privative modification of the authentic meaning of phenomenon, we call semblance or seeming [*Schein*], as a pretension to be manifest without really being so. There is a structural interconnection between these two, since clearly in order for something to be identified as seeming to be something, it must also be seen that it merely seems to be: its very showing itself as what it is not includes a reference to what it is. Semblance refers to a double-layered perception

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6 Cf. *PIA*: 21\371. See also Courtine (1988) p.86: “… se mettre à l’écoute du grec, c’est déjà pour Heidegger s’engager *phénoménologiquement* dans l’affaire de la phénoménologie.”
of a single phenomenon that does reveal itself, but under a different aspect than what it in fact is.

This is not the case in appearance [Erscheinung]. Appearance indicates a reference relation within an entity, and not the entity showing itself as itself or as what it is not. Except in the very special and exclusive sense that indicates something showing itself through its appearance, an appearance is not a genuine phenomenon. We can distinguish several senses of appearance to demonstrate this: 1) the manifestation of something which refers to something else which does not itself appear, as for example a symptom indicates a disease; 2) the means through which something that does not show itself as it is, is announced, such as for example the disease showing itself only through its symptoms; 3) mere appearance in the Kantian contrast between the phenomenal and the noumenal. Here, the noumenal does not show itself, but is only announced through the phenomenal. Appearance in this case refers to a visible aspect “bringing forth” some underlying real entity-in-itself that cannot itself be made manifest, and which one thinks of as in some way essentially other, more complete, than its “mere appearance” (SZ: 30-31 \ 53-4).

There are then two levels of being implied in “appearance”: there is 1) the “real” truly ontological but unknowable entity, which lies behind 2) the experientially encountered appearance. To concentrate on appearance in the three senses listed above is to avoid the “matters themselves”, the phenomena, das Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende, which are the subject of phenomenology. Appearance paradoxically indicates an entity that does not show itself in the sense of phainómenon- that is, from itself- but that merely announces itself through something else. But what is interesting is that phenomena even
in these “hidden” modes still manifest themselves in some way. The phenomena to be studied in phenomenology are often in some way hidden: it is rather the exception that the things to be analyzed are there before us simply to be encountered. Our way of access to the phenomena is a struggle involving thinking that attempts not only to free itself from preconceptions but to penetrate the layers that obscure the free manifestation of entities.

This process or access is described in the second component of the word phenomenology, lógos. The Greek word springs from the verb légein, “to bind together”, which acquires the meaning of “to discourse”. This does not for the Greeks mean simply to express or exchange words. There is a very strict relationship (a binding) between lógos and what is the case in the world; between discourse and truth; between what is said and what is. The function of discourse is- as Plato says- to make manifest, [dēloûn] what is being talked about. Lógos is always lógos... tinós: discourse is always about something, but it is guided by its subject, which gives the words that make up the ensemble of a discourse their unity (Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, GA21: p.142). In De Interpretatione, Aristotle calls this apophainesthai. Taking this in its component parts, we find apó, “out of’ or “drawn from”, and the familiar phainesthai, “to make seen”; thus apophainesthai is to make seen from out of what is.\(^7\) Let’s see how this relates to language.

\(^7\) Cf. the Latin demonstratio: to show from, [mostrare de]. By convention, the German word Aussage, English “assertion” is used to translate the Greek apophansis. The latter gives us the sense of joining to, ad serere, which is useful, as we will see, in understanding apophansis as synthesis and diairesis.
In *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle writes that a simple assertion is a statement that has a meaning, and that affirms or denies that something belongs to another thing in some temporal mode (*De Int*: 17a 23-5). Spoken words are signs of affects in the soul (*pathēmata tēs psuchēs*), and these affects are likenesses (*homiōmata*) of objects (*prágmata*) (*De Int*: 16a 5-8). As Heidegger reads this, words are expressions not of interior states, but of the way in which human being is in relation to the world. Referential talk (*phonē sēmantikē*) does not necessarily have the structure of *apóphansis*. Simple utterance (*phásis*), mere spoken words on their own such as single nouns or verbs, are signs and refer to something but do not express truth or falsity, since they do not by themselves combine or separate, and “combination and separation (*sûnthēsin kai diairesīn*), are essential before you can have truth and falsity” (*De Int*: 16a 12). A noun by itself has no reference to time; a verb has a time-reference, and does assert something of something, and thus implies a synthesis, but it remains a mere sign when used by itself.

Furthermore, not all *complex* referential talk (*lógos*) is presentative, or apophantic. Though every statement has meaning, not all statements are assertions, that is, they do not all admit of truth and falsity. Thus prayers for example, or exhortations, questions and commands do not affirm or deny anything, but simply express something; they belong to the study of rhetoric and poetics. Such statements signify (*lógos sēmantikōs*) but they do not make something manifest by pointing it out; they do not involve the theoretical apprehension of anything; they do not belong to the smaller class of *lógos apophantikōs*. 
So what is the character of assertion, *lógos apophantikós*? The synthesis and separation involved in apophantic speech are not the expression respectively of affirmation and negation. They are intrinsic to every assertion, whether negative or positive. Every tying together of a subject and predicate is at the same time a differentiation of the two. Applying a predicate to a subject is a specific limitation of that predicate, but not a universal limitation. To say that “the kettle is black” is not to limit blackness to its specific occurrence in the kettle. There is *diairesis* even in the case of affirmation. At the same time, to say that “the kettle is not black” is still to link a subject and its predicate. There must therefore be synthesis even in the case of negation. Synthesis in an assertion does not mean the linking of a subject and a predicate as these reflect some sort of psychical phenomena which must then be checked against the “real” state of affairs in order to establish if the combination is correct (correspondence). Rather, in Heidegger’s reading, the bringing together in synthesis reflects the way in which what is, is let seen as something (*SZ*: 33\56). This “as” we can call the “apophantic as”. The structure of synthesis\diairesis in every assertion is that upon which affirmation and denial is based. Presenting something as something, makes it possible to affirm or deny something of something, and therefore for this affirmation or denial to be correct or incorrect.⁸

Any predication, any assertion, is a letting-be-seen of a phenomenon. In this sense, apophantic discourse cannot be false. It always dis-closes something: this is the meaning

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⁸ See chapter one, section vi on Aristotle’s discussion of a “primitive universal in the soul”, which allows us to see an individual as a *certain kind* of individual (as a universal).
of a-lēthēia, to bring forth out of hiddenness. The primary mode of disclosure is nóēsis, pure noetic perception, as Aristotle discusses it, and aisthēsis, sensuous intuition. These denote an immediate apprehending of the givenness of an entity. They cannot be false, but only perhaps insufficient, a non-perceiving [agnoein] leaving the phenomena hidden [lanthánomein].\(^9\) This pre-predicative and non-synthetic form of disclosure is the ground of any assertion whatsoever, as is the givenness of entities themselves.

On another level, however, in its synthetic structure, assertion can be false when the synthesis does not uncover the phenomenon such as it is. The assertion affirms or denies something that we can then judge as correct or incorrect. We can read this clearly in De Anima:

... Assertion [phásis], like affirmation, states something about something, and is always either true or false; but this is not always so in the case of noûs: the what it is [tī esti] in the sense of the essence [tò tī ēn ēnai] is always true and is not a saying of something about something [tī katā tīnos]; but just as while the seeing of a proper object is always true, the judgement whether a white object is a man or not is not always true... (DA 430b 25-30).

Pre-predicative apprehension of phenomena is primary; it is the condition for the possibility of the work of synthesis and diairesis, that is, the taking of a phenomenon as a certain thing, or as not a certain thing. Lógos which permits of synthesis and diairesis is drawn from the phenomenon to show it as it is: apo- phainesthai.\(^10\) Whether an

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\(^9\) See chapter one vi, on the infallibility of noûs.

\(^10\) Heidegger adds that three of the translations commonly applied to the word lógos have some ground once we understand lógos as apophantical discourse. Lógos can mean 1) “reason” [Vernunft], because it has the function of letting something be seen, as does the working of reason. 2) As legómenon, it can mean “ground”, “ratio”, or hupokeímenon, because it refers to what is shown as the ultimate matter to which one is referring. And 3) it can mean relation or relationship, because it denotes that which becomes visible in
assertion is correct or incorrect will depend directly on the synthesis made. But this latter kind of truth, the truth of judgement, is “a secondary phenomenon” (SZ 34\57).

Aristotle’s apophantic understanding of lógos thus works on two levels. Aristotle did not discuss the primordial level of disclosure in apophansis in connection with that term, however, because he did not delve deeply enough into the structure of synthesis and diairesis and inquire about their unity. In Heidegger’s view, Aristotle was never able to escape his orientation to language to look at the pre-predicative structure on which language is based (GA21: 141-2).

To sum up: synthesis and diairesis are the conditions of the possibility of attribution and denial. The condition of the possibility of synthesis and diairesis is pre-predicative apprehension of phenomena. Since they belong together in every assertion, synthesis and diairesis point to a phenomenon that is the ground of their unity, and as such, necessarily prior to predicative expression (GA21: 140).

Underlying and preceding the synthetic apophantic as-structure as the condition of its possibility is another as-structure, intrinsic to the way in which human beings relate to the world. The hermeneutical as is grounded in the various modes of perception, understanding, interpretation- in short being- of the one who discloses as she relates to things in the world: it denotes a mode of comportment. The predicative as-structure is

its relation to something, through being addressed (SZ: 34\58).

\[11\] Aristotle himself was aware of the two possible levels of truth; even if he does not thematize ontological truth, he recognizes it primacy. This was discussed in the context of “being in the sense of being true”, in chapter two, sec.ii above. Aristotle rejects this sense of being from consideration in the primary science, since it deals with an “affection of thought” and not being as such.
derived from the hermeneutical *as*. Thus we arrive at a conception not only of a phenomenon that grounds assertion, but of a mode of comportment that grounds the *lógos* of apophansis. As we will see in section three, this means that for Heidegger, theory is derived from an originary praxis.

Before proceeding on that topic, which will involve a look at the way Heidegger describes the structure of human being, we should tie together the meanings of *phainómenon* and *lógos*. *Légein tâ phainómena* means *apophánesthai tâ phainómena*: “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way that it shows itself from itself” (*SZ*: 34\58). This is to repeat in other words the maxim “to the matters themselves”. Phenomenology as so described clearly denotes a “how”, a method of approach, a way of encountering. It indicates the sort of work that has to be done to let things be seen as they are, that is, in their being, and from themselves. It is not particular entities, but precisely the being of entities, the meaning of entities, that is covered up, and that phenomenology has as its task to uncover. We experience beings always *as* something, but always as different things depending on the way that we approach them: the way of approach constitutes what shows itself as manifest.

Heidegger writes: “when something no longer takes the form of just letting something be seen, but is always harking back to something else to which it points, so that it lets something be seen *as* something, it thus acquires a synthesis-structure, and with this it takes over the possibility of covering up” (*SZ*: 34\57). The original “as” of our apprehension- letting something be seen- is transformed through the assertion that phenomenology must use, into seeing something *as* something. Phenomenology therefore
means “the methodological mediation of the immediacy of the truth of the phenomena”.\textsuperscript{12} \n
\textit{Lógos} in its conjunction with \textit{phenomenon} in the word “phenomenology” is being used in the sense of \textit{apóphansis} as \textit{theòreîn}, “discoursing in the sense of communicating the apprehension of a subject matter and only such a communication” (GA20: 116\S85). But to have a “science” of phenomena means “to grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly” (SZ: 35\S59): phenomenology must be rooted in original experience.

Phenomena are grasped in various ways of being \textit{as}: the unity of these ways of being would give us something like the \textit{pròs hèn} unity of being. But this being-\textit{as} also indicates the various ways of human access to these beings. The unity of \textit{those} ways would give us the \textit{a priori} structure of human being as revealing logos. Thus 1) the unity of \textit{lógos}, and 2) the way in which being \([tó ón]\) appears as the unity of ways of appearance of beings, together give for an ontology that grows directly out of phenomenology.\textsuperscript{13} It is the is-\textit{ness}, the being of entities, that we are first looking for in ontology in order to determine the meaning of the unity of being: being is always the being of entities, therefore to get at being, we must go through entities. But even more,

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{13} See Sheehan (1983): p.141: “... since the modes of \textit{logos} are correlative to the modes of the appearance of entities, the discovery of the unity of \textit{logos} would provide the philosopher with the \textit{a priori} horizon for working out the analogical unity of all modes of the appearance of entities. This would be the meaning of being itself.”
\end{flushleft}
because our access to entities is through our own understanding, we must also go through an analytic of what we ourselves are. Heidegger writes:

... entities are, quite independently of the experience by which they are disclosed, the acquaintance in which they are discovered, and the grasping in which their nature is ascertained. But being is only in the understanding of those entities to whose being something like an understanding of being belongs ... (SZ: 183\228)

So far then, we see Heidegger's point that Aristotle did not inquire into the conditions and structure of the truth of beings. Aristotle took ontological truth as a given basis for predicative truth. He then inquired into the grounds of beings conceived according to predication, i.e. ousía as the unity of the ways in which being is said. Heidegger, on the other hand, wants to inquire into the grounds of ontological truth. This kind of truth involves inquiry into those for whom truth is manifest: human beings. In the next section, then, I will briefly summarize the essentials of the "preparatory" constitution of human existence as Heidegger reads it - preparatory to its interpretation in terms of temporality. This background does not carry us away from the topic of Heidegger's method: I will focus on those structures that must be understood in order to expose the disclosedness inherent to Dasein. Disclosedness necessarily plays a decisive role in the way in which Heidegger's project is conceived.

II

Fundamental Ontology

We have seen that the way of access to entities, the légein of phenomenology is not a simple intuition, but involves showing entities in themselves from themselves as
they are. There are different ways in which we lay out how these things are; the way that
we look at something, the way in which we understand something, the very asking of the
question itself all come into play in our discovery of what there is in fact to be
investigated as being and as being true. Thus, "it is precisely the analysis of the truth
color of being which shows that being also is ... based in a being, namely in the
Dasein" (GA24: 19). As beings distinguished by the fact that we ask about being, we
must interrogate ourselves, and our mode of access to entities, including our own selves
as existent beings: the analytic of who we are is fundamental to ontology.

*Being and Time*, in its incomplete published version, is a "fundamental ontology":
it is a preparatory study of the *a priori* existential structures that comport Dasein, and an
interpretation of these structures in the light of temporality, explaining the role of time
in human understanding of being. The first division of the work then is an attempt to lay
out the structures through which being is understood by human being. The second section
reinterprets these structures as modes of temporality, or as a process of finite kinetic
transcendence, which reveals the meaning of being to be time. What Dasein essentially
is, what constitutes its "existentiality", or the modes of being fundamental to it, its
ontological structure, is approached through an analysis of the factual existence of human
beings. The existential structure of human being is the condition for the possibility of
comportments that make up everyday human living and thinking. Phenomenology
demands that we look to the things themselves; not as appearances, not as semblance, but
that we pierce through these to "wrest" the phenomena as they are in their being, from
what seems. This means that we have to look at what first seems, and dig below to the
condition of possibility of that seeming. We have to look at how we are in our everyday way of being in order to pierce through to see the ontological structures that are at the root of that way.

The first task of ontology therefore is to demonstrate and characterize the ontical foundation of ontology, that is, the temporal historical concrete existence that is grounded in ontological structures (GA24: 26\20): ourselves. The human pre-predicative understanding of being as it plays out in everyday comportment must be brought to the fore, and examined as a structure of the being of human beings, a structure that plays an important role in understanding the question of the meaning of being. The interpretation of Dasein's ontic being is at the same time a condition for the possibility of any ontological study whatsoever. The second task of ontology is to examine the a priori structure of being and its determinations, the way in which it precedes and underlies its appearance in beings. This involves an analysis of a priority itself as a temporal structure related to human understanding of being (GA24: 20\27), which I will pursue in the next chapter.

Dasein, [literally “there-being”] the common German word for “existence”, is the name that Heidegger gives to “the entity that each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its being” (SZ: 7\27). It refers not to existence as understood traditionally in the existence\essence split, but to human being as it relates to being. Dasein designates the primordial characteristics of human beings: that they are "there", in a given world of interrelations, with which they are familiar; that they have a (vague and general) primordial comprehension of being; and, (taking be-ing in a verbal sense) that humans are dynamic potentiality-to-be. It is in this latter sense that the phrase
“existence precedes essence” applies to Heidegger’s characterization of human being. There is clearly an ontological structure that characterizes human existence, but in each case existence is my own. The structure of existence is run through with possibility. Heidegger emphasizes the finite kinetic structure of Dasein as ek-sistence, standing out into possibility. Dasein is possibility: possibility stands higher than actuality (SZ: 38\63).\(^\text{14}\)

Dasein is primordially being-in-the-world. The world in this context is not simply the presence of objects lying about before Dasein, nor is it the being of those objects, nor is it something that Dasein is physically and spatially “inside”. It is a situation in which Dasein is involved, without having asked to be, or without having any choice in the matter. The word “world” refers to the existential character of the practical situation in which Dasein finds itself. It finds itself “thrown” into a context of relations and inter-relations; it is not a mere isolated subject, but is always involved with others and with entities. Thrownness constitutes “facticity”: the way in which Dasein as being-in-the-world understands itself as intrinsically related to entities that it encounters in the world (SZ: 56\82).

There are different ways in which Dasein’s facticity is expressed in being-in-the-world, through different modes of being-in. Being-in is the formal existential expression for the inescapable \textit{sine qua non} of Dasein’s existence as being-in-the-world (SZ: 54\80). It is a state that is always in some way familiar to Dasein. This familiarity is “being-alongside” the world, which does not mean somehow living beside it, but living totally absorbed in it, often slipping into a state Heidegger calls “fallenness”, forgetfulness of the

\(^{14}\) I will develop the significance of this statement in the next chapter.
authentic ontological structures of one’s being, and of the being of entities. This is not a negative structure to be overcome, but an essential way of being-in-the-world. The primordial way in which being-in is concretely, is expressed in “concern”, which is an ontological term for Dasein as involved in the practical situation. This existential characterizes the way that Dasein is in its everyday dealing with the world, in interacting with things, using them, putting them aside, ignoring them, taking a rest from them, in discussing, accomplishing, considering, etc. Dasein is primordially occupied and pre-occupied with things, and sees them “circumspectly”, with an eye to what they can be used for, or what their “in order to” might be. Things seen in this way are available, or “ready-to-hand” [zuhanden]: but each thing, seen now as a tool, refers to other things, each “in order to” presupposes a context in which the “in order to” makes sense. This context, the referential totality, constitutes the world. The first way in which we encounter things is in a practical context. The theoretical way of looking at entities, as “present-to-

15 “Existential” and “existentiell” both apply to the being of Dasein: the term “existential” indicates a constitutive element of that being, therefore an ontological structure; it is opposed to an “existentiell”, as the concrete way in which this element is lived out in individual Dasein. “Ontological” inquiry focusses on the meaning of beings or on the being of beings (tō ὅν ἡ ὅν); ontic investigation on the other hand focusses on tā ónta, the beings themselves as such.

16 Although Dasein does not see others in the practical mode of concern. “Being-with” and “being-with-others” are structures equiprimordial with being-in-the-world, but constituted by the sharing of a world. The existential characteristic associated with the way that Dasein interacts with other Dasein is “solicitude”, which, like concern, is not to be taken in the positive sense the word connotes, but includes also such “negative” behaviours as neglect, hatred, etc. Dasein in everyday comportment is caught up in dependence on others. The nameless others who direct Dasein’s life in the form of norms, rules and acceptable comportment is referred to as das Man, the “they”. The they-self is a mode of being of Dasein: it characterizes being-one’s-self (“who”) in Dasein’s everyday mode, in which it lives for the sake of what they think. This is in contrast to the
hand" [vorhanden] is derivative, involving a pulling-back from our primordial involvement with things in order to address something and discuss it.\textsuperscript{17} We see again Heidegger's shift to the practical from Aristotle's concentration on the theoretical.

Heidegger claims, however, that the Greek experience of being was practical\productive:

... in Aristotle's time ... this expression \textit{ousía} was still synonymous with property, possession, means, wealth. The pre-philosophical proper meaning of \textit{ousía} carried through to the end. Accordingly, a \textit{being} is synonymous with an at-hand [extant] disposable. Essentia is only the literal translation of \textit{ousía} ... the basic concept of \textit{ousia} in contrast lays more stress on the producedness of the produced in the sense of things disposably present at hand ... .(GA24: 153-4\108-9; cf.PIA: 26-7\375).

Intuitive finding-present, \textit{nóēsis} and \textit{aisthēsis} are- in Heidegger's Aristotle- modifications of seeing in the sense of circumspection. Heidegger thus finds grounds for his practical focus in his reappropriation of Aristotle. There is nonetheless no doubt that Aristotle privileged \textit{sophía} over \textit{phrónēsis} as the ideal activity [\textit{energeía}] of human being: the last

\textsuperscript{17} As Taminiaux points out, everyday preoccupation with things in terms of their means and goals in practical and circumspective concern "hides its own presupposition". Preoccupation is preoccupation with handiness, not with existence. The being of handy things, \textit{zuhandenes}, is understood in terms of \textit{Vorhandenheit}. Therefore concern is a mode of falling, obscuring the clear apprehension of the being of beings. Heidegger discusses this movement in section 33 of \textit{Being and Time} (see section three of this chapter). Interesting also is Taminiaux's observation that \textit{vorhanden}, while a common German word, is also an exact translation of the Greek \textit{procheirón}, which Aristotle uses to describe the first objects of philosophical wonder. (Taminiaux: (1987): p.141).
half of book ten of the *Nichomachean Ethics* is devoted to this theme (*NE*: 1177a 12ff).¹⁸ *Ousía* does carry the meaning of “property”, as I remarked in the previous chapter. In Aristotle, this means not that *ousía* is “produced”, but that it is subject to accusation, *aition*; or in other words, that it must be grounded.¹⁹

Taminiaux argues that there is a more general agreement between Heidegger and Aristotle on the priority of *praxis* over *poïēsis*, which in Heidegger becomes the distinction, respectively, between authenticity and inauthenticity. Practical circumspection, and noetic apprehension as a modification of this, are forms of *poïēsis*, the activity of making or doing aiming at an end distinct from itself. *Praxis*, we saw, is an activity that includes the end in itself, thus *phrónēsis*, unlike *tēchnē*, is a *praxis*, aimed at acting well. Aristotle clearly states that *praxis* rules over *poïēsis* (cf. *NE* 1140a ff), hence *phrónēsis* certainly rules over *tēchnē* and, in Heidegger’s view, also over noetic apprehension as a modification of circumspective sight. *Poïēsis* is thus the fallen mode of concern, and *praxis* the authentic movement of care.

Of course in Aristotle *sophía* is something else again, since *praxis* and *poïēsis* both refer to things that vary, and *theoría* concentrates on unchangeable things; but Taminiaux suggests that the separation of praxis and theory in Aristotle is perhaps ill-founded, and

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¹⁸ See also *Metaphysics* Alpha on the “degrees of knowledge”; (980a 22- 982a 2), where Aristotle argues that theoretical sciences are higher than the productive sciences; *Posterior Analytics* (100a 5-100b 7), where *epistēmē* and *noûs* are said to be the most infallible kinds of knowledge. Clearly knowledge of *ousía* begins with the practical experience of perception, but the goal is theoretical understanding and comprehension.

¹⁹ Thus one can ask of property: what is it made of, where did it come from, what is it, and for the sake of what is it. *Ousía* is its own property (a particular *ousía* is proper to itself).
that Heidegger’s critique of this distinction has roots in Aristotle’s own description of praxis.\textsuperscript{20}

Volpi convincingly argues that Heidegger submits the practico-moral determinations of Aristotle’s analysis to an ontological absolutization and radicalization, and makes them the foundation of the unitary ontological structure of human existence. Volpi draws a parallel between \emph{zuhandenes} and \emph{poïēsis}; \emph{vorhandenes} and \emph{theoría}; and Dasein and \emph{praxis}. Praxis here indicates how Dasein comports itself to its being, i.e., in a practical-moral mode, as opposed to theoretical \emph{inspectio sui}. The structural shift resulting from the prioritization of praxis over theory, as well as the ontologization of these modes in Heidegger, means that \emph{poïēsis} and \emph{theoría} characterize the way that Dasein comports itself towards the being of beings that are not Dasein, in the mode of concern. Concern then manifests itself in both modes, \emph{poïēsis} (handiness) and \emph{theoría} (present-at-hand). \emph{Theoría} can then emerge as a derivative mode of \emph{poïēsis}, and the shift from theoretical to practical mode is explained.\textsuperscript{21}

Yet if these commentators are right, what do we do with Heidegger’s comment that “care ... as concernful solicitude, so primordially and wholly envelopes Dasein’s being

\textsuperscript{20} Taminiaux (1982): p.151. See also Taminiaux (1991): p.xix ff, where he discusses Heidegger’s two-fold approach to Aristotle: overtly, Heidegger critically thematizes Aristotle for privileging the eternal through privileging \emph{theoría}; on the other hand he “covertly” transforms and re-appropriates Aristotle, arguing that \emph{theoría} originally stems from the practical. (This is a general theme in these works.)

that it must already be presupposed as a whole when we distinguish between theoretical and practical behaviour” (SZ: 300\347-348)? Building the theoretical into the practical does not solve the existential-ontological problem of the locus of the unity of these two: the self (SZ: 320\367 note xix). As Peperzak, supported by these passages, points out, Heidegger’s philosophical aim was “an investigation of the originary dimension preceding the distinction between theory, practice and poetics”.22 He sought the unity of theoría, praxis and połēsis: all of which, as we saw above, are energēai. But actuality in Heidegger is possibility. The unity of theory and practice is founded in an authentic kinetic praxis: the understanding of being accomplished through transcendence. Authentically lived, projected onto Dasein’s own ultimate possibilities, the future-oriented temporal structure of transcendence coincides with Dasein’s understanding of being. As we will see in the next chapter, how this unfolds is determinate not only for the shift in Heidegger away from theoría that marks a major difference between his thought and Aristotle’s; it also grounds the “destruction” of ontotheology that is the core of his innovative ontology.

22 Peperzak: “Heidegger and Plato’s Idea of the Good”, p. 258. See also Volpi, Heidegger e Aristotele: “Per Heidegger ... Aristotele avrebbe fornito una geniale ‘fenomenologia’ delle determinazioni fondamentali della vita humana (theoría, połēsis, praxis ...) senza tuttavia porsi esplicitamente il problema della loro unità fondamentale” and this because of Aristotle’s understanding of being and of time, which did not allow the connection between the two to be fully exploited (p.116). I will draw out this latter connection in the next chapter.
III

Hermeneutic

The discussion of fundamental ontology sets the stage for an explanation of “hermeneutic” as Heidegger uses it in section seven of *Being and Time* to describe “the meaning of phenomenological description as a method” (*SZ* 37\61), as well as when, in sections 32 and 33 of that work and in the 1925-6 lecture course (*GA*21) he discusses it in the context of the structure of primary understanding.²³ It is the *lógos* of the phenomenology of Dasein that has the character of *hermēneía*. This means first of all that from a methodological standpoint we are faced with the task of interpreting the basic ontological structure of Dasein.

In chapter five of the first division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger turns to an analysis of being-in. Being-in refers us to a “there”, the *Da* of Da-sein, the entity constituted by being-in-the-world, which as such is openness to the world. It is itself “lighted”, meaning that its very being is tendency to disclose, to bring to light (*SZ*: 132-133\171). In other words, Dasein is *lógos*, it is the mediation that makes things meaningful, through transcendence. The disclosedness of Dasein has the structure of

²³ The title by which I have been referring to Aristotle’s work, *De Interpretatione* is of course a Latin translation of the Greek *Peri Hermēneias*. The word *hermēneía* derives from the name of the god Hermes, messenger between the gods and human beings, interpreter therefore of divine or absolute truth into human terms. The word was reborn when used, appropriately, to describe the work of biblical exegesis. In Aristotle, since the treatise deals with semantic meaning and logos, but primarily apophansis, we must read “*hermēneía*” in the widest sense of expression and communication of what is- the way in which words, as signs of affects in the soul, relate to, or translate, the objects of which they are likenesses. Heidegger’s usage of the word is not dissimilar: it seems to mean the way in which humans “read” the world.
disposition, \textit{Befindlichkeit} and understanding \textit{Verstehen}, which are characterized by discourse \textit{Rede}. In brief, disposition, which shows itself ontically as moods, discloses Dasein to itself as being, and as being necessarily and involuntarily (being thrown), and as being in such a way that the world matters to it (SZ: 139\178). The articulation of intelligibility disclosed in the passive moment of \textit{Befindlichkeit}, and in the active moment of \textit{Verstehen} and interpretation is discourse \textit{Rede}, the ontological foundation for language (SZ: 161\204).

The hermeneutical \textit{"as"} structure that we are pursuing relates to the interpretive nature of Dasein, and is a development of understanding. As constituent of the \textit{there} of Dasein, understanding describes one of the ways that Dasein is as being-in-the-world. Dasein is being-possible: \textit{possibility as an existential is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically} (SZ: 143-4\183). Concretely Dasein understands itself as able to choose and to reject various options within the practical situation it is thrown into, from among the definite possibilities that result from its prior commitments to one choice or another. On an ontological level, being-possible

\begin{footnote}{Volpi suggests an identification of disposition with the traditional passivity and receptivity of the subject, contrasted to the spontaneous activity of the understanding, retrieving Aristotle’s passive and active soul (1984: pp.105ff). Heidegger does in this section (§29) refer to \textit{páthē} (affects) in the context of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric} (SZ: 138\178). Despite the temptation, it would seem difficult to show that \textit{Befindlichkeit} is a retrieval of \textit{héxis} (though certainly the moral \textit{héxeis} relate to \textit{páthē}). Note that at PIA 33\380, Heidegger translates \textit{héxis} as “being-able-to-have-at-one’s-disposal”; at 32\379 as “habit”, again at 376\383 as “having-at-one’s-disposal”. It is not easy to see Heidegger’s understanding of Aristotle’s \textit{héxis} thus expressed as retrieved in the notion of \textit{Befindlichkeit}. However, a case could be made: a \textit{héxis}, like \textit{Befindlichkeit} is a given disposition that is only manifest under certain conditions (see ch. V section V).}
means that Dasein has the potential for being in different modes in its dealings with the world and itself, modes that disclose possible significance of the world and Dasein.

In the attempt to discover possibilities, both within Dasein and within entities in the world, understanding manifests its existential structure of "projection": it looks towards its own potential for being, and projects itself towards a possibility that, as characteristic of its being, it already is. Dasein always already is in the mode of projecting itself beyond its "now", and into possibility- which means that the "now" itself is possibility. Projection projects onto significance (it looks to make sense of things), and onto a "for-the-sake-of-which" (it looks at things in terms of use): it either sees its possibilities in relation to the world and the possibilities of that world, or else it turns inwards to its own understanding of itself, its ultimate end or "for-the-sake-of-which" [Worumwillen]. It is not that possibilities are chosen "with an end in mind", but that the "what-for" of projection becomes clear through the very act of projecting in which Dasein is always involved.

Recognition of this potential in entities and in Dasein itself constitutes "sight" [Sicht], which, as an understanding of the situation of being-in-the-world, is the condition for the possibility of access to entities, and to Dasein’s own being as possibility (SZ: 147\187). By projecting itself on its own possibilities, by transcending itself, by what Heidegger calls ek-sisting, Dasein opens the way for disclosure of the world, itself, and of being in general. Understanding is being-ahead-of-oneself, that is holding oneself out beyond one’s self into the possibilities one sees through the “in order-to” of concern, and then returning to something, and in so doing, disclosing (GA21: 148). This movement constitutes the hermeneutical as-structure.
Working out the possibilities projected in understanding is *Auslegung*, interpretation. Primordial understanding is not an appropriation of possibilities, but an implicit grasp of them. Interpretation, on the other hand, which is grounded in the prior understanding, sees an explicit “in-order-to” in the things available in the world. As soon as we interact with things, repair them, prepare them, set them up, we are explicitly taking something *as* something. This *as* is not brought to language immediately, but is a pre-predicative mode of our comportment towards entities, from which the predicative assertoric mode is derived. In using a hammer to pound a nail, I have already interpreted it in terms of its *as*, in this case “as” a tool for pounding nails. It is not the case that I first see the hammer as a bare meaningless object, and then throw over it a practical meaning. On the contrary, the hammer is seen immediately in a structure of involvement, and in terms of its usability, serviceability, and detrimentality.

The interpretation of a tool is founded on an original pre-predicative fore-understanding of a tool. The entity in front of us must already be accessible. This prior accessibility is based on a “fore-having” of the totality of involvements in which a tool is found; on a “fore-sight” of the definite particular way that the tool can be interpreted (used), or in other words understanding of its own “in-order-to”; and on a “fore-conception” of the particular use of the tool in its relation to the totality of involvements in which it is found, that is how a particular tool can be used for a wider task. This structure is constitutive of what Heidegger calls the hermeneutical situation: we are always already involved in a world, and we always already have an understanding of how
that world works. I live as already understandingly dealing-with things in the world, and
this constitutes my existence as being-in-the-world (GA21: 146).

Interpreting is the explicit appropriation of the fore-structure of the understanding, by taking hold of the possibilities revealed in our understanding. In taking the hammer as a hammer, and using it, we are displaying an understanding of the possibility of the hammer. By becoming aware, in some sense, of the hammer in its “in order to”, by seeing it as a tool for repairing or completing a greater task than the immediate hammering, seeing beyond its own particular function to a larger in-order-to; or perhaps also by seeing it as inadequate for the task at hand- in these ways we explicitly appropriate the fore-structure of the understanding: we see the hammer as good for fixing a roof, as crooked and inappropriate. The hermeneutical “as”-structure, as a way of making-sense-of, is a part of human comportment (GA21: 146). We see the hammer as having a meaning within the totality of relations by our pre-predicative interaction with it.

“Meaning” is not something somehow attached to or emanating from entities: it is what Dasein is, as a being that makes sense of things. Making sense of things is an existential of Dasein, as it discloses what beings are: “only Dasein can be meaningful or meaningless” (SZ 151\193). There can be no disclosiveness if nothing is disclosed. But nothing can be meaningful if Dasein is not disposed to understand. It is Dasein that makes-intelligible: Dasein is this making-sense-of, and expresses itself in meanings to which it gives words (GA21: 151). The question of the meaning of being is therefore one about the disclosure-structure of Dasein, in its relation to beings and to itself as the being
that already has some understanding of being. It asks how it is that beings are given to human experience as intelligible. Being is this meaningful givenness. We must already understand in order to interpret, and the articulation of interpretation is “meaning”.

There is clearly a circle here: in order to interpret, to give meaning to something, we must already have understood it, yet interpretation contributes to the understanding. But this circle is the existential constitution of Dasein’s way of disclosure. In order to exploit the circle to reach a positive possibility of knowledge, interpretation must:

... have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves ... (SZ 153\195).

In a phenomenological inquiry, guided by the motto “to the things themselves”, we must be careful that the ground upon which we build our interpretation is clearly demarcated not by preconceptions, but by what is actually understood in primordial disclosure of the things themselves. Then interpretation can enrich understanding.

This hermeneutical structure of understanding and interpretation, so important to Heidegger’s way of approach to the question of being, is the ground of the assertion. Since in ancient ontology, “the lógos functioned as the only clue for obtaining access to that which authentically is, and for defining the being of such entities” and “as the primary and authentic ‘locus’ of truth”, (SZ 154\ 196), the way in which the “as” of assertion is in fact a derived form of the hermeneutical “as” will help us to see how Heidegger’s approach to the question of being differs from Aristotle’s and how that difference relates to a different understanding of ‘truth’. And it will emphasize again the
primacy of the practical in Heidegger. Assertion emerges in section 33 of *Being and Time* in a more complete light, after the analysis of understanding: one that repeats in a different structural context the findings discussed so far.

In section 33, Heidegger treats the three significations of the word “assertion”, all of which relate, as derivative, to the articulation of the fore-structure of the understanding. The primary signification is *Aufzeigen*, pointing out, thus the pointing out of an entity in the particular way presents itself, i.e. the hammer as “too heavy”. Secondly, assertion means predication [*Prädikation*], a restricting of the first instance of pointing out that makes explicit a definite character of what is indicated. The third sense of assertion is communication [*Mitteilung*], literally, sharing with someone else our intentional movement towards what is indicated in its definite character. Like any kind of interpretation, assertion also has its fore-structure: pointing something out as “too heavy” requires a fore-having of its involvement with other entities. Predicating it as “too heavy” requires fore-sight into the what-for of the hammer. Communicating requires a perhaps unnoticed reference to the whole context in and which the hammer is used for a task.

It must be made clear that the type of assertion discussed here is not the same as an immediate expression. If one calls out “the hammer is too heavy” or “too heavy! get the other hammer!” while laying aside the other tool, one is engaged in fact in a primordial comportment that reflects the hermeneutical as-structure. Language then is a

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25 This incidentally gives us a practical example of the way that Heidegger’s ‘method’ unfolds. The immediate understanding of something in its fore-structure has to be worked out and interpreted, the possibilities developed and laid out, then it can be resubmitted to analysis in the light of these new findings, which take understanding to a different level.
form of behaviour, reflecting an immediate "circumspective" understanding of the practical possibilities at hand. The language of assertion proper is already a step towards a theoretical understanding of the entity at hand. This way of seeing an entity transforms it from something readily available, as it is seen primordially in the context of "what-for" in which we are involved in the world, to something "present-at-hand". The entity is thus seen as a bare object, as mere presence of a thing removed from the way in which it is first encountered as available for use, or in its serviceability. Taking something as present-at-hand obscures its character of availability, and removes it from the context of serviceability. It is seen no longer as something with-which we do something, but as something about-which the assertion is made. It therefore shows something in such a way that we "just look at it" instead of doing something with it.

The distinction between immediate expressions and assertoric statements is one we have already seen in Aristotle: the distinction holds between commands or requests, which demand a performance as a response; and apophantic discourse, which calls the interlocutor simply to look at what is pointed out in the definite character expressed. The various kinds of assertion "in between" the two extremes of the command "hand me the hammer!" and the theoretical remark "the hammer is too heavy", such as reports on the situation, descriptions, etc., originate in circumspective concern, the comportment described in the hermeneutical "as" (SZ: 158\201). To think of them as springing from

\[26\] Note: "the kind of interpretation which is circumspectly expressed is not necessarily already an assertion in the sense we have defined" (SZ: 157\200).
theoretical statements, Heidegger says, is virtually impossible: they have a prior connection to human comportment in the world as projective understanding.

Heidegger re-values human comportment as a way- the only way- in which beings can be revealed for what they are. His search for the unity of the ways in which beings appear is a search for the ways in which beings appear to human being, and is inseparable from this. His look towards the things themselves involves a study of the “look”. And the primordial look he finds is pre-predicative practical involvement with entities. In Aristotle, as Heidegger says, truth is in things- inasmuch as things are taken as the objects of the assertion that is made about them- and not in the understanding. In Heidegger’s own view, however, “truth as revealing is in Dasein, as a determination of its intentional comportment, and it is also a determinateness of some being, something extant, with regard to its being as a revealed entity.” (GA24: 311\218). We will have to look more closely at the meaning of “truth” to understand what this means. But first, I will continue the methodological analysis, with a more formal discussion of phenomenology and Heidegger’s innovation in applying it to ontological concerns.

IV

Three Discoveries of Phenomenology

Now that I have discussed the goal of phenomenology, and the way in which it is intrinsically related to ontology, I will briefly resume what Heidegger, in the Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time (GA20), calls the three major discoveries of
phenomenology as a science. These are: 1) intentionality; 2) categorial intuition; and 3) the original sense of the *a priori*. I will look at each of these in turn.

a) Intentionality

The neglect of the question of being in Husserl's phenomenology is a product of Husserl's neglect of the question of the being of the intentional. For Heidegger, phenomenology is in fact the "analytic description of intentionality in its *a priori*" (GA20: 108\79). The meaning of this should become clear in the following pages.

Heidegger argues that the field of intentionality has been unduly restricted, and needs to be opened to the things themselves as they actually are in their being as perceived. This requires an analysis of what is perceived in perception; what Husserl has left out is the factical involvement of human beings in a world, and how this shapes the *intentum*.

*Intentio* means "directing itself towards"; every form of comportment, every lived experience, every psychic occurrence is a directing towards. Intentionality is thus the structure of lived experience as such (GA20: 36\29). It is not a relation between a psychic event and a real thing "outside consciousness": it is not, in other words, the structure of a correspondence theory of truth, nor is it something added onto experience. Perception itself is intentional.

The *intentum* of intentionality, that toward which perception is directed, is the perceived of the perception. Heidegger notes that in looking at things as they are in themselves we perceive them in various ways. In the 1925 course, as in *Being and Time*,
he insists that we first see things (where "seeing" means "simple cognizance of what is found" (GA20: 52\39)) as "environmental", which seems equivalent to ready-to-hand. The theoretical perception of something as a "natural thing" (present-at-hand) is derivative, as is seeing something purely in the determinations universal to any physical object (seeing its "thingness"). The field of intentionality is clearly broader than perception of the theoretical. In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger sets intentionality in the everyday practical situation; Dasein is not a transcendental ego removed from the factical situation. The being of the intentional being has to be considered in discussing intentionality. The way that we direct ourselves towards an entity is disclosive of the meaning of that entity. We transcend ourselves towards the world as the complex of significant structures, and disclose the meaning of beings, that is, the being of beings. The intentionality of being in the world is thus expressed as transcendence: no longer intentionality between experience and entities, but transcendence between experience and the meaning of those entities, or being.\(^{27}\)

The perceivedness of the entity, the way it shows itself as being-perceived, belongs to the structure of intentionality, to the manner (the "how") of its being intended, and not to the entity. Thus, an entity can be given: 1) through "empty intending"; 2) through intuitive fulfillment; 3) through the perception of a picture; or 4) superlatively as bodily presence. The first of these cases is the most common way in which things enter our ordinary discussions (as we have seen in the discussion of assertion) and the way in which they become ready-to-hand. We generally talk about things that are not "intuitively

given”: we talk about a chair without the chair actually being present before us, and without calling to mind the image of a chair. In the second case, we represent to ourselves what is intended, for example in trying to remember the details of something, and thus give “intuitive fulfillment” to the intention. The third kind of representation is that which we experience in looking at a picture: we look through the material context in which something is pictured, to what is there pictured. Finally, in simple perception, I simply see the thing itself as bodily present. There is no “in between” stage in simple perception in which I represent the object to myself: I do not make for myself a “representation of a chair”, I just see the chair. Furthermore, I see it as complete entity, even though I in fact perceive only an aspect of it; and I see it as selfsame, despite the different views I might have of it in walking around it.

There is a structural interrelation between these different modes in which something is intended, as different ways of toward-which inherent to the being of the one who intends. The way in which something is intended determines the way in which it is perceived. Every intention tends towards fulfillment: simple perception, as a superlative case of intentional fulfillment, finds fulfillment through perception of the bodily presence of an entity; remembrance through envisaging, etc. But in the definitive demonstration of the accuracy of fulfillment, we turn to the simple perception of the thing as bodily presence. In looking to find fulfillment for the empty intention of assertion, I must direct

28 Cf. Aristotle on perception at *APo*: 79b 29-31. As I argued in section four of chapter one, it seems that for Aristotle also “simple perception” means perception of an ousia with attributes, not of Lockean primary or secondary qualities. I see a blue chair, not “hardness” or “blueness”.

my being-toward not to the assertion itself, but to that about which the assertion speaks. There is then some sort of identification between the assertion and its about-which required for demonstration. But how does this actually pan out in intending as the belonging together of intentio and intentum? The second "discovery" elucidates the issue.

b) Categorial intuition

Categorial intuition is an intentional comportment that makes concrete the basic constitution of intentionality; it reveals the ontological a priori of a subsistent entity, or the being of a being. Intuition means "simple apprehension of what is itself bodily found just as it shows itself" (GA20: 64\47). In the perception of the given, and in every such experience, we already also apprehend the categorial, that is, we have an intuition of what can be conceptually grasped as a category. The categories are correlates of certain acts. In the immanence of consciousness I find nothing like "this", "and", "being" (GA20:77\57). The categories then are found by referring to what is intended in an act, what is intended in a comportment. They are discovered through non-sensory perception of an originary self-given: through categorial intuition. Categorial intuition is an act that establishes the relation that perception involves.

Simple perception is already pervaded by categorial intuition: in perceiving a bodily entity, we "see" not only a sensible being, but also its "surplus" [Ueberschuss], that is, what is not sensibly perceptible in bodily presence. Categorial intuition is the articulation of forms already found in the composition of sensible experience- forms that are not

29 Pertinent to this, see my discussion of truth as adequation in section V below.
sensible but intuited: intuition represents the whole matter in its totality. Being, for example, is self-given in perception through categorial intuition. Gaining the insight that it takes to make the leap between seeing an aspect of something and “filling in” the whole, between a particular view of something and the selfsameness of that thing, between the intended and the intuited is called “evidence”. What was intuited is illuminated in the state of affairs, by an intentional act of identifying the intended and the intuited.

We saw that there is a definitive fulfillment of any intention when the perceived entity shows itself bodily. Fulfilling an empty intention by reference to a given present entity requires an act of identification between the empty intention and the perceived. Fulfillment of an intention is an *adequatio*, phenomenologically understood as a bringing into coincidence of what is intended (*intellectus*) with the intuited subject matter (*res*). A first concept of truth (one of three discussed here) emerges from this adequation: 1) that of the identity of the intuited and intended, which I experience in the “living act of concrete perceiving”. Here, I do not “apprehend” the identity between what I intuit and what I perceive, that is, I do not thematize it as true, I rather “live in the truth” (GA20: 70\52). This is clearly the concept of truth we will see as fundamental in section 44 of *Being and Time*. Truth here is a comportmental relation that I *experience* by directing myself towards the subject matter. A particular notion of being emerges from this form of truth, if I try to express it via an assertion. In the phrase “the chair is yellow”, I can emphasize the *being* yellow of the chair, so that I mean that the chair is *really and truly* yellow. In this case being is taken in the sense of truth as “the subsistence of truth, of the
truth relation, subsistence of identity” (GA20: 71\54). Being and truth are identified in the “translation” of my everyday experience of perception. The being-yellow of the chair is not sensibly perceived, but intuited, and played out in my comportment towards the chair.

It is possible to arrive at a second concept of truth on the basis of phenomenological adequation, however. Here, truth is: 2) a structural relationship of the acts of intending and intuiting. It is, in short, predicative truth. Being in this case also has a different meaning: in the phrase under discussion, I emphasize the being yellow of the chair, attributing a predicate to a subject, the being P to S. In this sense, “being” is used as a copula; being is a “relation factor” of the state of affairs, a structural moment in the state of affairs. But the copula is not intuitively fulfilled. In the statement, “the chair is yellow”, when “is” is a simple copula, we can find no fulfillment in perception for the “is”, any more than we can find fulfillment for the totality of a given thing when we see only an aspect of it. I can see the yellow and the chair, but not the “is”, any more than I can see the being-yellow.30

The difference between these two notions of truth is, in short, that the first is focussed on the experience as such. I grasp the whole situation in which a chair is there as yellow, and comport myself towards the yellow chair. In the second case, I separate myself from the experience and begin a rudimentary analysis, such that I perceive the

30 The analysis recalls the Russell\Frege distinctions in the meaning of “is”: existential (A is); identity (A is A); predication (A is B); and class inclusion (A is a B). Cf. Russell (1937) p.64. For these philosophers, the senses of being are not unified. Heidegger (like Aristotle) seeks a unity on the basis of truth. Aristotle focusses on ousía, given as true; Heidegger on the complex of human perception of which determines the truth of ousía.
chair particularly as a yellow thing, as opposed to any other possibility of colour. In this
second case, I separate out the quality of yellowness from the chair (I ask if yellow is a
good colour for the chair); whereas in the first case, I simply live in the situation in which
the chair is yellow (I sit down on a yellow chair). To express this latter experience of the
chair in an assertion, I would have to emphasize somehow that the chair "is" yellow;
something that is lost when I begin to analyze the relation between subject and predicate
in asserting that the chair is yellow as opposed to, for example, red. Yet on the surface,
the two assertions have the same structure: "the chair is yellow".

In assertion, there is a "surplus of intentions", and no demonstration can be made
either of the notion of being or the notion of truth: predication expresses something that
is not found perceptually. Furthermore, non-relational acts of simple apprehension can
also be true: this shows that phenomenology breaks with the restriction of the concept of
truth to relational acts, or to judgements. Truth as disclosure has its ground in the pre-
predicative comportment in which we relate to being. Thus, writes Heidegger,
"phenomenology has demonstrated that the non-sensory and ideal cannot without further
ado be identified with the immanent, conscious, subjective ... and this constitutes the true
sense of the discovery of categorial intuition" (GA20: 79\58).

A third concept of truth is that focussed on the intuited entity itself, as that which
makes knowledge true. This is: 3) the condition of possibility for any truth whatsoever,
i.e. that the entity reveal itself, that there be "phenomena". As the Greeks saw, it is the
being of entities that ultimately makes knowledge true.
We have been talking about "being" on two levels: as it is initially intuited as self-given, and as it is expressed in a proposition. Assertion expresses something that is not found perceptually (GA20 78\58), and that is why there is no possible fulfillment of what is found in the assertion containing the copula except through categorial intuition. A perceptual assertion is "communication about the entity perceived in perception and not about the act of perception itself" (GA20: 76\57). At the level of simple perception, a categorial intuition is already found in giving the thing in its totality. Through an act of expression, what is intuited is brought to language. A predicative judgement establishes the relation of unity or identity between sensible givens, drawn from intuited content. When a relation is explicitly expressed, a categorial act is made and a categorial object is given. There are two kinds of categorial acts: acts of synthesis and acts of ideation, which seem, respectively, to be a re-appropriation of Aristotle's synthesis and diairesis, and a retrieval of Aristotle's notion of "abstraction", or "potential" knowledge of the universal through "actual" knowledge of the particular.\(^{31}\)

i) Acts of synthesis

In bringing the intuition to language, whichever side we accentuate in the proposition, "the chair is yellow", involves accentuating the whole relation, the "state of affairs". The state of affairs is ideal: being-yellow is not a real property of the chair. "What is real is the yellow, and in the state of affairs only the quality is accentuated as something real, objective" (GA20: 86\53). The presentation of a state of affairs is only possible on the basis of the already given subject matter, but we do not change anything

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\(^{31}\) See ii on acts of ideation below.
in the real matter by making an assertion of it. In forming an assertion, "the subject matter becomes present in the how of the state of affairs" (GA20: 87\64). The act of relating is synthesis and diairesis, wherein by showing that \( P \) belongs to \( S \), we do not connect two objects, but show the wholeness of \( S \) more explicitly. "Synthesis is not a connecting of objects, but synthesis and diairesis give objects" (GA20: 87\64). Through the accentuation of the state of affairs in this movement, the chair becomes present in what it is in a more authentic objectification that brings out the relation of the state of affairs (GA20: 86\63). The accentuation of the state of affairs is a categorial form. By bringing out this structure through objectification, we make the reality of the thing comprehensible in its structure.

This makes it clear what the work of phenomenology is, and how it is not a betrayal of the primordial truth of Dasein as disclosive involvement in the world. The task of phenomenology is to bring out the \textit{a priori} structures which are revealed through categorial intuition in intentionality directed towards the being of the perceived. Making assertions is not to disturb the truth revealed in intentionality, but to draw out the structures inherent in perception. Because synthesis and diairesis inherent in assertion are founded on the self-giving of an entity in perception, and because simple perception already is pervaded by intuition of categorial forms, assertion brings out the reality- the truth or the being- of entities.

Notice what happens here: Heidegger grants to the assertion the function of accentuation, of bringing out the truth of being that we experience in the world. The truth of the assertion is \textit{theoretically} derivative of what we experience as factical beings.
Theory then is no longer, as it was in Aristotle, directed towards the eternal in “contemplation” [theorία], but is rather turned towards the world, through the articulation of what is experienced in finite transcendence (which, I argue, is praxis). This is the meaning of the shift to the practical and its implication for theory. That the theoretical is a mode of the practical has radical consequences for any notion of the eternal, or the beyond of finite being.\textsuperscript{32}

ii) Acts of ideation

The other kind of categorial act is the act of ideation. Such acts do not intend the sensible content of perception, but as acts of intuition of the universal, they give the idea or species [eїdos] of the sensible object. They give what is seen in sensible objects “first and simply” (GA20: 91\66). When I look about and see houses, to use Heidegger’s example, I do not first see them in their distinctive individuality: what I first see is this as a house, I see a universal feature of the house.\textsuperscript{33} This as-what guides my looking at the sensible matter, and permits me to make sense of it. The as-what is not expressly apprehended in my initial simple intuition, however: the sensible foundation for acts of ideation is submitted to an abstractive ideation, such that I bring the species out from

\textsuperscript{32} An exploration of this in chapter six will make it clear how Heidegger can write: “philosophical research is and remains atheism, which is why philosophy can allow itself ‘the arrogance of thinking’ ... this arrogance is the inner necessity of philosophy and its true strength” (GA 20: 109\80).

\textsuperscript{33} Cf. Aristotle on universals. In seeing a particular individual, we have a perception of the universal (Apo: 100a 17-18; see my chapter one section IV). Also book Mu of the Metaphysics (1087a 10-25): we have actual knowledge of particulars, but through the perception of individuals, we have potential knowledge of universals.
individual instantiations. This gives for the new objectivity of generality (GA20: 94\69), which is again founded on practical comportment.

Heidegger writes that “the categorial ‘forms’ are not constructs of acts, but objects which manifest themselves in these acts” (GA20: 96\70). Categorial acts let an entity be seen in its objectivity, not by adding something to them, but by accentuating what is already there in a simple act of perception. By illuminating the ideal features of entities, categorial acts simply thematize the intuition already inherent in perception. Phenomenology, which thematizes the objective features of entities brought out on the basis of perception, is scientific ontology.

c) The a priori

The third discovery of phenomenology is that of the original sense of the a priori. The term itself implies a time sequence, and thus introduces temporality into the notion of being: it denotes ontological structures that are already there in entities, and that are thus a priori in relation to the here and now of a particular thing (GA20: 101\74). But the a priori is not in the entity itself, nor is it some form of “immanent knowledge” of a subject: it belongs to the being of the entity, and is thus a structure of meaning. It is therefore determined by the way that an entity is perceived and brought into view, the way that it is accessed by categorial intuition. The a priori belongs to intentionality, “not as title for comportment, but as a title for being” (GA20: 101\74): it is the way that the entity first manifests itself as intelligible. Being itself, the way that an entity manifests itself as meaningful, has an a priori character, which calls for a priori cognition as a way
of approach to apprehending being. Phenomenology is this cognition, that lets us see beings as they manifest themselves as accessible.

Summing up: intentionality in its a priori is the basic field of phenomenological research: it denotes the search for the structural elements of entities in their being, through transcendent comportments directed towards the meaning of entities. Categorial intuition is the originary way of access to these structures, the method of this phenomenological research. The method is descriptive, in that categorial acts express through accentuation what is originally intuited along with perception, in pre-predicative understanding. Accentuation is a form of analysis, in that it shows up theoretically what has been pre-predicatively understood in the primary act of transcendence (GA20: 108\78). The definition of phenomenology as “the analytic description of intentionality in its a priori” is now understandable.

Phenomenology aims then at exposing the truth of beings. We have seen three concepts of truth emerge from this analysis. In the next section, I will look more closely at what Heidegger means by truth.

V

Truth

In the very dense section 44 of Being and Time, Heidegger, by drawing on what has already been discussed concerning Dasein’s mode of being as disclosure, arrives at the characterization of truth as the disclosedness of human existence in relation to entities as disclosed: αlēthēia. He repeats on a new ontological level the discussion of the
relationship between assertion and the primordial mode of revealing on which it is based: in this context, it emerges as a search for the ontological foundation of the “traditional” concept of truth. The analysis then proceeds in the opposite direction to that of section 33 on assertion.

A look at the traditional conception of truth shows that there is clearly a connection between logical truth and ontological truth. As Volpi contends, Heidegger was dissatisfied with the interpretation of Aristotle (put forward by Brentano) that saw the unity of the senses of being as focussed analogically on ousia. Here he examines being as being-true as a possible fundament of this unity, culminating in the virtual identification of being and alêthêia.34

There is nothing new about the relationship between truth and being: as Heidegger points out, Aristotle describes philosophy both as the science of the truth and the science of being qua being, or entities with regard to their being (SZ: 213\256).35 But there is a view commonly, and in Heidegger’s view, falsely, ascribed to Aristotle: 1) the judgement, or the assertion, is the place of truth; and 2) the essence of truth is in the agreement of

34 Volpi (1988): pp. 5-6. Volpi defends the view that Heidegger goes beyond being as truth [tò òn hos alêthês] to giving being itself the character of alêthêia. This is evidenced in Heidegger’s courses of WS 1925\26 (GA:21); WS 1929\30 (GA 29\30); and the first part of SS1931 (GA31). Volpi contends that Heidegger later in SS 1931 (GA33), on Metaphysics Theta, makes a similar attempt to explore the possibility of being as dunamis and energeia as a fundament for the unity of being, such that being itself is given the character of phûsis.

35 Cf: Alpha Elatton 993b 20-32. Also, of course being as truth (but, note, predicative truth) is one of the four senses of being Aristotle describes inter alia in Meta V 1017a 8ff and Meta. VI 1026a 34ff, though it is rejected there as a subject of the primary science. See my chapter two, section II.
judgement and object (SZ 214\257; GA21: 128). Aristotle did not in fact say any such thing: this explains why τὸ ὄν ἀληθές, which is being as the judgment of truth, is not being in the most fundamental sense. The truth for Aristotle, as we saw, is the essence of things, or the ground of form, not the essence of judgments. Aristotle referred truth to:

1) entities as revealing themselves (the ground of being in the sense of being true) and
2) modes of lógos as the human disclosure of truth (ἐπιστήμη, τεχνē, phrónēsis, nous, sophía); 3) the way of being that can either uncover or cover up (lógos apophantikós).

Heidegger argues that Aristotle further recognized 4) the primary locus of truth in his conception of nóēsis, which, as pure disclosure, has no opposite, and he discussed aísthēsis as pure revelation through the senses.36

We have seen that for Heidegger, the assertion must have, as the ontological condition for the possibility of its covering up or uncovering beings, a moment of pure disclosure at its root; a moment that Aristotle does not develop. Heidegger's innovation is to characterize Dasein as disclosedness. Primordial truth is the place of assertion, and not the other way around. Truth is a part of the basic constitution of Dasein, as being-in-the-world (SZ 226\269).

Aristotle is however responsible for the traditional notion of truth as agreement, if only because of a certain reading of his texts. In De Interpretatione, Aristotle speaks of truth as a likening between the soul and its experience of things. At De Int: 16a 7,

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36 Nous is revelatory of universals; aísthēsis of particulars. Recall that epistēmē (which with nous is a theoretical disposition that constitutes sophía) is understanding of explanations, but this is not a direct noetic apprehension, since it relies on prior knowledge of universals.
Aristotle writes that vocal sounds and writing are indications of affects in the soul, and that affects in the soul are likenesses of things in the world. Also in *De Anima* (430a 14-15) we read: "Nous in the passive sense is such because it becomes all things"; and later (430a 20): "Actual knowledge [energeian epistēmē] is identical with its object". Furthermore, in the *Metaphysics* passages I have discussed, Aristotle clearly talks about judgement of the truth or falsity of predication, but one that is not fundamental, since it is dependent on a noetic apprehension of the being of things.\(^{37}\)

The notion of agreement gives rise in Medieval philosophy, and particularly Thomas Aquinas, to a conception of truth as adequation or agreement between intellect and thing (*adequatio intellectus et rei*). In Christian theological belief, and with the influence of the Platonic conception of participation, this becomes *adequatio rei ad intellectum divinum* (wherein created things only are inasmuch as they correspond to an idea in the mind of God); or *adequatio intellectus humani ad rem creatam* (wherein the created human mind must conform to the object as created). Under the influence of the modern conception of the dominance of human reason, the Kantian sense of *adequatio rei ad intellectum* means that the subjectivity of human being is such that the perception of an object is constituted by the structures of the transcendentental subject; whereas the positivist conception of truth involves conformity of statement to matter of fact (*intellectus ad rem*). In each of these

\(^{37}\) The "correctness" of this judgement, that is, whether the synthesis and diairesis is true or not, is dependent on how things are, thus: "he who thinks that what is divided is divided, or that what is united is united is right; while he whose thought is contrary to the condition of objects is in error" (*Meta*: 1051b3-5; cf. also 1051b32-35). Truth properly consists in knowing whether things are or not, or having noēsis of things; the opposite of truth is not falsity but ignorance, or not having noetic apprehension of things [ágnosia] (*Meta*: 1052a 1-4). See my discussion of the et esti in ch.1, sec. II above.
cases, there is always at issue the question of concordance or correspondence, which involves a judgement about whether what is posited concords with what is the case (cf: *The Essence of Truth*, [WW]: 8-10\120-122).

This begs the question of what this correspondence or agreement means and presupposes, and what kind of relation obtains between a statement of something and the things about which the statement speaks. A statement about a picture on the wall and the picture itself are two very different things, although knowledge, as the outcome of judgement concerning agreement of thing and statement, is supposed to give the thing as it is. Clearly, we are speaking of a relationship between two different species of things: an ideal content, and a real thing that is present-at-hand. The relationship between real and ideal content, often framed epistemologically as the way that a subject has knowledge of the world over against which it stands, has long remained obscure because it has not been questioned in its ground. Thus, writes Heidegger, in one of his most charming lines: “Is it accidental that no headway has been made with this problem in over two thousand years?”(SZ: 216-7\259). Truth becomes phenomenally explicit when something is demonstrated to be true. An analysis of demonstration (not used in the Aristotelian sense) will clarify the relationship between statement and thing, by bringing forward truth as truth.

Heidegger’s example of the statement “the picture is askew” makes the role of intentionality in the demonstration of truth clear. If someone with her back to the wall is told that the picture is askew, she turns round to look at the picture to seek confirmation. What is confirmed is not agreement between a picture one “represents” to oneself and the
actual picture, but whether what the assertion points to is just as the assertion says it is. In the absence of the picture, in "empty intending", one has in mind not a representation of the picture, but the picture itself. An assertion is therefore not related to a mental representation, but to a real thing: it is an intentional relationship which points something out. Thus confirmation of a such a statement is gained by looking at the picture, and not comparing a "representation" of the picture with itself, not, in other words comparing psychical content with physical matter. In looking at the picture, one notes whether it does in fact present itself as askew, whether the empty intentionality of the assertion does in fact find adequate fulfillment in the entity that it intends. What is confirmed in looking at the picture is that the entity is as it is pointed out by the assertion, that the entity shows itself in its self-sameness. Thus the uncoveredness of the entity itself is what is demonstrated. Being-true then is being as uncovering: inasmuch as what I say reveals what is, it is true, inasmuch as it obscures what is, it is false. The subject-object distinction, the separation of the real and the psychical and the seeking of "agreement" between them, can only be made on the basis of this uncovering.

This conception is of course not new to our analysis. We have seen already how the uncovering and revealing is the true function of the assertion. But we have also seen, and see again in this new context, that uncovering and revealing are only possible on the basis of Dasein’s being as being-uncovering. Since uncovering is a very part of the way that Dasein is, as being-in-the-world, since Dasein is this constant comportment of making sense of things, it is Dasein that is primarily true, and entities, as uncovered, are true only secondarily. It is Daseins’ own structure, the structure of Dasein’s “there”, as being-in and
as already ahead of itself, that makes possible the uncovering of entities. As being-in-the-world in the manner of projective disclosing, Dasein is "in the truth".

This latter phrase, or principle, as Heidegger calls it, means that disclosedness is a part of each of the structures of human existence. The structure of Dasein's being is care [Sorge]. Care signifies the primordial ontological structural totality of Dasein, that is, the unity of the various structural elements of Dasein: the being of Dasein means "ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (SZ:192\237). Dasein is ahead of itself in the structure of projection: its existentiality is such that it has to transcend itself towards its own being-able-to-be. As in-the-world, its factical existence is such that it is thrown. Finally as alongside the world, it is absorbed in the things of the world, it is fallen. As a unified phenomenon, care signifies the a priori structure that is the condition for the possibility of actual comportment in the world.38

Disclosedness permeates the whole of this structure, such that the disclosure of beings within the world is a part of, as well as a consequence of, Dasein's being. Thrownness, as a form of disposition, is part of the structure of Dasein's disclosedness. Dasein is already in a definite world of relation to things and definite patterns of involvement with things; this facticity of Dasein means that it is in each case my own disclosedness that is at issue. Dasein's mode of being also involves projection, throwing itself into its possibilities, as we saw in the discussion of understanding. In trying to make

sense of itself, Dasein relates to the world, others or itself as potentiality for being. When it projects itself authentically, that is, when it discloses itself as its own potential for being, when it sees itself in relation to its own ultimate structures and possibilities, when it comes face to face with the truth of its own finite existence, then Dasein is in the truth.\footnote{This authentic \textit{praxis} of this projection is the root, as I have noted and will develop in chapter five, of the theory/practice division, revealing as it does the meaning of being as time.} Finally, falling is a constitutive element of Dasein's being. Mostly Dasein is not contemplating its own finite existence; usually we go about our business, making sense of the world and other people, living according to generally accepted norms and beliefs (what "they" say). Often we become totally absorbed in the everyday world, we become lost, and no longer see entities for what they are. Things become disguised, and even though they have been uncovered, now show themselves as semblances. This is a part of Dasein's facticity and shows that Dasein is equally in untruth (SZ 221-222, 264-265).

Because it is a very part of Dasein's being to be in the untruth, it is a struggle, and an essential one, to constantly try to wrest the truth from semblances. Things easily slip back into disguise, because we slip back into an everyday mode of just viewing what seems to be. Thrown projection- the fact that Dasein is in a world, and must live out towards the possibilities of things, others and itself as its means of making sense of the situation in which it finds itself- this is the existential ontological condition for the truth and untruth that characterizes Dasein. The type of access that we have to entities and to ourselves is the condition for our disclosedness. (SZ: 223, 265).
Ultimately then, truth as agreement is a derivative modification of the primordial form of truth as Dasein's disclosedness, and this derivative modification leads to a theoretical notion of truth, as the truth of judgement. The roots of assertion are likewise in the hermeneutical "as" and in Dasein's understanding. An assertion is Dasein's expressing itself as intentional, and communicates the way in which entities are uncovered. Once an assertion is spoken, it becomes something available, that can be repeated and passed on into common parley, becoming adrift from its basis in disclosure of an entity. This is to a large extent how we have access to entities: not through our original dealings with them, but through hearsay in which the uncoveredness of something is preserved. Becoming absorbed in assertions that "they" make, our relationship to what is said changes. We no longer even look for the intentional relation to entities which the assertion originally spoke: the assertion becomes something "ready-to-hand" available for our use and manipulation.

If, however, we want to demonstrate that the assertion does in fact uncover, we must show that what is preserved as uncoveredness in the assertion relates to the entities it originally intends. In order to demonstrate this, the assertion as ready-to-hand then shows itself as the uncovering of something within the world, and a theoretical relationship is established between the assertion and the entities it "describes". The assertion itself is seen as a theoretical thing, something present-at-hand, no longer taken for granted, and as possibly conforming to something either ready to hand or present at hand. The uncovering preserved in the assertion is an uncovering of something: the demonstration
we seek to verify this thus takes a theoretical stance towards both entities and assertion. Truth becomes agreement.\textsuperscript{40}

Dasein’s concernful absorption in the things it encounters in the world as it goes about its daily business, its pre-understanding of being that allows it to live in such a way, leads it to see truth also as something present at hand. The uncoveredness expressed in assertions comes to us removed from its intentional relation to entities, and we begin to see assertions as assertions “about” something. Truth as disclosedness is obscured by the average understanding in which we live.

Truth is disclosure and Dasein is disclosedness. Truth then is only as long as Dasein is, which means that truth is relative to Dasein’s being. This is not to say that truth is “subjective”, meaning that it is a product of the whim of an individual. Rather, it means that truth, as a kind of be-ing that is Dasein is ultimately dependent for its being on the existence of a subject. There can be an understanding of being only because Dasein is constituted by disclosedness.

Phenomenology then is the disclosure of entities as they are in themselves, which is conditional on the \textit{a priori} existential constitution of Dasein as disclosedness. It signifies a way of encountering something, a way of being towards things such that they appear from themselves as themselves. Heidegger’s method is distinguished from Aristotle’s in that whereas Aristotle presumes the truth of beings and then inquires into the grounds of the being of those beings, Heidegger thematizes the truth of beings, which

\textsuperscript{40} Cf. \textit{SZ}: 225\textendash268: “Truth as disclosedness and as intending uncovered entities- a being which itself uncovers- has become truth as agreement between things that are present-at-hand within-the world”.
we grasp predicatively as the meaning of beings. In attempting to describe how beings are, how they show themselves, Heidegger must enter into a description of who it is that discerns how they are. The emphasis on human involvement in truth as disclosure entails a shift from an emphasis on theoretical knowledge (seeking grounds for why), to a prioritization of practical knowledge (seeking description of how).

This very large look at the meaning of phenomenology in Heidegger, and the way in which it bears directly on ontology and the question of the meaning of being clears the way for the next move in my analysis. So far I have looked at the being of Dasein removed from the temporal structures that constitute it at its very root. In the next chapter, I will examine the structures of Dasein that reveal its finitude, and therewith, the finitude of being and the absence of God; this contrasts with Aristotle’s eternity of movement and the eternal prime mover. A discussion of finite transcendence as kinetic praxis will also explain how Heidegger grounds Aristotle’s energéiai: theoría, polēsis and praxis. This will in turn allow for a clearer analysis in chapter six of the radical separation of theology and ontology that fundamentally differentiates Heidegger’s ontology from Aristotle’s.
CHAPTER FIVE

Ontology and Finite Temporality

Phenomenology in Heidegger entails, or is identical with, a particular understanding of ontology. Up to now, I have discussed Heidegger’s ontology without relating it to temporality [Zeitlichkeit]. In this chapter, I will look at some of the structures of Dasein’s being that bring out the connection between human being and time. The thematization of Dasein as finite radically affects the function of a possible God in ontology.

What being means, the truth of being, is for Heidegger how human being understands and interprets beings. Human understanding of being is conditioned by human finitude. Finitude relates not only to the fact of death, but through and because of human mortality, it permeates the care structure of Dasein as thrown, fallen, and ahead of itself. Being itself- the network of meaning that Dasein experiences- is finite because Dasein is finite. Being is always the being of entities, and Dasein’s relationship to entities is necessarily constrained by Dasein’s own finitude. The world, in the “objective” sense of the “stuff” out there that does not include me, of course will not come to an end with my death. “World” in Heidegger’s sense, however, is the understanding involvement of Dasein in a given structure of relations. This world does come to an end when I die; Heidegger can only discuss the world as Dasein experiences it. Death as an end is not the
main issue in Heidegger's discussion, however; rather, it is the way that Dasein lives as one who will die that is thematized in the question of the meaning of being.

Though Dasein persistently avoids the issue of its mortality, the experience of angst reveals the unavoidable truth of finitude. Conscience calls Dasein back from its guilty denial of this "nullity" towards recognition of Dasein's true uttermost potentiality, that is, the absence of any possible further potentiality for being. Radical understanding and acceptance of Dasein's own finitude, "anticipatory resolve", is the clue to authenticity. Authenticity is an existentiell: it is a particular way of relating to the world by understanding oneself as thrown. But even in relating to other entities, Dasein is primarily concerned with itself. Finite temporality is thus the primordial ontological basis of Dasein's existentiality as a whole. The kinetic praxis of transcendence by means of which Dasein understands being is itself consequently finite: it leads Dasein beyond itself, beyond the isolation of the ego over against a naked set of facts, but towards the world. Transcendence is not transcendence of, "over", or "beyond" the world, not towards an eternal being, but towards the (finite) world, towards the discovery of meaning.

My general aim in this thesis is to show how and why Heidegger's ontology differs from Aristotle's on the issue of God. A secondary aim is to show how Heidegger, in conversation with the Greek master, retrieves and transforms some of Aristotle's fundamental notions to accomplish this difference. In this chapter, I map out some of the basic conceptual shifts that mark the change. These include a shift from the priority of theory to the priority of praxis, from the priority of the eternal to the priority of the finite, and from the priority of actuality to the priority of possibility. The methodological
difference between Aristotle and Heidegger is explanatory of these changes, and thus, I will argue in chapter six, of the shift from ontotheology towards an ontology that is independent of theological considerations.

In this chapter, I document the shift from an ontology that is dependent on the notion of eternity to one that is rooted in temporal finitude. This involves thematizing this finitude, and how it affects Dasein as a rational being who interprets being. My approach in this chapter is first to describe the way in which Dasein’s finitude is evidenced to Dasein itself in angst (section one), then to describe the nature of this finitude (section two) and how Dasein understands it authentically (section three). On this basis, it can be argued in section four that finitude is an essential feature of Dasein’s being as care. In the fifth section, I discuss how Dasein’s two modes of comportment in concern-practice and theory- are a retrieval and transformation of two of Aristotle’s *energeía*. The unity of these *energeía*, understood now as *dunámeis*, is to be found in a fundamental human *praxis*, also dynamic, and thus kinetic, discussed in the final section of this chapter. This will lay the ground for my argument in chapter six that the separation between ontology and theology which is a consequence of Dasein as radically finite does not necessarily entail throwing out consideration of the infinite from phenomenological ontology.

I

Angst

The first question in the analysis of Heidegger’s finite ontology is how Dasein understands itself as finite. This requires an examination of authenticity. A theme that
runs through *Being and Time* is the back and forth between authenticity and inauthenticity, not to be confused with the methodological shift between existential and existentiell analysis. Authenticity is that which constitutes the most extreme possibility of Dasein, and that which principally determines Dasein (*BZ*: 10\10E). As indicative of Dasein’s awareness of its existential situation, authenticity gathers all of the characteristics of Dasein’s being, and shows them as what they are. But Dasein is in fact authentic only on an existentiell level: authenticity is an “existentiell modification” of the inauthentic they-self (*SZ*:267\312). It is angst that brings Dasein back to itself from fallenness in the they, and “makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its being”. (*SZ*:190\235).

Angst is the primary mode of revelation of Dasein’s finitude. We have already looked at the mode of falling and absorption in the world of concern as essential ontological structures of Dasein. Being thrown into a particular world of interrelations, Dasein is easily lost in concern for the things and easily available concepts it finds ready to hand. Being so absorbed in the everyday is a way of turning away from or “fleeing” in the face of Dasein’s potentiality for being itself. The retreat into the “they” is a fleeing from Dasein itself, and it is grounded in angst. Angst makes us want to retreat to the comfortable ground of living according to well-accepted rules. It is an indefinite form of fear: an oppressive feeling of overwhelming lostness and helplessness and responsibility. No definite thing in the world, but rather being-in-the-world as such provokes angst (*SZ*:186\230; *GA*20: 402\290); angst is latent in being-in-the world. Angst is indeterminate: we simply feel ill at ease, uncanny, not at home [*unheimlich*]; all things
recede and sink into indifference, but in this receding things somehow close in on us (WM 32\103).

That which we are anxious about is also indefinite: it is our own authentic potentiality for being in the world. Angst provokes the realization that Dasein is free, free to choose what it can be, free to chose itself. Dasein is anxious about its potentiality, revealed to it in all its nakedness as nothing fixed, nothing determinate; and it is free in the face of being-in-the-world. The world is disclosed as the simple relational “where” in which Dasein will be as it can be. This “where” is not determinate: there is nowhere in particular to be nothing in particular, there is no directive.

Through the experience of angst, the potentiality for being of Dasein, as being-in a world, is individualized and thrown (SZ 188\233). Angst throws Dasein back upon itself as the only one who is at issue; its choices are its own, no longer prescribed by the comfortable directives of the “they”. It is pure potentiality, but its potentiality is its own; what it can choose is dependent only on what is given to it, as a thrown entity. The world of the “they” is revealed as empty, and Dasein is face to face with itself as possibility to be, and as having to be. Everything, including the very existence of Dasein, seems precarious, and the world itself slips away. In this sense, Dasein means being held out into the nothing (WM:35\105), and this is transcendence (WM 38\108).

Dasein is held out beyond the factual existence of beings, into the meaninglessness of the nothing. But this very meaninglessness, this absence of connection, draws Dasein back again to beings. Faced with itself, with what it essentially is, (thrown possibility), Dasein is drawn out beyond what it factically is, towards its possibilities. But to
experience these possibilities, Dasein must return to beings, through which it can experience itself. This is the movement of transcendence, here shown as prescribed by a angst as a fundamental disposition of Dasein.

The nothing that opens before the anxious Dasein throws Dasein back on its own authentic potentiality-for being-in-the world (SZ: 187\232), and opens Dasein to the freedom for its ownmost potentiality-for-being, and thus for the possibility of authenticity or inauthenticity.¹ The tripartite care structure of Dasein- existentiality, facticity and being-fallen- is clearly stated here. Anxiety shows Dasein as factically existing as being-in-the-world. Dasein projects onto possibilities, it is ahead of itself, it has to transcend itself towards its own potentiality for being; it is thrown, it finds itself in a world already given, revealed forcefully in angst; and it is fallen, it flees from itself, from its authentic possibilities into the they-self. Heidegger’s contention that “being is an issue” for Dasein means that Dasein is self-projective. Understanding oneself as finite is the ground of transcendence, which is how Dasein understands being.

But this dedication to oneself in authentic understanding, to this Dasein that each of us is, is not something that Dasein does: it is not the expression of a practical comportment. Theory and practice are both possibilities of Dasein defined as care (SZ: 193\238), a way of being that defines what Dasein essentially is, as the possibility of being authentic or inauthentic. Care finds its meaning in a more original form of praxis,

¹ As Henry points out (1992; p. 357), “this revelation [i.e the self-revelation of existence] is not peculiar to anxiety; like the revelation of the world, the revelation of being-in-the-world, the revelation of existence to itself, is the fact of affectivity [Befindlichkeit] itself.”
that of transcendence. Awareness of finitude in angst, by pushing Dasein towards projection of its possibilities in relation to beings, in a sense provokes understanding of what is.

Human finitude is not thematized in Aristotle; instead, for Aristotle what provokes the movement to understand what is, is the given telos of human being to become rational, to exercise the divine part of our nature in contemplation of the eternal. Thus whereas in Heidegger the push towards understanding being is rooted in finitude, for Aristotle it is rooted in eternity. But what does finitude mean for human being in Heidegger’s analysis?

II

Death

In division one of *Being and Time*, the preparatory analysis of Dasein, Heidegger for the most part looked at the existentiells, the way that individual Dasein comports itself in the world; then he looked to the condition of possibility for such comportment, the existential structure that underlies the existentiell. This analysis was done primarily from the perspective of the inauthentic “they-self”. In the second division of *Being and Time*, *Dasein and Temporality*, Heidegger seeks to lay clear the authentic mode of Dasein’s potentiality for being, in order to bring the whole of Dasein to light, not only the inauthentic, everyday mode of its existence. Here there is a reversal in methodology: Heidegger examines the ontological conditions of authenticity before seeing it “attested” in the ontic mode. The totality of Dasein, we saw, is the tripartite structure of care.
Authentic Dasein must now be included in this totality, not only in order to make the analysis complete, but also to explain what the individual Dasein is in its own selfhood.

Dasein was characterized ontologically as care, and care is defined as "ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (SZ:192\237). This is the disclosure structure of the one who discloses being. As Aristotle seeks a unity in the ways that being is said, Heidegger, since he thematizes human involvement in the disclosure of what being means, must find a unity in the way that being is understood.

The fact that aheadness is part of the disclosure structure would seem to make the task of getting Dasein into our grasp as a whole impossible. Dasein’s existence is defined in terms of potentiality: this implies a not-yet that remains to be filled. If the essence of Dasein is existence, and if existence is potentiality, then "‘existence’ means a potentiality-for-being- but also one which is authentic" (SZ: 233\276). Why so? Because authenticity is part of the essence of Dasein: it is what Dasein is in its own intimate mode. The condition of possibility for Dasein’s being as care is the temporality and historicity of Dasein, its living always towards its own ultimate possibility, while finding itself already in a given world of possibilities, and having to choose among them. The task then is not only to explain how aheadness, with its structure of projecting onto possibilities, can be incorporated into an interpretation of Dasein as a whole, but also how we can ensure that the interpretation includes Dasein as authentic. There are thus two questions that arise: 1) the existentiell one of whether Dasein as a whole is possible, and 2) the existential one of what Dasein’s end, totality and death are.
1) The existential analytic started with everydayness, the being "between" birth and death. The end of being-in-the-world is death, which limits and determines what is possible for Dasein. Death, as the possibility that destroys all other future possibilities, can be experienced in life existentially only as being-towards-death [Sein zum Tode]. Dasein lives towards its own death, directing itself towards this end.\(^2\) Being ahead of itself means that Dasein exists for the sake of itself, and comports itself towards its ultimate potentiality for being. This implies that there is always something outstanding which has not yet become actual, until the ultimate potentiality is fulfilled in death. This presents a difficulty of course: in achieving wholeness through death, Dasein is no more; in becoming complete, in no longer having anything outstanding, Dasein ceases to be its "there". It cannot experience its own death or reflect back upon it. It seems impossible then that we can ever get the whole of human being into a comprehensive grip. Furthermore, another Dasein can never stand in for us in death: dying is in every case my own (SZ: 240\/284). Death is always my own death (GA20: 429\/310). It is my own being that is at stake: no one can die for me— even sacrificing oneself for the sake of another is only putting off what is inevitable for the other.

Three theses then emerge from the analyses in section 47 of Being and Time, described above: i) Dasein is such that it has something still outstanding, a not-yet; ii) coming-to-its-end involves the destruction of Dasein; and iii) there can be no substitution or representation for Dasein in its coming-to-an-end. However, it becomes clear that to

\(^2\) Since death is a potential for being in this sense, how can Dasein be interpreted authentically as a whole? This will be resolved in the fact of Dasein's wanting to have a conscience, as we will see below.
think of death in this way, is to posit Dasein as something merely present-at-hand, that can “disappear” or become no-longer present-at-hand. An existential analysis is wanting. We have to then to rethink what “end” and “totality” mean, and we must think these from Dasein’s being, in such a way that “end” signifies being-a-whole. “Dying is not an event”, writes Heidegger, “it is a phenomenon to be understood existentially” (SZ: 240\284). Dying is what constitutes the wholeness of Dasein and is thus an existential matter.

2) In discussing what is still “outstanding” in Dasein, we must be careful to define the kind of “becoming” that is involved: it is not to be understood as a debt that has yet to be paid, a sum to be exacted that only affects Dasein at the very moment of payment. The not-yet is not a perceptual trick, like the waxing and waning of the moon, when we see only some parts of it. Nor is it the growing towards fulfillment or perfection like a ripening fruit. As Heidegger points out, we often die well after we have achieved “ripeness”; or most often, we die before having achieved fulfillment. The analogy with ripeness does help in the understanding of death in relation to Dasein, however, when we note that ripeness is not something outside the fruit that is somehow added to it afterwards. The not-yet of unripeness is the being of the fruit; the coming to ripeness of the fruit is already prescribed by the what-it-is of the fruit itself. Death is what Aristotle would call an “irrational potency”: it belongs to Dasein as given potential, and is not a

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3 Though he does not do so, at least not in the specific case of human beings. Aristotle does of course treat generation and destruction of all sensible ousía as a natural process (that is, one that affects sensible things as tà phùsei). However, the fulfillment of the telos of a sensible ousía is the attainment of form; since, as I argued in chapter two, an individual ousía does not have its own form, form is not destroyed with the destruction of the individual. Matter is that which is receptive of coming-to-be and passing-away, and thus the material ground of destruction (De Gen. et Corr.: 320a 3-5).
matter of choice. The coming towards death, Dasein’s ultimate potentiality-for-being, is what Dasein is.

Dasein then is already its not-yet. End-ing and dy-ing, understood as processes, and not as some definite stopping points, are part of Dasein’s existence, ways of being of Dasein. We start dying as soon as we are born. It is clear that the not-yet of Dasein is then not something still outstanding, that awaits Dasein. But what it is in a positive sense needs to be looked at, with the help of the care structure: existentiality, facticity, and fallenness.

Death is the uttermost possibility towards which Dasein comports itself. It is something impending, as a possibility of myself that I must take over: it is ownmost: the issue at stake in Dasein’s confrontation with death is its own being-in-the-world, and the possibility of no longer being there. It is non-relational: when Dasein is confronted with its own death, it removes itself from all relationships to other Daseins. It is

Matter thus fulfills its potential in destructing. However, *ousíaí* are not essentially but only accidentally material: they are defined according to the species- essence which does not pass away with the particular instantiation. There is no destruction in a universal sense. Thus what is to be explained is not the destruction of this individual, but the source of motion of the perpetual cycle of generation and destruction, sensible things attaining form and then passing away; and this is “the province of the ... prior philosophy” (318a 17): it is God as pure form.

As for Heidegger, then, also for Aristotle death is not a fulfillment of telos; for Aristotle, it is a completion of potential on a material plane. In the context of the *Ethics*, Aristotle mentions that *noús* constitutes human happiness providing that humans have a complete span of life (110a 5; 1077b 24-5). The death of an individual is not a telos, but a naturally prescribed ending, an irrational potency having to do with matter, that should occur at an appropriate time in order for human beings to reach their rational telos. This is again similar to Heidegger: death is not a fulfillment of what we are given to be (not a culmination like ripeness), but yet it is a potency- the ultimate possibility already given to us, and in the light (or shadow) of which we live out our other possibilities. Death is an irrational potentiality (a material potency) in that we do not choose it.
unsurpassable: “death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein” (SZ: 250\294). Existence, as ahead-of itself, grounds dying. Dasein is disclosed to itself essentially as in terms of possibility, as ahead-of-itself. Thus we see the existentiality of Dasein reflected in death.

Facticity plays a role, when we see that Dasein is thrown into the possibility of death. I am always already thrown into the situation in which I am dying. This thrownness is revealed, as we have seen, in angst. Anxiety in the face of death is anxiety towards being-in-the-world itself, because it is angst in the face of that unsurpassable possibility of Dasein’s being. It is not fear in the face of one’s own demise, but a basic disposition of Dasein, awareness that Dasein is a thrown being-towards-its-end. The existential conception of dying is thrown being towards its ownmost potentiality for being (SZ: 251\295).

For the most part, Dasein flees in the face of death: in relation to death, then, it is mostly fallen. It is ignorant of death, and not in the state of awareness of death that angst reveals. Mostly, Dasein, absorbed in the world of concern, covers up dying, flees in the face of it, and uncanniness announces itself. Existence, facticity and fallenness then characterize being-towards-the end (SZ: 253\296). Dying, an ontological possibility of Dasein, is grounded in care. How does this play out in everydayness?

Being towards death authentically means that Dasein comports itself in relation to itself as its own ultimate possibility. But in everydayness, Dasein comports itself in relation to others, in particular, in relation to the “they”, the public interpretation of things. In the everyday mode, Dasein knows that death is a certain fact, but it is seen as
an event that occurs in the world, that is neither personally imminent, nor, as such, really important. There is a temptation to cover up the fact of our own deaths. Moreover, we conceal death even from those who are obviously dying: we tranquilize them, and we treat death as a social inconvenience, or as “tactlessness” (SZ: 254\298). To think about one’s own death is publicly considered to be a form of fear, and thus cowardice; whereas in fact it takes courage to confront our own death in the mode of angst. The result of this public denial is that Dasein is alienated from its own death. Not surprisingly, then, the experience of death in the they-self is that of falling. The ownmost potentiality for being that is non-relational and unsurpassable is an issue for Dasein, and one which Dasein attempts to evade in taking refuge in the they.

The certainty that I myself will one day die is “the basic certainty of Dasein itself” (GA20: 437\316). The everyday certainty about death is not authentic certainty, however, since it involves evasion and concealment of Dasein’s own death. The everyday Dasein is not certain about being-towards-death, but about the empirical fact that all people die. In fact, what is certain is that death is possible at any moment, though it is indefinite as to its when (SZ: 258\302). To cover up the indefiniteness of death is to cover up its authentic certainty. Since covering up involves the prior existence of something that must be concealed, “inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity” (SZ: 259\303). But as a kind of certainty, authentic being-towards death is an existentiell possibility of Dasein; it is a decision that must be made, a choice amongst others.4

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4 Cf. the course of summer 1925: “Dasein’s running forward toward death at every moment means Dasein’s drawing back from the they by way of a self-choosing” (GA20: 440\318).
Being-towards-death is being towards a distinctive possibility of Dasein. This does not mean actualizing the possibility, nor brooding on it, or calculating how we can control it. It must be understood as a possibility, not annihilated. Nor is expecting death an appropriate comportment, for this is to wait for its actualization. Rather, to be towards the possibility of death is to act such a way that death is seen as a possibility. This is anticipation.  

Death is an “irrational potentiality”: we do not choose it. Aristotle and Heidegger agree on this. They also agree that death is not fulfillment of a telos, but rather a potential within finite sensible beings. For Aristotle, death (destruction) is the material end of a particular, but the universal form or essence of a particular is eternal. For Heidegger death is my own; it is not simply my end, but permeates my ontological structure as being-towards-death. The focus for Heidegger is not to see my death in relation to an eternal continuation after me, but rather to live my life in relation to my finitude which is all that I can know. Heidegger notes that the existential analysis of death is an interpretation of death insofar as it is a possibility of being of any particular Dasein. In this sense it is “this-worldly”: it cannot take any existentiell stand on the question of whether there is another world after this one, or if Dasein is immortal and lives on beyond death.  

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5 Dasein’s finitude as revealed in the fact of death, and in the anticipation of death, does not constitute an “extrinsic” limitation, but rather a starting point. As Dastur writes, death is “a limitation which, because it is internal, makes possible [Dasein’s] own surpassing, i.e. makes possible both ekstasis and temporality” (Dastur: 1992; p.177).  

6 Cf. SZ: 248\292: “Only when death is conceived in its full ontological essence can we have any methodological assurance in even asking what may be after death; only then can we do so with meaning and justification. Whether such a question is a possible theoretical question at all will not be decided here. The this-worldly ontological
it means to know about one's finitude, and how one knows it, is the subject of the next section.

III
Anticipatory Resolve

Anticipation is the possibility of understanding one's ownmost potentiality-for-being. It reveals that it is my own being that is at stake, and thus wrenches me from the they. This ownmost possibility is non-relational: it is me myself that must take over my own being. It is an unsurpassable possibility; anticipation frees me for my ownmost possibilities in showing how these are determined by the end and are thus finite. By letting me see that the uttermost possibility is death, it loosens my hold, and allows me to choose among the possibilities that precede this ultimate one. I can thus see myself as a whole, bounded by the ultimate possibility. Anticipation reveals death as a certain possibility, more primordial than any empirical certainty we encounter in the world. Finally, anticipation, as an indefinite possibility, is essentially angst (SZ: 266\310). Anticipating the indefinite certainty of death keeps open the constant threat that is a part of Dasein's "there": it brings us towards the nothing. Anticipation then reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they, and brings it to the possibility of being itself, in an "impassioned freedom" towards death (SZ: 267\311).

interpretation of death takes precedence over any ontical other-worldly speculation." The finitude of Dasein seems to prohibit speculation concerning what might lie beyond its own finite existence. This is significant for the analysis of how a god might appear in Heidegger's thought.
Ontologically, we can see now the possibility of existentiell being-towards-death as
the possibility of Dasein’s being-a-whole. But it remains a purely ontological possibility.
We need to see phenomenal evidence that authentic existence is possible; we need to see
it “attested” in Dasein.

Dasein is usually lost in the inauthenticity of the “they self”. It does not choose its
own possibilities, but allows the common way of behaving, the expected mode of
comportment, to make its choices for it. One of Dasein’s possibilities is that of bringing
itself back from its lostness in the “they” to its authentic being-itself. The move to
authenticity is thus an existentiell possibility, an alteration in the everyday self, and one
that must be chosen. But how can Dasein know that there is this possibility if it is lost
in the they? As possibility, Dasein is also potentiality-for-being-itself, but it must have
this “attested”, it must feel some pull, or have the possibility of authenticity presented to
it. The voice of conscience, as a primordial phenomenon of Dasein, plays this role (SZ:
268\313).

Conscience discloses: it is a call, a mode of discourse. We have seen that discourse,
lógos, is the expression of disposition and understanding as constitutive existential
elements of Dasein’s disclosedness, which itself is the being of Dasein’s there. The call
of conscience is an appeal to Dasein, and calls it to its ownmost potentiality-for-being
(SZ: 269\314). It is not an utterance, not an actual voice, but a “giving to understand” (SZ:
271\316). It is a discourse that discloses understanding- understanding that we are lost in
the they. The call comes to the they-self, but one is called to one’s own self, away from
the they-self, which then collapses (SZ: 272\317). However there are not two selves; only an authentic self hidden in the they.

The call does not say anything, does not give any information. "Nothing gets called to this self, but it has been summoned to itself- that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for-being" (SZ: 273\318). It is silent: it has an indefinite content, but the direction it takes is sure. It is an appeal to the they-self in its self. It is a summons to be one’s genuine self.

To the question of who does the calling, or where the call comes from, Heidegger replies unequivocally: “the call comes from me and yet from beyond me and over me” (SZ: 275\320). “It” calls: and the “it” is not some other person in the world with me.7 The conscience is sometimes thought to be a voice that comes from a power beyond ourselves, that is, from God. We cannot make this leap, in Heidegger’s view. (Or if we do, we must first go through the interpretation of Dasein’s existential constitution.) The conscience is a phenomenon of Dasein: we must stick to the phenomena as we find them. There is no justification for taking recourse to a being that has some character other than Dasein for an explanation of the conscience as a phenomenon that occurs in Dasein (SZ: 275-

7 This raises the question of whether the call of conscience could not be some biologically determined mechanism. Perhaps it could be a matter of “instinct”, (that vague term that is called upon as a way of explaining inexplicable behaviour). In Heidegger’s view, to call upon biology here would be to take Dasein as an object present-at-hand. It would be, in other words, to step away from our phenomenological experience of being this entity, and to treat the manifestation of conscience as a fact, instead of as a lived experience. Heidegger notes that the caller of the call has also been conceived as some sort of objective power shared by all hearers, a kind of universal conscience; it has been seen as something we all share by virtue of being human beings, or as something that comes from the outside and attains all of us as human beings. This “world-conscience”- as some kind of public recognition of a higher morality that we should all follow in order for things to run smoothly- this is simply the voice of the “they”.
276\320-321). Again we see that there is no appeal to an eternal; unlike Aristotle, Heidegger seeks grounds for the phenomenon of human being only in human being. The conscience is mine in each case: it comes to me and from me (SZ: 278\323).

Conscience is Dasein calling itself from its thrownness to its potentiality for being, its being as pro-ject. The call is the call of care: it is rooted in the ontological fact that Dasein is thrown, is fallen, and is ahead-of-itself.

If there is a call, there must be a hearing that corresponds to it. This Heidegger calls “wanting to have a conscience” [Gewissenhabenwollen]. This is the choosing to choose, the existentiell shift to authenticity that is called resolve [Entschlossenheit]. If the call discloses by awakening understanding, it is only by an understanding of the call that the experience of the call can be grasped. This understanding is the existential condition of possibility of Dasein’s existentiell being-able-to-be.

Despite the existential turn of Heidegger’s analysis, it is difficult not to see a parallel with Aristotle’s ethics here. Crudely stated, for Aristotle, we are as human beings torn between appetite and reason, between the animal and the divine, between what we are unthinkingly, and what we are rationally and essentially. Desire [órexis] is between these two, as an irrational element of the soul which yet participates in the rational principle (NE: 1102b 13). Desire is desire for the good; like Heidegger’s conscience, when applied rationally, it calls us towards what we truly are. In Aristotle, the language is one of telos, the rational end of human being. Choice, [proaíresis] supposes this
rational end, and, with the right desire, looks for the means by which to accomplish it.\textsuperscript{8}

But notice that for Aristotle what we truly are is rational; and we achieve our telos in contemplation of the eternal. For Heidegger, so far, we are not called to anything other than ourselves, and to recognition of what we are. Aristotle's "final cause" becomes Dasein's "for the sake of itself". We should ask then what, in Heidegger, does the call give one to understand?

The call of conscience is the call of care: \textit{it is Dasein calling to Dasein}, calling it back from fallenness, to what it factically is. Being free for the call means letting myself be called to the potentiality-for-being that as Dasein I already am. Conscience calls me to accept myself as thrown, as fallen, and as potentiality for being. I choose myself in facing the nullity that makes me up.\textsuperscript{9} Ultimately then the conscience has nothing normative about it:\textsuperscript{10} it displays what Dasein is, as finite. Wanting to have a conscience, allowing oneself to be called to account, is accepting the radical finitude that permeates Dasein's existence. The conscience is not a purveyor of practical advice; it calls one to

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Proaíresis} is thus "deliberate desire of things in our own power, for we first deliberate, then select, and finally fix our desire according to the result of our deliberation" (1113a 13-14).

\textsuperscript{9} In the important section 58 of \textit{Being and Time}, Heidegger discusses the phenomenon of guilt, so commonly associated with the conscience. Guilt is the ground for a being that is defined as a not: it is the basis of a nullity in the core of Dasein. This nullity, the nothing that was already called to our attention in angst, is essentially the lack of power that one has over one's thrown existence. I never asked to be here, in this particular world: I do not have complete control. Even in choosing among the possibilities open to me, I must always reject some: I cannot realize all of my possibilities fully. My freedom is then conditioned by my powerlessness, my thrownness, manifested in \textit{Befindlichkeit}. Dasein is guilty, indebted, at its root.

\textsuperscript{10} Except inasmuch as an "is" might imply an "ought": but this is another topic.
factual action only when, in hearing the call authentically, Dasein brings itself to its own potentiality for being in the world.

Understanding the call of conscience is a mode of Dasein's being; it is a way in which Dasein is disclosed. Disclosedness, Dasein's openness to the world, the primordial truth of Dasein, is constituted by understanding and disposition, as the pre-articulation of Dasein's being which determine logos, as that articulation. In the case of the conscience, understanding involves existing in the pure possibility that projecting oneself on one's own potentiality for being implies (SZ: 295\342). The corresponding disposition is evoked in coming face to face with the nothingness that this pure potentiality reveals: it is being ready for the consequent angst. The call itself is a kind of discourse, but it does not provoke a counter-discourse in wanting to have a conscience. The articulation of the understanding and mood that characterize wanting to have a conscience is manifest, paradoxically, as keeping silent. Heidegger calls it "reticence", an end to any chit-chat or to pleading one's cause in the face of guilt, and listening quietly to the stillness of what one essentially is. Putting together these elements of Dasein's disclosedness, then, we have "reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost being-guilty, in which one is ready for angst" (SZ: 297\343). This is resolve [Entschlossenheit].

Resolve is authentic disclosedness, it is the revelation of authentic being-one's-self. Of course, because conscience calls us into our definite factual possibilities, it reveals a situation to Dasein. It is not in other words, a disclosure of an isolated ego, but an uncovering of Dasein as involved in the world- a given world with determined limits. Anticipatory resolve is a kind of understanding, a disclosure of Dasein as both the
revealing and the being-revealed. Dasein is both the call of conscience, and what conscience calls. Anticipatory resolve permits Dasein to see what it actually is, and how it is in its factical situation as being-in-the-world.

I mentioned that the conscience calls one to taking factical action. This is not, Heidegger is adamant to point out, a kind of practical comportment that is to be contrasted with some kind of theoretical “faculty”. Activity in the sense it is used here includes passivity (SZ: 300\347). Indeed Heidegger is referring again to what we discussed in the last chapter as the *praxis* of Dasein that precedes the theory\practice split. The projecting of Dasein onto its possibilities is presupposed before any such division. This *praxis*, which I am gradually trying to develop here, is that of the kinetic involvement of Dasein in its own existence: at its root it is the temporality of Dasein, already becoming more evident here as a living-with, acceptance of and reaction to, Dasein’s own finitude.\(^{11}\)

So far, we have seen anticipation as authentic being-towards-death as the solution to how the whole of Dasein can be taken into our grasp existentially. Living towards death, and projecting onto possibilities that fall short of this ultimate possibility is part of the ontological (existential) structure of Dasein. Resolve demonstrates how this authentic potentiality can be achieved existentially, that is, how it can be seen to occur as a choice made by an individual Dasein. The question now is how to tie these together,\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\) I have mentioned, and discuss further in section v below, how this contrasts with Aristotle’s notion of *praxis*: for Aristotle, *praxis* is engagement in the world, a doing that is guided by the prescribed telos of human being as rational. *Praxis* is the activity associated with *phrōnēsis*, a disposition not towards any action whatsoever, but to the choosing of means to ends that conform to the rational human telos.
the aim still being to see how the unity and totality of Dasein is possible. Seeking unity in Dasein has the same motivation that Aristotle had in seeking a unity in the ways that being is said: to know how it is possible that we understand (the meaning of) being. An analysis of care will clarify this unity in the light of finitude.

IV

Care and temporality

Care, the unity of the being of Dasein, indicates the harmonious unity of existentiality, facticity and fallenness. The projecting onto possibilities of existentiality encompasses death as an ontological element understood ontically by authentic Dasein in anticipatory resolve as being-towards-death, the authentic potentiality for being a whole of Dasein. The existentials of death, conscience and guilt have furthermore been seen as anchored in care. But what holds this structure together? What is, in other words, the unity not of the ways that being is “said”, but of the ways that being is understood.

Since care indicates the entity for which its very being is an issue (GA20: 406\294), the immediate answer to such a question is clearly “I!” It is my self, my persisting as something that is, that constitutes the unity of care. Of course what this self is, is somewhat obscure, since Dasein presents itself (primarily) in the “they-self” as well as in the authentic self. Since the essence of Dasein is in its existence- since, in other words, what Dasein is, is played out and determined in the being of that entity, the answer to the unity of Dasein must be found in existential analysis.
The immediate “I” is not a bare subject: since the beginning of our analysis it has been evident that Dasein has always to be conceived in relation to the world of meaning in which it finds itself. The worldless I, the transcendental ego, and the consequent “division of tasks” of this ego into the theoretical and practical misses out on the most basic phenomenological findings. The I is always involved in a world; any sort of theoretical knowing is derivative of the primordial experience of Dasein’s being already involved in the totality of meanings that make up the “world”. Theoretical knowing requires explicit reflection; whereas the primordial *praxis* of Dasein is the pre-predicative projective knowing that constitutes Dasein’s disclosedness. Saying “I” is expressing oneself as being in the world. Aristotle did not seek the unity of the ego in its various *energeia*, except insofar as he saw a unified telos of human activity. In Aristotelian language, Heidegger is looking for a formal, rather than final unity; but what Dasein is cannot be separated from “where” it is, that is, the ego cannot be constituted without reference to the world.

For Heidegger, in the everyday self, the I is constantly asserting itself as over against and separate from the world with which it is concerned. Being fallen into the they-self, the denial of what one authentically is, is a part of what Dasein is, as non-self-constant. However, in anticipatory resoluteness, the authentic moment of disclosedness of Dasein as authentic potentiality-for-being-its-self, the constancy of the self is evidenced (SZ: 322\369). In resolve, Dasein comes back from the they to its authentic self by appropriating what it already is and, in anticipating death, projects towards its authentic future. The I is the entity for whom its own being is an issue. It is the constant concern
for oneself evidenced in authentic care: the self one says "yes" to in anticipatory resolve. The temporal structure of care is what makes the movement of resolve possible.

*Being and Time* reaches a climax of sorts in section 65, where Heidegger inquires into the ontological meaning of care. This begs the question of the meaning of "meaning" [*Sinn*]. Meaning is "that wherein the understandability of something maintains itself" (*SZ*: 324\370). How does something become understandable, then? By making sense of it, by seeing it in its possibility, by seeing it in the context of the hermeneutical situation. This is exactly the function of projecting, looking beyond the "now" into possibilities, taking something as something. 12 To say that entities have meaning is to say that they have become accessible in their being, in their meaningful givenness: that they have, in other words, been conceived in terms of possibility. It is Dasein that thus conceives them, Dasein which in taking entities as something, already has a pre-understanding of (the meaning of) being. The question of meaning is not just one of how entities are given to Dasein as intelligible, but of how Dasein discloses, or makes intelligible, entities. Dasein’s understanding disclosure of being, and the condition of its possibility must be questioned. 13 Ultimately, that which makes meaning, Dasein’s disclosure of entities, possible at all, is temporality.

Care is definitive of human existence as involved in this movement of understanding and disclosure. When the projective disclosure is turned in on Dasein itself in anticipatory

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12 Meaning was discussed in relation to section 32, *Understanding and Interpretation*. See the section of my chapter three above entitled *Hermeneutic*, and *SZ* 151\193ff.

resolve, then what care means, what it is essentially, is seen as the disclosure and understanding of human existence itself in its authentic potentiality. But what is the *ontological* meaning of care? In other words, what is the condition for the possibility of the self-understanding of anticipatory resolve having any meaning? The answer is temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*], “the phenomenon of original time” (GA24: 377\266). The three moments of care must be understood as conditioned by three temporal structures or ekstases: 1) becoming [*Zu-kunft*]; 2) alreadiness [*Gewesenheit; je schon*]; and 3) making-present [*gegenwärtigen*].

1) Dasein’s constant project, being ahead of itself, transcending its immediate self and looking towards the possibilities of the world in which it is involved, is grounded in the future (*SZ*: 327\375). The future is not some abstract not-yet, however, but the movement of becoming (playing on the etymological tie between *Zukunft* and *Zukommen*, coming-towards) in which Dasein seizes upon the possibilities that by its nature as project, it realizes in entities. But also, in choosing itself in anticipatory resolve, Dasein *comes towards its self*, and recognizes its own potentiality for being. What this means is that in authenticity, Dasein recognizes its own potential for being; it sees the possibilities of its future, and among them the ultimate possibility, that of death. Death is my ultimate becoming, whether I choose to recognize it in anticipation, or to deny it in the they-self. I am always becoming my potential, whether I actively choose or not; and I am always becoming my death, (hence Heidegger’s expression being-towards-death). Becoming is primordial amongst the temporal structures that underlie care. In Aristotle also, the
movement of coming into form, of fulfilling potential, is primordial in defining sensible beings.

2) The self that Dasein returns to in anticipatory resolve is not an empty space of undefined possibility. We have seen that the essential being-guilty, the nullity at the core of Dasein’s existence is what the conscience announces and resolve hears. Dasein is thrown: it is already in a set of conditions and circumstances over which it has no power. Dasein is what it already has been. Heidegger equates this with Aristotle’s to ti én eînai, the “what it was to be” (GA24: 150\107). As in Aristotle, what I am already, is the movement of becoming (though in Aristotle there is a definite telos of movement; and this is precisely the shift Aristotle’s emphasis on actuality to Heidegger’s prioritization of possibility). When Dasein returns to what it is, then, it returns to its “having-been”, that is, to what it already is determined to be: becoming, and ultimately becoming unto death. In this sense the “future”, becoming, determines the “past”, alreadiness.

3) The “present” likewise is determined by the “future”, and it presupposes having-been. It is only in accepting myself as becoming through anticipatory resolve that I can see the possibilities that surround me in my factical situation. This authentic present is seen im Augenblick, in the moment of vision, in which I bring myself back from falling, and “make present” the entities around me as participants in my becoming. Because I am concerned with my own becoming in anticipatory resolve, I see the possibilities of entities in relation to my authentic self, to my own ultimate potentiality. In general, however, my interaction with entities is in the mode of falling. Any involvement with the world requires some level of comprehension; it thus requires going beyond myself towards the
world in the movement of transcendence. Understanding myself as in the world, involved with entities, I realize the possibilities inherent within the entities around me. But any sort of encounter with entities ready-to-hand involves making them present—bringing them into my world. Thus even the fallen mode of treating entities as ready-to-hand and present-at-hand, as objects for my practical use or theoretical speculation, is based on the becoming that I am, and on that which I already am determined to be. As in Aristotle, what something is now, is understood in reference to what it is determined to become.

The structure of Dasein as projecting onto possibilities, and as already given, permits interaction with other entities. The movement beyond myself in transcendence that makes it possible for me to interact with, make present, or “have access to” entities—this movement is that of becoming what I already am.

Resolve is the movement of Dasein coming back to itself, recognizing itself as becoming, and involving itself and entities in its own becoming. Temporality, therefore, unified by the future as becoming, is the condition for the possibility of authentic care. The ahead-of itself, existentiality, is grounded in the future; being-already-in, thrownness, is revealed as having-been; and being alongside, fallenness, is possible only by making-present. The self-projection in authentic care, looking to oneself, is determined by and grounded in the future. The way in which possibility has precedence over actuality in Heidegger is clearer now in the light of these analyses. Indeed it is this future-centred temporality that makes it possible for Dasein to be in its various modes, particularly as authentic or inauthentic (SZ: 328\377).
Heidegger calls the modes of temporality “ecstases”, and in later works refers to Dasein’s way of being as *Ek-sistenz*, in an attempt to encapsulate in a word the way that Dasein is temporality. Temporality is only by being generated in the movement of Dasein’s becoming: indeed it is simply the expression of this movement, of Dasein’s stretching out beyond itself. Temporality is the original being outside of itself, the *ekstatikon* (GA24: 377/267). The “ordinary” conception of time as an infinite sequence of nows is derived from this primordial experience of Dasein’s becoming what it already is, by making present things to which it is in relation. The prior phenomenologically accessible experience is that of Dasein’s understanding of itself and the world in the movement of transcendence.

In section 65 then, temporality emerges as the condition for the possibility of the authentic self in care. In section 68 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins his discussion of the ekstases of temporality. Dasein is thrown, without power over the source of its being; it is further driven from its comfortable place in the inauthentic “now” of the they-self, in the bewildered attempt to come to terms with what it essentially is. The ecstatic way that we stand in relation to what we are, our projective search beyond our selves in the effort to make sense of the world, conflicts with the desire to withdraw further from the search, and return to the passive acceptance of the they—self. Dasein is this tension between peaceful “thereness” in a given world, and frenzied movement to comprehend itself in terms of authentic possibility.

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(Cf. particularly the contrast between the two terms in the letter to Beaufret *Ueber den Humanismus.*) The word “ecstasy” does not, however, share the same root as “existence”. The latter comes from the latin *ek-sistere*, to stand outside of, or to be independent of that which caused. “Ecstasy” on the other hand comes from the Greek *existēnai*, to drive or be out of place. In the classical sense this word was used to mean insanity or bewilderment, or in phrases such as *existānai tinā phrenōn*, to drive out of one’s wits. In later Greek, it meant the withdrawal of the soul from the body by trance, catalepsy or spiritual absorption. “Ek-sistence” is an appropriate term even in the early Heidegger to capture both of these senses, and refer to human existence as lived through the ekstases of temporality. Dasein is thrown, without power over the source of its being; it is further driven from its comfortable place in the inauthentic “now” of the they-self, in the bewildered attempt to come to terms with what it essentially is. The ecstatic way that we stand in relation to what we are, our projective search beyond our selves in the effort to make sense of the world, conflicts with the desire to withdraw further from the search, and return to the passive acceptance of the they—self. Dasein is this tension between peaceful “thereness” in a given world, and frenzied movement to comprehend itself in terms of authentic possibility.
of the temporality of care.\textsuperscript{15} Dasein is the movement of disclosure; disclosing, being the "between" of subject and object, is how Dasein relates to the world. Understanding and disposition are the constitutive elements of disclosedness, the way that Dasein finds itself in a world. Understanding reveals Dasein's existence as possibility and awareness of its own possibilities, its \textit{existentiality}; disposition shows the actual givenness of Dasein in the world; its \textit{facticity}. In the everyday being of Dasein in \textit{falling}, these two elements are covered up as Dasein hides itself behind the given projects and opinions of the group. \textbf{Discourse} makes the whole structure of disclosedness\care explicit.

1) Understanding, the fundamental way of Dasein's relating to the world, means futural projection, Dasein's being ahead of itself by looking to its potentiality for being. The present and past are also understood in terms of possibility. The understanding thus acts primarily in the ecstasis of the future: authentically in anticipation, and inauthentically in concern (SZ: 336-339\385-389).

2) Disposition is the affective counterpart to the understanding. Though like the understanding disposition manifests itself in all three ecstases, its primary ecstasis is the past, not the future. How one is, or how one feels is based on thrownness, on what one already is and must be. It is authentic in angst as awareness of one's true situation; inauthentic in fear, as forgetting of oneself (SZ: 339-346\389-396).

\textsuperscript{15} Dahlstrom (1995; p.105ff) in responding to Fleischer's (1991) critique of the necessity of the transcendental turn to temporality notes that having explained how care constitutes Dasein as a whole, Heidegger must see whether care describes Dasein only as it is inauthentically, since such a description has been achieved through the analysis of the everyday. I offer here the conclusions of Heidegger's analysis.
3) The ecstasis characteristic of falling is the present, though again the other two ecstases are manifest. Of course falling cannot have any authentic mode, since it involves precisely the falling away from the authentic self into inauthenticity. In falling, entities are made present not in order to understand them, or to see one’s self in relation to them, but only in strict terms of immediate use. It sees entities as facts, and not as possibilities; and as such the present presence of entities “leaps away” from any future possibility (SZ: 346-349\396-400).

4) Discourse does not have any particular ecstasis as the condition of its possibility, although of course language, the primary medium of discourse, is in general addressed in relation to the immediate present environment with which Dasein is concerned. The tenses and aspects that language does and must use reveal the temporal character of human existence (SZ: 349-350\400-401).

Each of the three moments of care then is primarily expressed in one of the ecstases of temporality, while incorporating the others: understanding is primarily grounded in the future, disposition in the past, and falling in the present. Each ecstasis implies the others. The unity of the ecstases is therefore an expression of the unity of care. Ecstatic temporality is the ground of Dasein’s being, the condition of the possibility for Dasein’s existing as it does. Inauthenticity and authenticity, being-in, and the world, are all grounded in temporality. Discourse makes the temporality associated with each ecstasis explicit.

Care is simply what is distinctive about human existence, the way that we are as interpretive beings open to the world, as defined by our being in a world, and as
interacting with that world: in brief, as disclosing the world- and therewith ourselves. That which makes it possible for us to look for meaning in the world, to see things as, and primarily to see ourselves as, is ecstatic temporality. Temporality makes possible, “lights up”, or “clears” Dasein (SZ: 351\402). It makes it possible, (following the meaning of légein tā phainómena as letting that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself) for Dasein to show itself to itself- to be clear to itself- in its essential structures; and to show to Dasein the world. It thus permits phenomenological truth; but also it permits Dasein to interact with the world on a pre-logical or pre-phenomeno-logical level, the level that Aristotle did not thematize. Temporality is the light that makes any showing possible. “Dasein is temporality” means that Dasein becomes clear to itself whether through entities, or through the nullification of entities, only on the basis of the temporal structures of care.

So far, we have looked at the temporalized structures of the “there” of Dasein: how it is disclosed to itself, and how the world is disclosed to it. But Dasein is being-in-the-world. It relates to the world mostly in the mode of concern; it deals with the world mostly as ready-to-hand and present-at-hand, in practical and theoretical ways. Are these structures also rooted in temporality? Can the priority of the practical over the theoretical which we discussed in the preceding chapter, finally be explained here in the light of the primordial praxis of human being, finite transcendence? We will see here that the question posed in section 32 of Being and Time, viz., whether the fore-structure of understanding and the as-structure of interpretation has an existential-ontological
connection with the phenomenon of projection (SZ: 151\192), can finally be answered in
the affirmative.

In other words, we will see that the method that Heidegger describes as the way to
interpret beings, and the being of Dasein, is not “constructed”. It is rather descriptive of
how Dasein in fact understands being, because it is a consequence of Dasein’s ontological
structure. This is not unlike Aristotle’s grounding of his methodology in the being of
human being. For Aristotle, we seek explanation because we are beings that by nature
desire knowledge; it is our given telos to seek knowledge. The highest form of knowledge
is theoretical sophía; comprehension of universals, and knowledge of universal
explanations, and ultimately knowledge of the eternal archai kai aitia. For Heidegger, on
the other hand, it is not theory that drives the understanding, but the praxis of self-
understanding in terms of possibility: transcendence. The goal is not knowledge of the
eternal and actual, but knowledge of the finite and possible.

V

Practice and theory

a) From Aristotle’s actuality to Heidegger’s possibility

For Heidegger, possibility precedes actuality: though human beings have a factical
structure, the way that we interpret the world is on the basis of possibility. For Aristotle,
however, actuality is prior to potentiality (Meta: 1049b 4ff). Now Aristotle’s notion of
physical potentiality and what Heidegger calls possibility are not identical. But nor is Aristotle’s notion of potentiality limited to the coming-to-be of form in sensible things.

In *Metaphysics* Theta, Aristotle distinguishes between rational potencies [*dunámeis logoi*] and irrational potencies [*dunámeis álogoi*]. Irrational potencies are those that admit of only one result, thus something hot must produce heat; this is the physical and metaphysical notion of potency, that everything tends, by nature, towards fulfillment of its potency. In the physical world, we saw that sensible *ousía* are finite as particulars, but the universal character of *ousía*, the universal form, is eternal. The physical cosmos is the eternal cycle of movement from potentiality to actuality in sensible things. This eternal movement is grounded formally and finally by a first mover, an eternal being, who is fully actual. Thus actuality precedes potentiality in the physical cosmos.

The notion of rational potency is perhaps closer to what Heidegger intends by possibility. Rational potencies, such as the *téchnai* (the poietic sciences), admit of contrary results: the science of medicine can produce sickness or health. The actualization of rational potencies is determined by desire (particularly in the case of animals) or by rational choice [ôrexin ê proatresin], though it depends on whether the desire or choice is directed towards that for which we have a given capacity (Cf: *Meta*: 1046a 36-b 9; 1047b 31-1048a 15). But desire and choice are also directed towards some end. Choice is the efficient explanation of action; and the final explanation of choice is desire and reason, themselves directed to some end (*NE*:1139a 6).

The end of the disposition [*héxis* or *dunámis*] of *téchnē* is *poîēsis*, the production of something; the end of the disposition of *phrónēsis*, is *praxis*, action itself. The end of
the disposition of *sophía*, on the other hand, is not action, but *theoría*, universal knowledge. But in all these cases, actuality is prior to the principle of change. The three rational *héxeis* come to be only through being employed; thought and desire are what bring the dispositions to actuality. And human being [*ánthròpos*], the originator of action, is a union of desire and intellect (*NE*: 1139b 5-7). The end of human being is *eudaimonía* (happiness) the exercise of the dispositions of the soul in conformity with excellence, throughout a complete lifetime (1098a 12-20). But the highest form of happiness is the exercise of the highest virtue, *sophía*. *Noûs* is the best activity for human being, and the telos of human life *NE*: 1177a 13-22). Now *noûs* is directed towards the universal and the eternal, and the eternal is fully actual. Thus even in the sphere of practical behaviour, actuality precedes potentiality in Aristotle. Rational potencies are dependent on rational *héxeis*, and these are dependent for their fulfillment on a more primordial irrational *dunámis*: that of the progression of all things from potentiality to actuality. Human beings, like all sensible beings, progress towards their telos, which is reason. Reason is inspired

16 We should recall the three fundamental modes of activity [*energeíai*] in Aristotle’s description of the logos of the *psuchē: theoría, poiēsis* and *praxis*; these correspond to three natural potentialities [*dunámēis*] of the soul, or dispositions [*héxeis*]: respectively *sophía* (which unites *epistêmē* and *noûs*), *téchnē*, and *phrônēsis*. Cf. *NE* book VI, 1139bff- chapters that Heidegger himself cites frequently in courses and published texts.

17 The telos of human being is the good, and the good for human being is happiness, and happiness is the life of contemplation. Ethics is not an exact science: thus it cannot give universal and necessary explanations of human being attaining a given telos. The science is complicated by human desire, which can be directed according to or contrary to reason (depending on education and circumstance). Nonetheless, there is clearly a rational “authentic” telos of human being: the life of contemplation; as well as an irrational (inauthentic) one, conformity with societal pressures to achieve honour, riches or sensual pleasure.
by and directed towards the eternal, pure actuality. Pure actuality is thus the final explanation of any human potentiality; and explanation precedes explanandum.

For Aristotle, the eternal and fully actual is primary in establishing the meaning of being, and the way that human being understands his or her own being. Eternity is the basis of Aristotle’s ontology and his ethics: being is eternal.

In Heidegger, on the other hand, any notion of the temporal infinite, if such a notion is coherent, is gathered from Dasein’s prior understanding of itself as temporally finite. Since Dasein is finite, and since Dasein is disclosiveness of being, time and being are primordially finite. Whereas kinesis in Aristotle applies to beings coming into actuality, and human being achieving its rational telos, in Heidegger, Dasein’s understanding of beings, and thus of being, is kinetic. Kinetic understanding is grounded in the kinesis that is Dasein itself in its transcendence. Finite movement, as opposed to infinite presence, defines Heidegger’s ontology. Human being as living into finite possibility, and as aware of its own possibility, precedes actuality in the order of understanding. Between Aristotle and Heidegger, there is then a shift from the priority of the eternal to the priority of the finite.

b) From Aristotle’s theory to Heidegger’s practice

Theoria in Aristotle is the activity of contemplation of necessary objects, while praxis and poïēsis require knowledge of contingent objects. Whereas poïēsis is an activity of making, aiming at a goal that is distinct from the action involved in the achievement

18 See chapter six, section ii below.
of the goal, the goal of *praxis* is achieved in accomplishing the very action itself. What about the goal of “contemplation” [*theoría*]? Aristotle is quite clear that theory is sufficient onto itself; that the goal of theory is not something other than the activity of contemplation itself, and that it is non-poietic.\(^{19}\) Likewise, happiness, which is activity [*energeía*] in accordance with the exercise of *sophía* as the highest virtue, (and *sophía* is the disposition associated with *theoría*), is self-sufficient and an end unto itself (*NE* 1076b 2-6).\(^{20}\) Theory is clearly not poietic activity in Aristotle. Is it a form of *praxis*?

The virtue associated with *praxis*, *phrónēsis*, concerns the affairs of human beings, and things that admit of deliberation [*boulē*]. It is concerned with action, and action has to do with particular and contingent things (*NE*:1141b 8-17). *Phrónēsis* determines the right means to the right end of a particular action; it is not itself poietic. *Phrónēsis* and *sophía* are contrasted throughout the *Nichomachean Ethics* on the grounds of the particular and contingent object of the one, and the universal and necessary character of the object of the other.

\(^{19}\) Cf *NE* 1177b 2-5: “[The activity of contemplation; *energeía*] may be held to be the only activity that is loved for its own sake: it produces no result beyond the actual activity of contemplation”. Also in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle characterizes first philosophy or *sophía* as non-productive [*ou' poiētikē*] and as something we engage in for its own sake. To know in any non-poietic sense is an end in itself. Cf: *Meta* 982b 10-30.

\(^{20}\) We saw in chapter one that *sophía* is the unity of the other two noetic dispositions: *epistēmē*, which has as its goal the understanding of explanations; and *noûs*, which aims at the direct apprehension of the principles upon which *epistēmē* ultimately depends. As we saw, both ultimately deal with universals; things that do not vary. Both are in a sense means to the end of the “consummate” form of human knowledge, i.e, wisdom, *sophía*, as knowledge of the *first* principles and explanations. *Sophía* is ultimately contemplation of God, a goal which needs no further justification, no higher goal than is involved in the performance of the activity itself.
Theoría then, as not concerned with action and the affairs of human beings, must also be distinguished from praxis. It is an energeía, an activity, concerned with investigation of explanations, and contemplation- the highest activity of human being. It is concerned with the question why, and the answer to this question does not necessarily have practical consequences. None of Aristotle’s three energeiai are reducible to the other, but theoría, as the telos of human life, and as revelatory of the first archai kai aitia is primary amongst them.

For Heidegger, Theorie is no longer concerned with the contemplation of necessary objects. Theory in Heidegger involves stepping back from the world, and conducting a cold analysis of things seen as merely present in the world. Unlike Aristotle’s theoría, however, theory in Heidegger is in no way directed towards the end of contemplation, nor does it study “necessarily existent” objects. Theoretical behaviour is looking at things, without looking at them in terms of use. As I will show in the section below, theory in Heidegger is a derivative form of poiēsis, stemming from the original moment of

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21 Thus the wise person (the sophós) is not always phrónimos (NE: 1141b4-7); it is possible to understand the archē kai aitia of things without being practically wise. (Heidegger springs to mind.) Wisdom is not a means to a good life, but is rather explanatory of what a good life is: “Wisdom produces eudaimonia not in the sense in which medicine produces health, but in the sense in which healthiness is the explanation of health” (NE: 1144a 3-5). Thus it is not the case that you can bring about a good life by being wise. Rather if you live a good life, then you will seek wisdom; if you understand already what a good life is, you will be on the path to wisdom.

22 See Meta: 1025b 25, where once again Aristotle specifies that there are three dianoetic activities, viz. poiēsis, praxis and theoría, and in the subsequent passages sets physics, mathematics and theology as the three theoretical epistēmēs.
involvement in the hermeneutical situation. *Theorie*, I argue, is not an entirely separate realm of dianoetic activity, but is already permeated with the productive.  

"Concern" [*Besorgen*] refers to Dasein as caught up in the world of things, entities and abstractions, as involved in the world and as "seeing" the world. "Seeing" here is to be understood as the understanding and interpretation of the entities with which Dasein finds itself already "alongside"; it designates a way of comporting oneself towards beings. In circumspective concern, Dasein sees things as "ready-to-hand"; in theoretical observation, it sees things as "present-at-hand". Practical absorption and theoretical distancing, as I argued in chapter four, conform more closely to the Aristotelian distinction between *poίēsis* and *theoría*, than to that between *praxis* and *theoría*.  

In using things, seeing them as primordially ready-to-hand, Dasein aims at something other than the action itself.

How does *praxis* then fit into Heidegger’s schema? Since Dasein at the outset is concerned with itself, its finitude, etc, it must prioritize *praxis*, as the activity that aims at an end non-distinct from itself. Being in the world is the fundamental *praxis* of Dasein

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23 *Theoría* in Aristotle is not derived from *poίēsis*. *Téchnē* (the disposition of *poίēsis*) and *epistēmē* (the disposition of *theoría*) both involve knowledge of universals, gathered through sensation, memory and experience. The difference is in the application, not the discovery, of the universal; in the case of *téchnē* it is applied to contingent things; in the case of *epistēmē* it is used to find explanations of what is. Cf. *Meta*: 980a 28- 981a 12 (Aristotle here refers us to the discussion in *NE*, clearly book six); also *APo*:100a 3-9; and see above ch.1 sec.iv.

24 But even so the analogy is flawed, since Heidegger’s "*Theorie*" is a derivative form of *poίēsis*, whereas in Aristotle, as we saw "*theoría*" is an entirely separate (dia)noetic activity.
that grounds both the poietical and the theoretical.\textsuperscript{25} Dasein’s concern for its self, expressed in care, and more primordially in the movement of finite transcendence, is the condition for the possibility of both seeing things as \textit{zuhanden} and \textit{vorhanden} (that is, in modes of \textit{poĩēsis} and \textit{theorία}). Praxis is primordial in Heidegger’s analysis; not theory.

I suggested in the previous chapter that the way in which \textit{poĩēsis}, \textit{theorία} and \textit{praxis} are unified according to Heidegger, who sought to find a unity where Aristotle did not posit one, is through temporality. For Heidegger, the ground of the unity of Aristotle’s \textit{energelai} is temporality, but for this to be the case requires not only a shift within the structure of these “activities”, but since in Heidegger possibility precedes actuality, it requires also a re-interpretation of the \textit{energelai} as \textit{dunámeis}. In order to demonstrate this transformation, we have first to see again how in Heidegger \textit{theorία} is a derivative mode of \textit{poĩēsis}: but now on the basis of temporality. Since care is at its root temporal, so also are \textit{poĩēsis}, expressed as the form of knowledge that sees the world as ready-to-hand, and \textit{theorία}, as the form of knowledge that sees the world as present-at-hand. The shift from the prioritization of \textit{theorία} in Aristotle to \textit{praxis} in Heidegger will be interpreted in terms of a shift from \textit{energelai} to \textit{dunámis}, and will result in an understanding of the understanding of being that is kinetic, as opposed to static.

\textsuperscript{25} Since \textit{theorία} is derived from \textit{poĩēsis}, and since \textit{poĩēsis} is the primordial way in which Dasein interprets the world and (through the world) itself, it could be argued that all \textit{poĩēsis} is \textit{praxis} and vice versa. But the \textit{praxis} of transcendence involves also Dasein as authentic; this existentiell modification cannot be achieved through interaction with things, but only in confrontation with the self on a more primordial level.
c) From Heidegger’s *poiesis* to Heidegger’s theory

What is the temporality of *zuhanden*? Seeing things as ready-to hand entails “the hermeneutical situation”; the pre-predicative way that we relate to entities in the world, showing our understanding of the possibilities inherent in them by unthinkingly using them, or interacting with them. In this mode of circumspective concern, we do not see for example a hammer “theoretically” as a hammer of a certain weight and size, except insofar as this relates to the relative utility of weight and size for the task at hand. We might reject it as too heavy for the task at hand, without yet standing back from it in order to assess its mass. We simply let something be involved, or not involved, in the situation: in Aristotelian terms, things as *zuhandenes* are seen poietically; in terms of use, and to perform an action for the sake of producing something.

Concern is a part of care, as the mode of being-alongside entities in the world. Since care is grounded in temporality, so also must be concern (SZ: 353\404). In looking at a tool “as” something, we “project” the possibilities of that tool in relation to the current situation by seeing it as “in order to”. Temporally expressed, this is “awaiting” and “retaining”: we expect that the tool function according to the possibility that we implicitly understand it to have; and we retain some understanding of the context of the equipmental totality in which we expect it to function. In other words, we do not every time conjure up anew some understanding of the way in which everything with which we interact fits together. We always already understand how things work, and we expect things to work, given this sustained understanding. Awaiting and retaining hint respectively of the future and the past: however in taking concernful action in the world, we are making present.
We rely on our understanding of what will happen, which is conditioned by our understanding of what has always happened, in order to take action in the present situation.

My involvement in the world is sometimes interrupted in its smooth course by an unanticipated hiatus, such that what is at hand no longer conforms to my fore-having or fore-conception of the situation. But even in cases when we are not actively engaged in action in the world, we are still primordially involved in an hermeneutic situation, though there can be a level of "tarrying" or holding back from the situation at hand. Deciding how on earth to extricate myself from an immediate difficult situation, such as locking my keys in the car, does not necessitate my becoming implicated in theoretical speculation; it does involve some ingenuity and adaptation to the situation as it has presented itself. This is the deliberative aspect of circumspection.

Every circumspective dealing with the world involves some sort of overview of the whole situation [Sicht]. Sight is the insight that Dasein has into itself as itself concerned with and involved in the situation; it is the understanding of Dasein itself as potentiality for being, as a being which is fundamentally concerned with itself, expressed in the care structure to which concern belongs. The condition for the possibility of such seeing of the situation is that Dasein is potentiality for being. As such, it sees the world in terms of possibility (taking things as something)- but this is founded on Dasein's understanding

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26 Cf. SZ: 359\410: "Such a survey illumines one's concern, and receives its "light" from that potentiality-for-being on the part of Dasein for the sake of which concern exists as care".
of itself as involved in the taking as. The hermeneutical situation reflects Dasein’s potentiality for its own self-expression.

In the context of circumspection, this understanding is expressed in deliberation [Ueberlegung], a consideration of the situation that takes the form of if ... then, ("if I call a tow truck, then they can unlock my door ...”). Deliberation does not require predicative formulation; rather, it is a further development of the temporal character of circumspection as awaiting and retaining, the expectation of fulfillment of possibility based on past experience. Deliberation upon the situation underlines the way in which I explicitly see the possibilities inherent in a situation and “bring objects closer” by interpreting them in relation to my own factical situation. Ueberlegung recalls the deliberation [boulē] of Aristotle which is associated with the phrónēsis, the excellence of praxis.\(^{27}\) Deliberation in Aristotle is a praxis that leads towards the excellence of praxis in general. Heidegger’s Ueberlegung, though explicitly poietical in character, is likewise associated with a fundamental praxis: that of transcendence.

In taking something as something, I have already “seen” it in relation to its situation, and to my situation. In projecting its possibilities, I have already projected myself, and seen myself in relation to it as possibility. I look towards what it can be (in its situation, as part of my factical situation), in referring to what it has been (how it has worked before, what I know myself to be capable of), in order to realize a certain present

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\(^{27}\) “To deliberate well is the most characteristic function of the phronimós” (NE: 1141b 10). Phrónēsis is not itself deliberation, but rather the knowledge that results from such deliberation. Phrónēsis “issues commands” (1143a 8), it is knowledge of the particular (as opposed to universal) principles that govern the rightness of means to good ends in the sphere of human action.
possibility. Thus the future and having-been are the ground of the present. But it is primarily the future-oriented nature of projection, looking ahead to possibilities, that makes it possible for anything to be seen as something. The as structure (like understanding and interpretation in general) is thus grounded in ecstatic temporality (SZ: 360\411). Concern is understandable only in terms of the fundamental praxis of care, as projection and transcendence. Thus the poietic involvement with things as ready to hand is primordially futural and dynamic.

To sum up: seeing things as zuhanden is seeing them poietically and in terms of possibility for production and use. But using something involves a prior understanding of being, and therefore of the being of Dasein: this is accomplished through the dynamic structure of transcendence, Dasein’s fundamental praxis, which is the movement of Dasein in understanding possibilities. Zuhandenheit is therefore grounded in transcendence; or in Aristotelian terms, poïësis is grounded in praxis: and both are dunámeis, not energeíai.

Just as circumspection involves a level of stepping back from the situation to view it as a whole, every theoretical apprehension of the world involves some kind of circumspective grasp.28 Every theory has a canon of procedure, a method (SZ: 69\99); and

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28 "Praxis" is the term Heidegger uses in this context in reference to concern (SZ: 357-358\409). If we take this usage to mean involvement in the hermeneutical situation, it seems to conflict both with what Aristotle means by praxis (for the manipulation of things he would use “poïësis”), and with my interpretation of circumspection as a retrieval of Aristotelian poïësis. However, note the following sentence, (parenthetical interpolation Heidegger’s): “… just as praxis has its own specific kind of sight (“theory” [Theorie]), theoretical research is not without a praxis of its own” (SZ: 358\409). The sentence permits another interpretation. There is a praxis that underlies and is manifest in both Zuhandenheit or poïësis; and Vorhandenheit or theory, understood as modes of behaviour in relation to entities. Projection shows itself in circumspection as the “sight” that grounds deliberation, and in theory as the surpassing of Dasein’s factual situation that grounds
every scientific experiment involves manipulation of materials. However the character of involvement in seeing the world as *zuhanden* is different from that of removal in seeing the world as *vorhanden*. What changes is the way that I am towards the object in question: my manner of being is different. This modification is grounded in temporality.

In saying "the hammer is too heavy", I can remove myself from a situation in which the hammer is useful or not useful, and refer to it as an object with a particular mass and weight. In this case, I no longer see it as an object for manipulation and in terms of awaiting and retaining, but rather I separate it out from its immediate in-order-to, and see it in a "new way". I have a “different understanding of being” in such a case (SZ: 361\412): in other words, the way that I understand my relationship to the hammer changes, thus what the hammer *is* changes. It is not necessarily the case that I see it totally removed from its context, or as independent of its tool character, since after all many sciences (economics, anthropology) study relations between entities and their environment. However what does happen is that I no longer see it as a tool inseparable from a particular place in which it has a given meaning. Rather I see it as in a spatio-temporal point that is indistinguishable from any other point. It is “released from confinement” (SZ: 362\413) in the particular environmental context, and seen rather as a part of the ensemble of things present at hand.

_Thematization (objectivization)._ But projection is projection of Dasein’s possibilities, and can be accomplished either in relation to the world (which always also establishes a relationship of Dasein to the world); or specifically in relation to Dasein itself in authenticity. Theory and practice, authenticity and inauthenticity, are made possible by the fundamental temporal *praxis* of transcendence. See next section.
Merely looking at something implies that I must look through the way in which it appears in the context of use and in relation to an equipmental totality, and see it as merely there within a particular defined domain of objects of study. I must, in other words, already have seen this entity in the context of involvement, and then assume an attitude towards it that projects it as a theme for study: "in principle there are no bare facts" (SZ: 3622414).

Thematization is objectivization. It frees entities from their equipmental context and makes them present in revealing their objective character. This kind of making-present involves awaiting, but not awaiting the functional character of a thing. Rather, entities are seen as discoverable, as the locus of objectively describable features. But this is possible only because Dasein is as an interpreting being that projects itself towards its potentiality for being in the truth, only because Dasein seeks this kind of assertoric truth. Dasein must already be in a certain way, in order for thematization to be possible.

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29 Even the scientific study of matter involves seeing it in relation to motion, force, location, etc. There is no naked approach to the study of entities, even in the realm of science. Aristotle, recall, argued in book Gamma of the Metaphysics that sciences must separate out a clearly defined subject area that studies "a portion of being": the epistēmē of τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν, however, "is not the same as any of the other particular sciences, for ... they divide off some portion of being and study the attributes of this portion" (Meta: 1003a 23-26). It thus precedes the other sciences. All sciences refer in some way to the primary science that studies being qua being, as well as to the axioms that make any scientific discourse about beings possible. Heidegger writes "The more appropriately the being of the entities to be explored is understood under the guidance of an understanding of being, and the more the totality of entities has been articulated in its basic attributes as a possible area of subject-matter for a science, all the more secure will be the perspective for one's methodological inquiry" (SZ: 362413). Is this a defense of phenomenology as first philosophy?
Specifically, Dasein must already have some understanding of being in order to separate off a particular domain for objective thematization. Furthermore, Dasein must transcend the entities that it thematizes: Dasein, as the thematizer, cannot be a part of what is thematized, even if (as in Being and Time) it is Dasein itself that is thematized. Of course Dasein is involved in thematization, but the kind of understanding that projects objects as free from the context in which Dasein is involved, requires Dasein to go beyond the immediate situation. Vorhandenheit then is also dynamic; it also involves projection of possibilities, and it is rooted in the primordial praxis of Dasein as projection.

Thus the two modes of being-in-the-world, theory and practice, theoría and poësis, vorhanden and zuhanden, are both rooted in transcendence. The condition for the possibility of both modes of behaviour is temporality, and specifically the futural movement of projection. Poësis and theoría, two of Aristotle’s energéia are in this Heideggerian reappropriation, dunámeis. And they are rooted in the fundamental human dunámis of transcendence, a retrieval of Aristotelian praxis, to which I turn now.

VI

Transcendence

"Transcendence, being-in-the-world, is never to be equated and identified with intentionality" says Heidegger in the summer course of 1928 (GA26: 215\168).\textsuperscript{30} In the

\textsuperscript{30} In the 1928 course, Heidegger cites note xxiii from section 64 of Being and Time that reads in part: “the intentionality of ‘consciousness’ is grounded in the ecstatical unity of Dasein” (SZ: 363\414). Cf. also WG: 28, where Heidegger again says that intentionality is possible only on the basis of transcendence. On the issue of intentionality and transcendence see Arion Kelkel (1988).
previous summer’s course, on the other hand, he asserts (and discusses at length) that “it is precisely intentionality and nothing else in which transcendence consists” (GA24: 89\63). How to explain this apparent contradiction?

First of all, Heidegger is careful to distinguish transcendence from any “traditional” notion of intentionality, that sets a worldless subject against an object in a noetic relationship. As we saw in the previous chapter, in Heidegger’s sense intentionality is the very structure of lived experience, a comportmental directing towards, that reveals to Dasein how it stands in relation to the world.

Secondly, intentional fulfillment gives for two kinds of truth, which correspond to two kinds of comportment: 1) identification of the intended and the intuited gives for a non-thematized comportmental and fundamental sense of truth as living in the truth. I make possible what I intend by seeing my intention as already fulfilled in my interaction with entities: I am directed towards the subject matter itself (GA20: 69\52). This is the hermeneutical sense of truth, or the way of understanding being manifest in circumspective concern. 2) The other sense of truth is the structural relationship that is seen to apply between acts of intending and acts of intuition. I direct myself towards the evidence, that is, towards the actual identification, such that truth becomes a character of knowledge (GA20: 70\53). I see the world as conforming to a noetic act of identification of intended and intuited; in other words, I see it theoretically.

Both practical and theoretical behaviour are intentional; both involve a directing-towards. But both these modes of understanding the world presuppose some prior understanding of being for it to be possible to relate to the world in these modes.
“Intentionality is based on transcendence” means that at the root of any intentional relationship is the transcendent comportment of Dasein that makes directing-towards possible at all. “Intentionality is transcendence” means that for Dasein to be in an intentional relationship, interacting with entities in the world, it must already be transcending. Original transcendence, as the primal *praxis* of Dasein, is what makes possible any relationship to entities whatsoever. In short, “intentionality is the *ratio cognoscendi* of transcendence. Transcendence is the *ratio essendi* of intentionality in its diverse modes” (GA24: 91\65). Before the intentional relationship (ontic transcendence) can be established, Dasein must be in the world, and as such must have an understanding of being (primal transcendence) (GA26: 194\153).

Transcendence and this understanding of being that *is* being-in-the-world, are in fact identical. The world is just the network of meanings that is constituted through Dasein’s relationship to the given. In every movement of understanding, every relationship of involvement, Dasein deals with entities in various ways so that it can be what it is; Dasein is always for its own sake. This does not mean that things are there *for us*, but that we bring things into relation with ourselves. In understanding entities, we posit something about ourselves; we are primarily concerned with our own becoming. This self-understanding, or self-creation is the root of any understanding of entities. The world is that for the sake of which Dasein exists; but Dasein exists for the sake of itself. Therefore the world is part of the selfhood of Dasein (WG: 84); Dasein is its world (SZ: 364\416).  

31 In saying that “Dasein is for the sake of itself”, or that “Dasein is in each case essentially mine”, Heidegger is not asserting that the world and nature and all things are merely there for the unquenchable enjoyment of Dasein as ego. It does not mean that
"Transcendere" means to step over, go through, pass over. The world, as the network of meanings revealed to Dasein as it steps over factual entities towards their possibilities, (conceived as possibilities of Dasein), is what Dasein steps towards. Dasein, in stepping, is the passage across (GA26: 211\165). It is Dasein that is passage.

For-the-sake-of refers to the ontological selfhood of Dasein as free to commit to becoming itself (GA 26: 247\191; cf. WG: 96).\(^{32}\) This means leaping over factual and factical beings, being excessive (GA26: 248\192), stepping out beyond the actual into the possible. Potentiality for being is the essence of transcendence, the defining character of Dasein as for-the-sake-of-itself.\(^{33}\)

In self-understanding, Dasein is always caught within a horizontal temporal schema, that determines how entities are disclosed.\(^{34}\) Temporality, we saw, is constituted by the

Dasein cannot essentially be concerned with others, or enter into I-thou relationships. Dasein is not an isolated ego over against the world. However there is an essential "egoicity" at the root of Dasein which makes it possible for it to enter into relationships with others. As a feature of Dasein's transcendence, to be for the sake of itself means that Dasein directs itself towards its own potentiality for being on every plane: this is the metaphysical condition of the possibility for a thou to be, and for any I-thou relationship to be (GA26:240\187; WG:86). The other can be seen in this way as not just another ego, but as a being concerned in its way with its own free becoming.

\(^{32}\) The for-the-sake-of seems to be a retrieval and ontologization of Aristotle's hōu hēneka (Cf: Volpi 1994: p.207-209). In Aristotle, praxis is an end in itself, that is, its "for the sake of" is itself. Since Dasein is for the sake of itself, this accrues further evidence to the thesis that transcendence is the praxis that unifies poïēsis and theoría, determinations borrowed from Aristotle and transformed.

\(^{33}\) "To put it briefly, Dasein's transcendence and freedom are identical!" (GA26: 238\185).

\(^{34}\) Cf. Dahlstrom (1995; p.109): "With every existentiell projection-and-horizon, every authentic or inauthentic existence (care), there is an existentiell ecstasis-and-horizon, a temporalizing that is the ontological sense (... projection-and-horizon) of Da-sein".
three ecstases, corresponding to the three moments of the care structure that is Dasein. Each ecstasis involves a stepping out of Dasein from itself, an intentional directing towards a “horizon”, or a scope of possible meaningfulness. The horizon of the understanding is the finite future, as Dasein projects itself onto possible significance by “being ahead of itself”, seeing its potentiality for being as a fulfillment of what Dasein already is. Thus Dasein comes towards itself, for the sake of itself. In disposition, the horizon of significance is the finite past, what already is the case, the backdrop of what has always been, the factors and situations that I cannot control, and in the face of which I am thrown into being what I am. Finally in falling, in being alongside entities in the world in a relationship of use, in being concerned with things in the world, I see things as significant in order to accomplish something in the present. The horizon of falling is the present. Each of the ecstases in transcendence involve Dasein’s relation to itself.

By being for its own sake, Dasein understands the world as potential for its own self to become what it already is. In angst, or in any disposition, by coming to see what it itself is, Dasein construes itself in relation to an already given world. In falling, by bringing entities into the world of its immediate concern, Dasein construes itself in relation to that with which it is now involved. The world then is already presupposed in the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand; it is that onto which Dasein constantly projects itself in any of the ecstases. “If no Dasein exists, no world is ‘there’ either” (SZ: 365\117; cf. GA24: 422\1297). The world must be disclosed before any entity can be encountered; thus neither the practical nor the theoretical construal of the world are primordial.
In the Logic course of 1928, Heidegger goes even further. In constructing a world, Dasein also constructs being, as meaningfulness of beings: “being ‘is’ not, but being is there [es gibt] insofar as Dasein exists. In the essence of existence there is transcendence, i.e. a giving of world prior to and for all being-towards-and-among intra-worldly beings” (GA26: 193\153). Dasein must “give itself” being, Heidegger continues, in order to make sense of the world at all, or in order for beings to emerge as what they are. It is Dasein that constructs the meaningfulness of the world (the world as its world), through its disclosive essence. The meaningfulness of the world is being, and Dasein has access to it only on the basis of the transcendent movement of understanding that is at its very root. Transcendence is the giving of meaning that makes up what we mean in saying “world”. There is being, as meaningfulness of beings, only insofar as Dasein understands beings, or transcends itself towards the world.

Transcendence then is the name for the ecstatic movement of Dasein as in-the-world understandingly: “transcendent Dasein” is a tautology (WG: 36). As the fundamental praxis of Dasein, it is just what Dasein is, as being-in-the-world in the articulated care structure that is grounded in temporality. As the towards which of Dasein’s surpassing, the world is transcendent, that is, it is grounded in the horizontal unity of ecstatic temporality. But what is surpassed in transcendence? Being itself: that is, every being that Dasein can disclose, including Dasein itself (WG: 38). It is the totality of beings that Dasein goes beyond, in order to choose what and how amongst the possibilities of those beings, Dasein can constitute itself. Dasein then comes back from surpassing to focus again on entities themselves as revealed through this kinetic projective structure of
transcendence; this means, within the limitations of its thrownness, (i.e. that Dasein must encounter entities along with itself), Dasein is free to discover and disclose entities in various modes. What makes it possible for entities to be encountered within the world then, and made use of or thematized, is the transcendence of the world, i.e. the world as transcendent (SZ: 366\418).

The self-defining movement of Dasein is limited always by what Dasein already is determined to be. The definitive feature of Dasein’s thrownness is Dasein’s finitude. Dasein lives in relation to its death: whether it is explicitly aware of death in the authentic moment of anticipatory resolve, or whether it flees from death in the they-self, Dasein’s time is limited. Its possibilities are limited, and hence the field of possible significance onto which Dasein projects at any given time and in any ecstasis is limited. As Heidegger says, “by its very nature temporality is finite” (GA24:385\272).

How does all this tie into Heidegger’s goal, of getting phenomenological truth about the meaning of being? In the introduction to Being and Time, Heidegger describes being as “the transcendens pure and simple ... Every disclosure of being as the transcendens is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of being) is veritas transcendentalis”(SZ: 38\62). In other words, Dasein has access to truth by being in excess of itself.35 But this excess, this self-transcendence, already includes, or already is limited by what Dasein is determined to be: its thrownness. Dasein is the transcendent being: it is always ahead of itself, stepping over its being what it is in going out towards its own possibility of becoming by means of relating to beings. The movement of

35 To use Sheehan’s language (1979).
transcendence is thus a becoming of what Dasein already is (projection or aheadness within the confines of thrownness), through the understanding of beings. This understanding of being is itself already a part of what Dasein is as fallen. The tri-partite structure of Dasein (aheadness, thrownness, fallenness) constitutes its disclosedness. And Dasein discloses truth by becoming what it already is.

To sum up: transcendence is the fundamental comportment of Dasein on the basis of which it can relate to any other being. It is being-in-the-world, as the basic way in which Dasein is in the world, as disclosive, and as temporal. “Transcendence precedes every possible mode of activity in general, prior to nóēsis, but also prior to órexis” (GA26: 236\183); it is prior to any noetic intentional relation to the world, and prior to any sort of erotic relationship also. It is also prior to any practical or theoretical mode of understanding the world, prior to all behaviour (WG: 34-35). As Heidegger himself points out, “the problem is the common root of both intuition, *theorein*, as well as action, *praxis*” (GA26: 236\184). Transcendence is the key. Transcendence, being-in-the-world as attempting to understand the world in relation to its own possibilities is the primordial praxis of Dasein that roots theory and practical comportment.

Transcendence always takes place within a “horizonal unity”, within, that is, a field of possible significance that is limited by what we already are. Death is the ultimate limit of making-sense-of in the crudest sense: my time, and therefore my possibilities, are limited. But the reverberation of the realization of death in anticipatory resolve is greater than the actual coming-to-an-end of Dasein. The fact of my living-towards-death, and the sometime awareness of this, permeates the way in which I approach the possibilities open
to me. The way that I project onto possibilities is conditioned by the nature of those possibilities as finite, thus by the horizontal limitation of Verstehen, and by my awareness of the limit that hangs over me, the horizontal limitation revealed by Befindlichkeit. The way that I make entities present, the way that I concern myself with entities in the world is conditioned by both the ecstasis of “future” as possibility, and the ecstasis of “past” as the given.\(^{36}\) The world is comprehensible to Dasein, because Dasein is finite comprehensibility of possibility. The radical finitude at the core of Dasein affects the way in which being is interpreted. As I will argue in the next chapter, because Dasein is finite, being, as meaningfulness for Dasein, is also finite.

Heidegger has retrieved many of Aristotle’s notions, as well as the central question of the unity of the ways in which being is said. But Heidegger no longer seek the grounds of why what is, is as it is, a question which in Aristotle leads to the positing of a supreme being who is fully actual. Rather, Heidegger asks how it is that we see things as we do: the grounds for what is, are in the groundless ground of Dasein as understanding what is through transcendence. Because Heidegger thematizes the disclosure structure of Dasein, as decisive in the way that being can be said, and because the one who discloses is finite, much of Aristotle is in a sense turned “upside down”. For Heidegger, possibility precedes actuality, praxis is primordial over theory, and the finite is primordial over any possible

\(^{36}\) Cf. Henry (1992; p.360):“Time, in its original temporalization, projecting the horizon of the future in advance of itself and coming into confrontation with it, turned back by it and brought back to itself, discovers in the unity of this twofold movement, in the ecstasy of the return ‘back upon’ both the world as finite world and its own existence to which it is handed over”.

notion of the infinite. What this means for the way that God can enter Heidegger's ontology is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

God and Being in Heidegger

Heidegger never explicitly affirms or denies the existence of God, nor does he think that it is the role of philosophy to do so. In his later works, he treats the holy and the divine; and in his personal life he seemingly maintained some relationship to Catholicism. But my question here concerns the early Heidegger's philosophical treatment of God in relation to his ontology. Particularly, I treat how Aristotle's "metaphysical" God is incompatible with Heidegger's ontology; and how a different notion of God, as the infinite, might be compatible with it.

Aristotle's god is a god of reason, "the god of philosophy", quite removed from a notion of god as an object of religious feeling. Aristotle's god cannot be said to be a personal God to whom individuals can pray, or with whom they can develop a relationship of trust. Rather, god as first mover is a ground of the workings of the physical cosmos, of the continued manifestation of sensible ousía or tà phusiká.

In the first section of this chapter, I will look at what Heidegger has to say about this kind of metaphysical god, and why it cannot be a part of his ontological thought. Heidegger argues that in Aristotle the question of the being of beings (ontology) and that of the unity of beings (theology) are distinct. Although Aristotle treated the two questions as part of one science, prótē philosophía, he did not, in Heidegger's view, discuss the way
in which these questions belong together. Heidegger further argues that in the later tradition, these two questions were combined through the notion of metaphysics as knowledge of “that which lies beyond”, focussing on God as the supreme supersensuous being.

Heidegger’s arguments against the ontotheological character of post-Aristotelian metaphysics do not concern my topic here, except by way of contrast. Heidegger contends that in the post-Aristotelian tradition, Aristotle’s two questions are united in a fundamentally different way than Heidegger himself proposes. Heidegger recognizes the distinction between the two questions as Aristotle posed them, and seeks their unity, which he finds not in a notion of something which “lies beyond”, but in an understanding of the essence of grounds as transcendence, that which makes it possible for us to “go beyond”. The for-the-sake-of, a retrieval of Aristotle’s final aitia, becomes the essence of Dasein as free transcendence, the ground of understanding being.

I have argued throughout the first part of this dissertation that for Aristotle the question of being and that of God are not separable. This clearly contrasts with Heidegger’s view. Before I review my argument for the unity of ontology and theology in Aristotle, I will look at Heidegger’s argument that they are separate. Since I argue that theology and ontology in Aristotle are related through the method of science, the seeking of grounds, and since Heidegger is proposing a different sense of “ground”, one that is compatible with his hermeneutic phenomenology, the issue does not affect the general direction of Heidegger’s argument. He seeks a (new) unity between the question of universality of being and that of the beings taken as a whole.
In the second section of this chapter, I discuss how God might be re-instated into Heidegger's ontology by means of the infinite. This God is no longer the eternal ground of the rational and teleological workings of the universe, like Aristotle's god. Nor is this God entirely "beyond the scope" of ontology, however, as something that Dasein cannot reach towards or question about except speculatively. Rather, the infinite, even though it might be understood only in relation to the experience of Dasein's own finite possibilities, will be seen to re-emerge, phenomenologically experienced as gratitude for being here at all. Dasein is the being for whom its own being is an issue. I will suggest that because its own finite being is an issue, the infinite is also an issue for Dasein.

I

God and grounds

According to Heidegger, Aristotle's notion of grounds leads to a bifurcation in the subject matter of first philosophy. Two distinct questions are asked in first philosophy: 1) the question of what unifies beings as a whole; and 2) the question of what is common to all beings. Aristotle's metaphysics asks exactly these questions, without positing a relation between them. 37 In his Logic course of 1928, Heidegger writes that theologikē in Aristotle regards the study of beings as a whole (GA26: 22\17). But philosophia, as

37 Cf: Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (GA32): "Aristotle already brought philosophy in the genuine sense in very close connection with theologikē epistēmē, without being able to explain by a direct interpretation what the relationship is between the question concerning ὣν hē ὄν and the question of theion" (p. 141\98).
knowledge of being, as the search for conceptual understanding and determination, or for a λόγος of the ὁν ἢ ὁν is ontology (GA26: 16\13).

Thus the concept of "metaphysics", understood in relation to Aristotle, encompasses the unity of "ontology" and "theology" (GA26: 33\24).

Heidegger’s argument can be constructed as follows. For Aristotle, who prioritizes theory as a way of knowing what is, ontological inquiry takes the form of the search for grounds for the presence of beings. Beings, as that which is present for observation, are seen as requiring grounds for their presence. Aristotle inquires into the grounds of sensible ousía, which comes down to explaining how it is that the universal form of individual ouslai continues to be manifest despite the cycle of generation and destruction. To explain how form continues eternally to manifest itself in sensible things, recourse has to be made to a being that determines the form of things as constantly present (universally). A highest being, eternally present, is the ground of the presence of beings. In this sense, God unifies beings as a whole, and answers the first question.

But God is itself an ousía, a being. The being of beings is determined as constant presence, constancy both of the eternal cycle of the generation and destruction of beings, and of the highest being which ensures the continuance of this cycle. The common element to all beings then, the answer to the second question, is presence: that they are here, and that they will be here eternally, at least inasmuch as they are construed according to their universal element. But in Heidegger’s view, Aristotle does not inquire into the relationship between presence of beings, and God as the unifier of beings as a whole. God is not responsible for the presence of beings (he is not a creator, not directly
an efficient *aition*), but only for the continued presence of beings, a characteristic which he himself, as a being, shares.

In Heidegger’s view then, metaphysics as the name for first philosophy has two different foci, which Aristotle did not question in their unity. Let’s look at how Heidegger sees these two questions arise now in relation to the meanings of *phúsis*.

In the course of winter Semester 1929-30, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (GA29\30), Heidegger discusses the meaning of *tà meta tà phusiká* especially in relation to Aristotle, since it was in that context that the phrase came to be (cf: GA29\30: 44ff\30ff). There are two meanings of *phúsis*. The first refers to *phúsei ónta*, as opposed to the *téchnē ónta*; here *phúsis* means that which does not arise or pass away, that which is always already at hand, as opposed to those things that are produced by human beings. In this sense, *phúsis* means “that which prevails”, and *tà phusiká* are beings taken as a whole, with the prime mover, *théion*, which eternally prevails, as the ultimate determinant of the whole of beings. 38 The other sense of *phúsis* is the innermost essence of things, that which determines whatever prevails as a being, as when we use the phrase “the nature of things”. This is *ousía*, the beingness of beings, the essentiality of beings. To philosophize in the sense of first philosophy is to question concerning both senses, thus, we see again, to question concerning 1) beings as a whole, and to question 2) about the universal communality in beings. “At the same time Aristotle says nothing … about how he thinks these two orientations of questioning in their unity, to what extent precisely this questioning in its dual orientation constitutes philosophizing proper in a

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38 Though Aristotle does not refer to the prime mover as god in the *Physics*. 
unitary way. The question is open and is open to this day, or rather is not even posed anymore today” (GA 29\30: 51\33).

The disharmony between these two different questions, says Heidegger, lies in the fact that notions of equality, opposition, difference, those problems that concern the being of beings, are very different from the question concerning the ultimate ground of beings (GA 29\30: 75\49). Heidegger finds this disharmony in Aristotle because he makes a distinction between the question of what something is, and that of why it is, questions which, I have argued above, Aristotle unites in the scientific study of first philosophy. Heidegger in his reinterpretation of the questions finds a different unity that focusses on Dasein as disclosive of the meaning of beings, which requires a prior understanding of the manifestness of beings. He has a different approach to the question of the unity of being, or the “whole of beings”, one which includes the articulated unity of Dasein as that which discloses the meaning of being. It is not the question of ultimate grounds, but the expression “as a whole” which contains the real problem of metaphysics (GA29\30: 85\56). “Philosophizing proper” puts the questioner himself into question, only in this way can we ask about beings “as a whole”. But the question of the essence of grounds must also be asked before we look to ground simply as ontic explanation of the presence of beings. Where does the notion of grounds itself arise from? What is it that makes us seek grounds? The two questions of beings as a whole and the ultimate ground of being are found in an analysis of the questioner.

I have argued that the science in the *Metaphysics* is a unified science, because for Aristotle the question of what and the question of why are ultimately identical. Because
of Aristotle’s notion of science as the seeking of grounds, to know the essence of something scientifically is to know the grounds of that thing being as it is. Thus Aristotle seeks the universal communality of beings, which he finds in the form of ousía. But first philosophy as a science does not stop there. It must inquire into the grounds of ousía, and particularly into the grounds of the continued manifestation of species form in individual ousíai. Taken at the level of species, or understood universally, (and science is knowledge of the universal) form is eternal. Individuals come to be and pass away but form does not. Looking for the ground of the continued reoccurrence of species (or “universal”) form in individual sensible ousía, leads Aristotle to God as the transcendental condition for the possibility of form. But this God is also an ousía: Aristotle does not leave the study of being in order to explain beings, but finds within ontology a ground of ousía, his prime subject matter.

Heidegger sees the two questions as distinct because he does not take into account the way in which Aristotle’s search for the unity of the ways in which being is said, is part of a scientific questioning to get to the grounds of being qua being. It is true that we can see two different directions of inquiry in Aristotle’s Metaphysics, but they are related methodologically. The book is a search for the près hèn unity of the way that tô ὅν is pollachôs legómenon. But this inquiry is itself part of the larger search for the first archai kai aitia: ousía, as the unity of the ways in which being is said, defines the subject matter of which the first principles and grounds are sought. The questions of universal communality and the unity of beings as a whole are expressly related through the scientific nature of Aristotle’s inquiry.
The fact that Heidegger sees ontology and theology as disunited in Aristotle does not affect his principal argument, which is one that concerns a reinterpretation of grounds. Heidegger reinterprets the notion of grounds, and shifts it from a search for the theoretical explanatory grounds of beings (which in my argued view unifies ontology and theology in Aristotle) to an examination of human being as involved in the grounding of beings. Because of his methodological shift away from theory and towards phenomenological description of human poietical involvement with entities, Heidegger finds the ultimate grounds of being, that is, the meaningfulness of entities, in the kinetic praxis of human being in transcendence. The roots of this shift, as we saw, are found in that which Aristotle presupposes but does not thematize: the pre-predicative manifestness of beings.

The concept of god as the god of philosophy, god as a ground, in Heidegger’s view does not get to original thinking about being, that is, thinking being in a way that questions the “as” of the being as being, or human involvement in disclosure of the meaning of being. Defining the individual according to its form as a universal (whether or not we see this definition of the “what” as separable from the “why”) presumes a way of human being towards beings, that takes them “as” something.

In the course of WS 1929\1930, Heidegger discusses the meaning of the lógos as the “word” that takes the prevailing of phúsis from out of concealment; or, in other words, lógos reveals what is- the manifestness of beings. The ground of the possibility of lógos as lógos apophantikós, the predicative structure, is its súnthesis-diaíresis or as-structure. In order for the assertion that posits something as something, to be either true or false, there must already be a pre-logical manifestness of beings. Aristotle himself
recognized this, in recognizing that being in the sense of being as true, the judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition, is not in itself a subject of first philosophy. We already see the manifestness of "beings as a whole" in making an assertion that requires an either\or judgement (true or not); that is, we see the context in which the assertion either holds or does not hold. The prelogical apprehension of "beings as a whole", or ontic context, is "a fundamental occurrence of Dasein" (352\511).

For Heidegger, the question of what unifies beings as a whole is no longer answered by recourse to a god as a ground, but rather by Dasein's prelogical apprehension of a "world". In apprehending a world, we do not add up all the beings and grasp them as a unified entity. Or, to use Heidegger's example, to see a forest we do not first have to perceive every tree, and then see them collectively as a forest, as if a forest were something "added on" to the trees. Rather, we always already understand the "as a whole".39 In understanding something as something, I already see it as a part of my world. And I am included in the "as a whole", not as an added component, but as being always already in relationship to beings.40

But how does this apprehension of beings as a whole, the world of Dasein, clarify the question of the being of beings, the second Aristotelian question of the ὡς ἄρ ν? This raises the question of the distinction between being and beings, the "ontological difference". This is a distinction that we always already make in our intercourse with

39 Cf. chapter four, section iv on categorial intuition.

40 Cf. GA 29\30: p. 507\349: "... the 'as' is a structural moment of what we call world- world taken as the manifestness of beings as such as a whole".
beings, or rather one that always happens to us as a fundamental occurrence of Dasein. In order to see beings as what and how they are, we must first always already have an understanding of whatness and thatness of beings. Predication relies on ontical truth, that is, on a pre-predicable manifestation of being. But it also depends on the discoveredness of the manifest in the disclosive activity in which Dasein is always already involved. Dasein “forms the world”, that is, it lets the world happen and gives to itself a view of all manifest being (WG: 88\89). There is a distinction between manifestness of beings [οn hos ón], or ontic truth; and being as disclosedness, the being of beings [οn hē ón], or ontological truth.

There must already be an understanding of being for any pre-predicative comportment or discovery of the manifest to be possible. Dasein, as already having an understanding of being, relates to beings, goes beyond beings towards being, or goes beyond the simple manifestness of beings towards the grasp of the possibilities inherent in those beings. In order to project the possibilities of a being, in order to seize upon one particular possibility, we must already have an understanding of the context in which this being belongs. We must already have a grasp of beings as a whole, in order to understand the meaningfulness of a particular being. Being as meaningfulness is not the meaningfulness of an individual being removed from its contextual relationship to other beings, rather the possibilities of this being are already given by my interaction in a given world of meaning. The distinction between comportment towards beings and the disclosedness of being, is the ontological difference that Dasein always already understands in behaving towards beings by understanding being in the movement of
transcendence (WG: 26\27). Dasein goes beyond the simple manifestation of beings towards the meaning of beings.

Thus Heidegger unifies the two questions which he finds distinct in Aristotle, that of the communality of beings, which Aristotle answers by an appeal to form; and that of the unity of beings as a whole, which Aristotle answers by appeal to God. For Heidegger, the two questions are intrinsically unified not by scientific method (as I argue they are in Aristotle), but by hermeneutic phenomenological method, that is, by appeal to the involvement of the questioner in the question. But how does transcendence relate to grounds?

Transcendence is freedom; and this (finite) freedom is the origin of grounds, the possibility of asking about grounds in the first place, and as perceiving the identity of being and the nothing, the origin of the question of “why”.41 It is Dasein’s understanding of being that makes the why possible, freedom as transcendence that is the ground of grounds. Freedom, however, is itself groundless; there is no other recourse than Dasein existing as possibility to be other. Thus freedom is limited, or finite, since Dasein is in a sense determined to be free by its factual existence as thrown. Dasein is factically and therefore finitely free. As such, it is presented with possibilities from amongst which it must choose. In other words, “in transcendence, the essence of the finitude of Dasein discloses itself as freedom for grounds” (WG: 130\131). There is no ground for truth any

41 "The essence of ground differentiates itself into diverse sorts of “grounds” (e.g. the four causes), not because there are different beings, but because the metaphysical essence of Dasein as transcending has the possibility of establishing world-access for diverse beings" (GA26: 277/214).
more than there is a ground for Dasein as free transcendence; there is no statable reason why either should be. Yet Dasein must always and does always presuppose truth, in its disclosive encounters with beings in the world.

As long as the question of the grounds of being is not asked in inextricable relation to the one who questions, who is thus also brought into question, the answer remains speculative discussion about beings seen as merely present. In contrast to Aristotle then, for Heidegger the origin of the why, and the answer to it, is not in a constant presence that explains the existence of beings, but rather in the constitution of Dasein as always involved in the project of understanding what is in relation to itself. This has its consequences: “because philosophy is the most radically free endeavour of human finitude, it is in its essence more finite than any other” (GA26: 1110).

In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, (SS 1928), Heidegger gives a different interpretation of Aristotle’s two questions, which demonstrates the shift from the need for a God as the ground of beings, to the role of Dasein as the ground of the meaning of being.

First philosophy has a twofold character, as the study of beings with regard to being, *tò ὅν ἕ ὁν*; and as *theologikē*, thematized as the *aitia toîs phanerôîs tôn theîôn*, the grounds of eternal sensible *ousíai* (that is, God as the ground of the movement of the first heaven, which moves non-eternal sensible *ousíai*). Heidegger writes: “*tò theîôn* means

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42 Heidegger’s translation of this passage (Meta. 1026a 18.) is “the causes of the superior manifesting itself in evident beings”. Cf. Tredennick: “the causes of what is visible of things divine”; Ross: “the causes that operate on so much of the divine as it appears to us (i.e. that produce the movements of the heavenly bodies)”.
simply beings- the heavens: the encompassing and overpowering, that under and upon which we are thrown, that which dazzles us and takes us by surprise, the overwhelming” (GA26: 13\11). In fact, if we look at Aristotle’s text, *tà theión* here means the *ground* of the cosmos. But for Heidegger’s Aristotle, theology is contemplation of the cosmos (which indirectly it is), or knowledge of the overwhelming. First philosophy then has the twofold character of knowledge of being and knowledge of the overwhelming.

Interestingly, Heidegger remarks here that knowledge of being and knowledge of the overwhelming correspond respectively to existence and thrownness in *Being and Time* (GA26: 13\16). I interpret this as follows: first, ek-sistence, as the ecstatic transcendence of Dasein, approaching the world from a pre-understanding of being and then manifesting this understanding in a self-transformative practical intercourse with entities in terms of possibility, is Heidegger’s conception of understanding being. There is a shift from theoretical knowledge of beings, to the involvement of Dasein as understanding beings. Secondly, there is a shift away from Aristotle’s notion of contemplation of *theión*, the overwhelming givenness of eternal being, and the principle and ground of the inexorable movement from potentiality to actuality in beings,\(^{43}\) to Heidegger’s non-aetiological perspective. The overwhelming in Heidegger is thrownness, the universal circumstance of the particular givenness of Dasein, individual powerlessness in the face of the given finitude of Dasein. Angst, knowledge or awareness of the overwhelming, is not a ground of being, but is rather the groundless ground of the possibility of understanding being. In

\(^{43}\) The eternal first unmoved mover explains the movement of the spheres; the eternal moved spheres explain the movement of sensible moved things.
this reading, the metaphysical deity is no longer theoretically required, since the theoretical grounding of beings is no longer primordial. But a dismissal of any consideration of God from ontology may not be conclusive, as I suggest in section two below.

Thrownness limits the power of freedom (the "abyss" of Dasein, its groundless ground that as potentiality for being is freedom for grounds). The givenness of Dasein as a self defined in terms of possibility, and as transcendent, is that in the face of which Dasein has no control. In *The Essence of Ground*, Heidegger writes: "This sort of powerlessness (thrownness) is not due to the fact that being invades [Eindringen] Dasein; rather it defines the very being of Dasein" (WG: 128-131/129-131). The essence of Dasein's transcendence as finite freedom is that which overwhelms Dasein in angst, the disposition that reveals Dasein's thrownness. The nothing that is thus experienced is the overwhelming: Dasein's finitude. This is the ground for wonder. Hence whereas in Aristotle the overwhelming is the eternal deity, the ground for being as being, in Heidegger the overwhelming is the givenness of Dasein's factual self as groundless in finite freedom, and is the ground for understanding being.44 Whereas in Aristotle it is the presence of beings that provokes wonder and leads to God as the overwhelming ground, in Heidegger it is the absence of grounds, the abyss at the core of Dasein's understanding that is itself the overwhelming ground of wonder. This ground admits no ground: it is groundless.

Finite Dasein is free to live out its possibilities through interpretation of the possibilities that beings present. This transcendent freedom, the movement of constituting the meaning of Dasein and consequently of being, though itself groundless, is the ground for any seeking of grounds. The facticity of Dasein, thrownness, is clearly a limitation of that freedom, and as such is a vague reflection of the notion of human powerlessness in the face of a deity. However, human being as given, and being as givenness remain a far cry from the necessity of a god to establish grounds of what is.

Nonetheless, that the god of philosophy does not enter thinking in Heidegger’s sense does not entail that God does not exist. Indeed, Heidegger writes:

...The ontological interpretation of Dasein as being-in-the-world tells neither for nor against the possible existence of God. One must first gain an adequate concept of Dasein by illuminating transcendence. Then, by considering Dasein, one can ask how the relationship of Dasein to God is ontologically constituted ...(WG: 9091).

Heidegger here supposes that any investigation of the concept of God would be posterior to the analysis of Dasein. But it may be that the concept of finite Dasein itself presupposes an infinite (God); Heidegger himself raises this possibility, as I will discuss in the next section. An inquiry into Dasein’s relationship to the infinite might clarify the issue.45

45 A note on the “ontotheological constitution of metaphysics”, a notion that we see already in Heidegger’s writings in the early thirties. My object here is to present Heidegger’s view as background to the issues I consider in my text, rather than to analyze it. According to Heidegger, Aristotle’s two questions, of universal communality and the unity of beings as a whole, are unified in the “tradition” (i.e. metaphysics from Thomas Aquinas to Nietzsche). Heidegger says that the originally technical title for Aristotle’s work, tà metà tà phusiká (after the Physics) came to be a title given with respect to content. In the Latinate version of the term, metaphysica, “metà” came to be understood not as “after”, but as “turning away from” phusiká, and turning towards what is beyond
the sensuous. In Heidegger’s etymological history, “meta” becomes understood not as “post” but as “trans”.

“Metaphysics” becomes the science of the supersensuous. The supersensuous creator, God, becomes explanatory of the unity of beings and for the communality of beings. “This changeover in the title is by no means something trivial. Something essential is decided by it- the fate of philosophy proper in the West” (GA29\30: 60\39). Whatever Aristotle meant by first philosophy, he did not mean what came to be known as “metaphysics”. (See Heidegger’s course, Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3: “Aristotle never has in his possession what later came to be understood by the word or the concept ‘metaphysics’”. Nor did he ever seek anything like the “metaphysics that has for ages been attributed to him” (GA33: 1\1).)

In Heidegger’s view, the “traditional” notion of metaphysics, referring to the realm of the supersensuous, is a re-interpretation of the content of ancient philosophy, and particularly Aristotle, to accord with Christian dogma (GA29\30: 64\32). This continues through the Renaissance, Humanism and German Idealism, and only begins to be understood with Nietzsche. In this tradition, God and man become objects of faith and theological systematology: God is the absolutely supersensuous, and human beings are seen in relation to their eternal fate, or immortality. Even Descartes at the beginning of modern philosophy sees the object of first philosophy as proving the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. (As for Medieval thinking: “because philosophizing proper as a completely free questioning on the part of man is not possible during the Middle Ages, since completely different orientations are essential during that period; because fundamentally there is no philosophy in the Middle Ages: for this reason the taking over of Aristotelian metaphysics according to the two directions already characterized is structured from the outset in such a way that not only a dogmatics of faith, but also a dogmatics of First Philosophy itself arises” (GA 29\30: 69\45) (my italics).)

The distinction in Aristotle between the question of beings as a whole (raising questions of the supreme or ultimate being) and the essence of beings- which, in Heidegger’s view, he left disconnected- prefigures the rift between theology and first philosophy. Through the Christian influence, Aristotle’s theology (a lógos of the theós that is not a creator god or a personal god) becomes a theology of reason, not of faith, and God becomes the specific supersensuous being that is the object of first philosophy. The supersensuous is one domain of beings amongst others, and knowledge of both supersensuous being and sensuous being become objects of thought that are accessible in the same manner. Metaphysics becomes trivialized: it is everyday knowledge, and proofs supported by Church dogma and revelation. That which I go out to, away from the physical, is distinguished from the physical only through the distinction between the sensuous and the supersensuous. “Yet this is a complete misinterpretation of the theión which in Aristotle is at least left to stand as a problem” (GA 29\30: 67\44).

In another tendency in the traditional concept of metaphysics, the ὃν ἢ ὅν, the other direction of Aristotle’s thinking, becomes compressed into the problem of beings in general. Looking for what is common to all beings means passing beyond individual
II

The Infinite

As we have seen, the metaphysical god, a god that emerges from an aetiological approach to the meaning of "being", is explicitly denied a place in Heidegger's ontology. It has become clear that the shift from an ontology that requires a god, to an ontology from which the metaphysical god is absent, occurs as a result of a difference in methodology between Aristotle and Heidegger. But the formal decoupling of ontology and theology does not disallow the possibility of another kind of God finding a place in Heidegger's thought. As the quotation which closes the previous section indicates, Heidegger does not explicitly hold to a thetic atheism, that is, one that pronounces the non-existence of God from the outset. There is no passage in Heidegger's work in which he declares that there is no God, nor indeed that there is a God. Furthermore, he does admit that we can have a faith relationship to God, even if this relationship is not a subject for philosophical analysis.46

beings towards their most general determinations. The universal, or nonsensuous becomes, in Thomas Aquinas for example, combined with the supersensuous "nature" of God, as the same kind of "lying beyond". Metaphysics itself falls into confusion. There was seen to be no difficulty in combining rational theology and philosophy in this way until the philosophy of Kant, who begins to again pose the question of the limits of metaphysics.

There is then in Heidegger's view, a distinction between the Aristotelian first philosophy, and the subsequent tradition. Aristotle leaves the being of God problematic, whereas the tradition more explicitly uses God as a solution to the unity of the two questions. Heidegger's unifying of the two questions no longer revolves around explanations of being, but around human understanding of being.

46 This idea is developed at length in the rather obscure lecture *Phenomenology and Theology* (1927).
The fact that Heidegger develops his notion of being before asking the question of what role God plays in human existence, or in a phenomenological ontology, leaves us with some questions. Even if they cannot be fully treated here, I would like to look at two of these questions. First, is the metaphysical god the only God that Heidegger can treat or consider? If not, it may be that a philosophical treatment of some other God is congruous with Heidegger’s ontology. Second, (a related question) is Heidegger’s finite ontology provisional? In other words, does the fact that Heidegger begins his ontology from the standpoint of radical finitude mean that it must end with radical finitude, and not approach the question of the infinite? Or can it be considered a provisional basis of a larger picture that includes an infinite?

To briefly summarize the position I will take on these questions: first, although the metaphysical god is clearly not compatible with Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology, I postulate that a concept of God as the infinite might be. I suggest that there are phenomenological grounds to suppose that finitude and human mortality are not final phenomena. There is a prior infinite givenness, which precedes and follows upon Dasein’s being in the world, and which is a precondition for Dasein’s experience of gratitude, in the same way that finitude is a precondition for Dasein’s experience of authenticity. Gratitude for the gift of being here at all, and hope that there is some other dimension than the merely finite human existence that is immediately given, are phenomenological indications that finitude is not the first or last word.

Second, I give some indication of the possibility that Heidegger’s ontology is provisional: although Heidegger determines the meaning of being without appeal to a
God, even bracketing God, his ontology can be maintained without abandoning a philosophical treatment of God. My discussion here takes the form of suggested directions only; the development of these ideas will have to be left for another occasion.

a) From finitude to gratitude

Heidegger explicitly declares that being is finite. But how does he arrive at the determination of being as finite? It is because he begins with the Dasein-analysis, and because Dasein is determined as temporally finite. Heidegger writes that “being is finitude” means that being is the horizon of ecstatic time (GA32: 145\100). That is, the perspective for understanding being is not speculative-dialectical (as in Hegel), nor is it “scientific”, in the sense of a search for explanatory grounds (as in Aristotle). Rather, being is understood from the perspective of finite Dasein as understanding being.

Being is finitude means then something about Dasein’s capacity to understand being, and about the temporal nature of what is, but only in relation to Dasein. Since “no understanding of being is possible that would not root in a comportment towards beings” (GA 24: 466\327), what being might mean for Dasein is issue of how Dasein comports itself towards beings. Thus “there is being only so long as there is Dasein” (SZ: 212\255).

Time is the original essence of being (GA32: 212\146); this means that the finite horizontal perspective of temporality- as a given of Dasein- determines how being is understood. If Dasein is finite, then so also being is finite, since being is a function of

\footnote{Cf: \textit{WM}: 40\108; GA32: 144\100. I find no passage in \textit{Being and Time} that explicitly makes this claim.}
Dasein’s understanding. This is Heidegger’s logic. But if we examine what kind of finitude this is, it becomes possible to admit that Dasein’s experience of its own finitude does not preclude the possibility of experiencing an infinite, even though this experience necessarily occurs from a finite perspective.

Heidegger’s logic seems to be that Dasein is temporally finite; from this it follows that it is finite in respect of possibilities, and that being itself, as the nexus of Dasein’s possibilities, is finite. Thus thrownness indicates that Dasein is: 1) temporally finite, but the fact of temporal finitude indicates another sort of finitude: 2) finitude in respect of choice of possibilities, and therefore of understanding. Dasein is freedom, and expresses its being here in reaching out to the possibilities inherent in beings. Yet not only are these possibilities finite, but Dasein’s capacity to unfold its possibilities through its relation to beings is finite: and both because Dasein is temporally finite.

There is another level of finitude, however, which seems more primordial still: 3) Dasein is given as temporally finite, as being towards death. The facticity of Dasein as in a particular set of circumstances, which includes finite temporality and finite transcendence, is beyond the power of Dasein’s freedom. Ek-sistence and thrownness, understanding and disposition, as well as the inevitable and constant practical comportment of inauthentic Dasein in fallenness- all forms of Dasein’s finitude- are prescribed always already by what is given for Dasein to be Dasein. As we saw, Dasein is aware of its finitude in the authentic disposition of angst. And it is the finiteness that is revealed in angst; it is the abyss of human finitude that presents Dasein with the overwhelming, and provokes wonder.
In each case, it is the awareness of the limitations of possibilities that throws Dasein back to itself in the movement of authenticity in anticipatory resolve. In order to experience the contingency and finitude of its own existence, Dasein must experience the limitation, the “nothing that is at the core of being”. Faced with this, Dasein can be thrown out towards those possibilities open to it. The givenness of Dasein is finite; and Dasein recognizes its finite givenness in authenticity.

This then is Heidegger's analysis of human finitude. The question is, is this all that Dasein can experience? Or is Dasein’s experience of its finite givenness not itself a clue to a prior infinite givenness? Perhaps there is another possible move, one that precedes that of the return to oneself in authenticity. This would be the recognition of another kind of givenness, which is arguably prior to Dasein’s recognition of its limitations. This kind of givenness is the infinite givenness that makes possible my finite givenness itself.

I recognize that though I do not have to be here, and though I am dying, still, I am here. The givenness of my existence here and now is not simply that of a nullity, of a “not” that directs me towards myself, nor just that of being thrown out to finite possibilities. There is a givenness of finite givenness itself: givenness not of my being here as a finite creature, but of the whole given that encompasses the “not” at my core (which expresses something about my powerlessness in the face of having to choose) and the limited given possibilities of my existence. In this whole, the “not” is understood not merely in relation to myself and my own factical possibilities, but in relation to the larger given of my own contingent existence. There is a possibility that precedes my being-in-the-world, that is, the possibility that would have dictated that I not be here. But it has
not been played out. Clearly, the possibility of my own non-existence has been overcome at the outset, since I am here.

In the face of this realization, a realization not of my own being-towards-death, but of my being here at all, when I could also not have been here, I experience gratitude. Despite the contingency of my own existence, and the finitude of my existence, I am here. And, though I do not always experience this (any more than I always experience angst), it is good to be here. Facticity, finitude, mortality are not final phenomena, because they already suppose that I am when I could have not been. My finite facticity is, only because I first am: and I am grateful for being.

The experience of gratitude for being here is an experience of the Other; I do not experience merely myself and my own possibilities, but I am directed outwards, beyond this world of finite possibility, towards the origin of my being here at all. This Other, larger than my own limited possibilities, is the focus of my gratitude; it is the infinite that has played out, from among the possibilities larger than my contingent existence, the factical event of my being here.

b) A provisional ontology

But what does Heidegger say about the infinite, and how could this relate to a God that might be compatible with Heidegger’s ontology? If an infinite can be admitted into or alongside Heidegger’s ontology, then his ontology could be part of a larger picture.

Heidegger himself asks about the infinite in the provocative, unanswered questioning at the end of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*:
... is it permissible to develop the finitude in Dasein only as a problem, without a "presupposed" ["vorausgesetzte"] infinitude? What in general is the nature of this "presupposing" ["Voraus-setzen"] in Dasein? What does the infinitude which is so "composed" ["gesetzte"] mean?... (KM: 239\168).

But even were it permissible to presuppose an infinitude, writes Heidegger in the same passage, "there is nothing which even the idea of an infinite creature recoils from as radically as it does from an ontology". But why should this be so? Only because Heidegger has already determined being as finite, and the perspective of Dasein as self-contained. An "infinite creature" then could not belong to a finite ontology. It appears at first that a move to presuppose an infinite would alter the character of this ontology from Dasein-focussed to God-focussed, from a focus on possibility to the priority of actuality.

But is this the case? Could we not argue that if there are phenomenological grounds for the experience of an infinite, then an infinite is not simply "added on", but indeed already "presupposed" as Heidegger himself suggests? The question is, from the standpoint of phenomenological, and therefore ontological, investigation, can anything be said of the infinite?

Clearly, Dasein will always only be able to understand the infinite from its own finite perspective, but this does not necessarily entail that there is no other than the finite. But to write any phenomenology of the infinite, Dasein would have to have some phenomenological experience of such a thing.

It would seem that if the infinite is to be phenomenologically accessible, it must be accessible from the realm of finite possibility, since we understand what is from our temporal perspective. Perhaps the infinite can then be "experienced" as the ground for the possibility of the experience of finite temporality in authenticity. But what sort of a
"ground" would it be? For Heidegger, as I discussed above, the ultimate ground is always the groundless ground of Dasein as given. There are certain uncontrollable givens in Dasein’s world- e.g. death, and an individual’s particular circumstances- that define Dasein as finite possibility. Yet these finite givens, or givens which determine Dasein’s finitude, are themselves always already given. It would seem then, that there is thus a primordial givenness of the given.48 We experience it intellectually as a ground, that which makes it possible that we are here in the first place, or we experience it in the disposition of gratitude that we are here, as finite creatures.

The experience of gratitude for my being here, and that of hope that there is some significance to my being here other than my self-descriptive seizing of possibilities unto death, are indications that Dasein does experience an infinite. Gratitude to; hope of are directed away from finite possibility, away from the finite world, and towards some Other. This Other enters my world as an experience within my finite world. But it is not one of my finite possibilities, inasmuch as it precedes my being here; it is that to which I am grateful for my being here at all and having any possibilities whatsoever.

The givenness of givenness is not. It “is” not being or a being, since it precedes any distinction between being and non-being. It is not finite givenness as such, since this givenness is experienced in the mode of temporal finitude. Nor is it “beyond” being as

48 It is interesting to look ahead to a later work, the Letter on Humanism, where Heidegger writes the following in relation to the es gibt Sein: “... the “it” that “gives” is being itself. The “gives” names the essence of being that is giving, granting its truth. The self-giving into the open, along with the open region itself, is being itself” (BH:25\238). But this is a giving to (finite) Dasein. In order for there to be a giving to Dasein, there must always already be givenness as such. This we could call the condition of the possibility of the es of the es gibt Sein.
a transcendental cause of what is; though perhaps as the ground for any givenness, or non-givenness, it is the condition for the possibility of thinking the finite given as finite. As the givenness of given possibility itself, the infinite is the ground of Dasein’s transcendence as reaching out beyond itself towards the finite possibilities open to it.

Is this infinite therefore a necessary part of Heidegger’s ontology? I cannot make that claim here. My argument is simply that this notion of the infinite allows for a God that is not in conflict with Heidegger’s ontology. Can such a peculiar notion as the givenness of the given be associated with God or Divinity? Can we pray to such a thing\non-thing? Feeling gratitude for being here is a first step in the appreciation of a dimension that opens out beyond the self. Perhaps the mystery of the incomprehensible fact of our being here fills us with awe, or with gratitude- but why also not indifference and resentment? Only because to be here is a gift.
CONCLUSION

What is to be learned from this extensive contrast and comparison between Aristotle and Heidegger? For one thing, that the question of being, which though “long forgotten” has remained with philosophy for almost 2500 years, continues to trouble us. But how the question is phrased, and what method we use to approach it, go a long way towards determining the sort of solution we can expect.

The way in which God relates to the human attempt to understand what it means to be has changed, as has also the way in which humans see themselves in relation to what it means to be. In Aristotle, the perspective of the subject involved in questioning what “being” means is left out. He approaches the question of what “being” means aetio logically, seeking grounds for what is, and accepting a unity between what is the case in the world, and what humans correctly perceive to be the case. Seeking grounds for what is, leads to the positing of a god as first cause. The modern introduction of the subject reaches a climax of sorts in Heidegger, where the question of being shifts to the question of the meaning of being for humans as existent. No longer an aetiological search for grounds, Heidegger’s ontology makes it possible to coherently and consistently describe what it is to be, and to be human, without reference to a god.

But, though I only offer some hints in this direction, just as Aristotle’s ontology may ignore the perspective of the individual human being, Heidegger’s ontology, convincing
as it is in its descriptive content, may not capture all of what it means to be, and to be human. Though the later Heidegger continues in the direction of the mystery of being here, and towards a rather pantheistic divinization of the earth, sky, and material conditions of our presence in the world, the pre-war works which I have discussed above begin and end with human being standing alone. How does this fit with our twentieth century concerns?

The twentieth century limps to a close, and fin de siècle disorientation is setting in. This century has borne the effects of “the death of God”, pronounced by Nietzsche, but expressed in the works of Marx, Freud, Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida, among others. Spellbound by materialism, alienated in the separation of God and state both from ancient religions and giant corporate governments, struggling with consumer-driven spirituality in “New Age” thinking, disoriented by the failure of grass-roots revolution, and faced with the cynicism of post-modernist deconstruction, in the West we are experiencing a paradoxical crisis: the decline of belief in reason. Perhaps the vicissitudes of materialism, which, among other factors, have been at play in this century in the years 1933-1945, as well as in East Timor, in Rwanda, in Zaire, in Bosnia, in Argentina, in Chile, in El Salvador, in Guatemala, in Israel, in Mozambique, and on and on, need tempering with some hope of another dimension, a hope that is not manipulated by political concerns. Perhaps we need a renewed look at the possibility that reason can encompass a concept of the infinite\God.
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WS= Winter Semester Course  
GA= Gesamtausgabe (Collected Works) edition number  
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy.

March 31, 1997  
Date

Adriaan T. Peperzak  
Director's Signature