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THE ABSENT FOUNDATION:

HEIDEGGER ON THE RATIONALITY OF BEING

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Nihil est sine ratione, “nothing is without reason.” For everything that is, there is an answer to the question *why* it is just so and not otherwise—and, ultimately, there is a reason (*ratio*) grounding the fact that there is something rather than nothing. Reality as a whole is thus “rational” or “reasonable,” in the sense that everything is based on something and has a “why” or a “how come” that grounds it, rendering it comprehensible and meaningful and thus letting it be part of meaningful reality. Nothing is without something that lets it be what it is. This is the famous “principle of reason” (*principium rationis*)—in a slightly different formulation, the “principle of the restoration of sufficient reason” (*principium reddendae rationis sufficientis*)—which was first explicitly

formulated in these words by G. W. Leibniz, although not as a doctrine of his own but as a fundamental and generally accepted philosophical principle.

There is in Nature a *reason* [*ratio*] why something should exist rather than nothing. This is a consequence of the great principle that nothing comes to be without reason, just as there also must be a reason why *this* exists, rather than something else.¹

Indeed, in one form or another, the principle of reason has been an integral part of Occidental metaphysics ever since antiquity. The central issue of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*—the question which Heidegger names the leading question (*Leitfrage*) of Occidental metaphysics as a whole—concerns that-which-is, beings.² What is a being *as such*? What is a being insofar as it is a being? Or, as Aristotle reformulates the question, what is the being-ness (*ousia*), the fundamental being-character, of beings as such? For Aristotle, the first essential characteristic of being-ness is fundamentality, foundationality.³ What truly is must be a *hypokeimenon* (in Latin *substantia*, “substance,” or *subiectum*, “subject”)—literally, something that “lies beneath” as an ontological basis or foundation, letting other, dependent beings be while itself remaining ontologically independent. The most being of all beings is that on which all other beings are dependent but which is itself absolutely independent of anything beyond itself.

The ontological investigation of Books Zeta, Eta, and Theta of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* thus finds its culmination in the theology of Book Lambda—a

discussion of God as the absolute, the most fundamental and necessary being-ness and principle. The Aristotelian notion of God as absolute self-awareness, as perfect being in-itself and for-itself, was then taken over by medieval Scholasticism—for St. Thomas, God as the uncreated creator and the ultimate cause of things is not only the most being of beings (*maxime ens*) but subsistence and permanence, that is, being-ness, as such (*ipsum esse subsistens*).⁴ Heidegger's famous genealogy of modernity shows how, since Descartes, the self-conscious I, now interpreted with regard to the absolute and immediate self-certainty of the *cogito*, gradually replaces God as *the* fundamental subject of reality. As modern metaphysics unfolds, human subjectivity as the basis of meaningfulness becomes more and more absolute and self-sufficient; this "subjectivization" culminates in Nietzsche's idea of the "superhuman" subject who no longer simply apprehends given objectivity but instead gives itself its own "truths" as fuel for its essence, that is, the ceaseless will to self-enhancement.⁵

In asking its leading question concerning the being-ness of beings, the metaphysical tradition has, according to Heidegger, constantly sought a supreme, ideal form of being-ness which all beings could be referred back to and founded upon. Yet from Plato to Nietzsche, metaphysics has been unable to radically pose what Heidegger calls the "basic question" or "fundamental question" (*Grundfrage*) of philosophy;⁶ it has never really inquired into the origin of its own "rationality." What are the experience of ideal being-ness as something foundational and the subsequent metaphysical demand for

foundations in themselves based on? What is the foundation, ground, or reason of being-ness, of the presence of beings as such? How come there is being-ness in the first place?

We know that the achievement of Leibniz was to intimate this question by asking why there should be something rather than nothing.⁷ However, he also immediately provides this question with a metaphysical answer: the ultimate reason for the fact that there is being-ness at all is the perfection of God as the most being of all beings. Yet it must be emphasized that overlooking the radical dimensions of this question was neither a personal failure of Leibniz nor an “error” of the metaphysical tradition he stood in. Heidegger emphasizes that the basic question is only really becoming plausible as a question now, in the (post)modern epoch, after the project of founding beings on ideal being-ness has been pursued to its extreme point of culmination, completion, and saturation by Hegel and Nietzsche.⁸

In what follows, I will briefly study Heidegger’s attempt to pose the basic question by way of reinterpreting and radicalizing Leibniz’s principle.⁹ He does this notably in the 1928 lecture course *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, in the 1929 essay “On the Essence of Reason,” and in the 1955–56 lectures on *The Principle of Reason*. Finally, following Jean-François Mattéi, I will try to suggest a sense in which the later Heidegger’s “fourfold” (*Geviert*) is an attempt to reformulate the traditional Aristotelian articulation of the essence of foundation or reason. I will argue that an insight into Heidegger’s reinterpretation offers an essential path to an understanding of his endeavor to

reconsider the ground—or rather, the back-ground—of the leading theme of the metaphysical tradition, of the being-ness of beings as such.

How do we primarily understand Leibniz’s simple thesis—that nothing *is* without being based on something? For the modern scientific mind, “reason” or “ground” is first and foremost associated with cause and causality.¹⁰ Modern science would tend to interpret the principle of reason to say that for every phenomenon, there is something that causes it to be the way it is; there is nothing random or spontaneous in nature. The initial approach of the modern scientist to any phenomenon is thus to attempt to explain it causally through an account of the factors that cause it to be the way it is, in accordance with certain causal laws. Such laws, which are basically formulated through induction from observations, tell us what is causally brought forth by what, thus permitting us to predict certain observations, to produce them experimentally and, eventually, to control them. As Heidegger points out in “The Question Concerning Technology,” modern science does not only make technological applications possible, it *is* essentially technical in itself.¹¹ The conceptual origin of technology lies in the Greek *technē*,¹² defined by Aristotle as familiarity with a principle that allows the bringing-about (*poiēsis*) of certain results¹³—a “know-how”—and distinguished¹⁴ from *epistēmē*, true science in the sense of a disinterested, comprehensive grasp of the structures of a certain phenomenal field. Science is “theoretical” in the sense that it finds its fulfillment in the activity of *theōrein*, “theory” or “speculation”—that is, in the comprehensive overview of reality in its fullness, without productive aims.¹⁵

In modernity, especially after the fall of German Idealism and its peculiar concept of science (*Wissenschaft*), “theory” and “science” have gradually come to mean the opposite of what they meant for Aristotle. It now belongs to the essence of scientific theories to have predictive power, and their role is thus essentially instrumental; scientific explanation of phenomena now entails the technical ability to produce certain results experimentally. Furthermore, whereas for Aristotle philosophical meditation concerning the principles (*archai*) of reality as a whole was precisely the most profound, most universal, and supreme scientific activity, in the modern age, scientific “research” and philosophical “speculation” have become two fundamentally different approaches. For the positivist and naturalist trends of thought, positive science, based on regularities in empirical observations, is our most profound way of getting to know what reality is like.

Kant, however, retains for philosophy another task as “transcendental” philosophy: philosophy seeks the necessary a priori basis and foundation of science, the condition of meaningful observations in the first place.

I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our manner of cognizing objects in general, insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*. A system of such concepts would be called *transcendental philosophy*.¹⁶

Kant, too, is looking for the grounds of phenomena. However, his transcendental approach does not seek the causal grounds of objects in other

objects; instead, following the metaphysical tradition, it seeks to ground objects in the necessary a priori structure of objectivity as such.¹⁷ Instead of reducing beings or facts to other chronologically anterior beings or facts, transcendental philosophy considers beings in relation to their very being-ness. Heidegger stresses that Kant's use of the term "transcendental," which in medieval philosophy denotes the most general categories of being-ness, is not arbitrary. In order to clarify the a priori structures of experience, it is necessary to transcend, to "overstep" (*übersteigen*) the immediately present, already constituted experience towards the structures of its constitution.¹⁸ However, these transcendental structures are not *transcendent* to our experience, in the sense of being beyond its reach. Rather, they form the structural background or horizon that necessarily accompanies and structures our experience of the object occupying the foreground or focal point of our experience.

As Heidegger emphasizes, Kant's basic framework is that of Cartesian metaphysics, and he accordingly seeks the reality of things in their objectivity—that is, in their capacity to be represented by the cognizing subject—and therefore poses his transcendental question in terms of the preconditions of subjective representation (*Vorstellung*).¹⁹ However, this should not prevent us from appreciating Kant's Greek background. It is precisely Kant's transcendental search for the fundamental structural principles of meaningfulness that, according to Heidegger, makes him Greek in spirit.²⁰ In the opening words of Aristotle's *Physics*—words that Heidegger praises as being worth more than entire libraries of philosophical literature²¹—we find the aim

of philosophy already defined as a transcending, an overstepping of the immediate and already constituted everyday reality toward its fundamental, transcendental principles (*archai*):

In all paths of research [*methodos*] to which principles [*archai*], grounds [*aitia*] and fundamental elements [*stoicheia*] belong, insight and scientific understanding result from acquaintance with these, for we take ourselves to be acquainted with something as soon as we are acquainted with its primary grounds and primary principles and have proceeded all the way to its elements. . . . Our path is originally such that it proceeds from what is more recognizable and more evident for us to what is more evident and recognizable originally [*physei*]; for what is recognizable to us is not identical with what is recognizable as such.²²

What is more easily recognized by us—the immediately present and fully constituted reality—is not identical with what is more primary in the order of the origination and emergence (*physis*) of reality—that is, the structural principles of its constitution, which are always implicitly there as the necessary background of all beings. The “method”—literally, the “path” (*hodos*)—of philosophical investigation is to proceed from the immediately given and to transcend it towards its necessary structural background. Already for Aristotle, philosophy is essentially “transcendental” in the broadest possible sense.²³

In the *Physics*, Aristotle presents his famous analysis of the four basic kinds of ground or reason (*aition*).²⁴ These are: (1) “that out of which” (*ex hou*) the thing consists, its material or “stuff” (*hylē*), such as gold; (2) its form,

generic appearance or essence (*eidos*), such as that of a bowl; (3) the mover or originator (*ho kinēsas*) of its becoming what it properly is, such as the goldsmith; and 4) the final end or purpose (*telos*) of the thing, that for the sake of which (*hou heneka*) it is real, the “good” proper to the thing in question. These four are usually known by their Scholastic names as the material, the formal, the efficient, and the final cause. However, Heidegger maintains that there is no “causality” in the modern sense of cause and effect involved here. The very notion of “efficient cause” (*causa efficiens*) is Roman in origin and remains foreign to Greek thought.²⁵ Instead, the four reasons are to be understood as the fourfold context on the basis of which the grounded thing becomes meaningfully present.²⁶ The *aitia* are the four fundamental factors that are responsible for the coming-to-be of beings and for their emergence into presence. They form the background “through which” (*dia ti*) the presence of the grounded thing is possible, to which it owes its presence and therefore always refers back to—the fourfold answer to the question “why this (and not something else)?”²⁷ What the Aristotelian description of the four reasons ultimately and half-unwittingly refers back to—in a Heideggerian reading that overcomes Aristotle’s own tendency to objectify these reasons—is “world” (*Welt*) as the context of mutual references that transcendently surrounds every being and at the same time constitutes the horizon which makes this being meaningful in the first place, that is, lets it be.²⁸

Heidegger is, in fact, arguing that ever since its Greek beginning, Western philosophy has been “transcendental” in the sense that it has sought the

structural grounds that lie implicit within and beyond explicit reality.²⁹ Even Husserl's transcendental reduction can be understood as the last great attempt to revive this original transcendental sense of philosophical investigation as such.³⁰ The phenomenological reduction is literally an attempt to re-conduct philosophical attention from already constituted things back to the structure and process of their constitution. Heidegger famously reinterprets the phenomenological reduction in the following manner:

*For Husserl, the phenomenological reduction . . . is the method of re-conducting [Rückführung] phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being, living within the world of things and persons, back to the transcendental life of consciousness and its noetico-noematic experiences, where objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. For us, the phenomenological reduction signifies re-conducting phenomenological vision from the so-and-so determined apprehension of beings back to the understanding of the Being . . . of these beings.*³¹

This is precisely how Heidegger reinterprets the question concerning the ground of beings and transcendental philosophy as the quest for these grounds. This was shown to be a questioning of the structural background, horizon, and context which surrounds and grounds beings and is necessarily implied in their presence. For Aristotle, this background is constituted by the principles (*archai*) of reality itself, the most fundamental principle being God. For Kant and Husserl, the background of objects is the transcendental

structure of objectivity-for-subjectivity—self-conscious subjectivity being itself the fundamental foundation. In all of these cases, the fundamental background of beings is ideal being-ness as the sphere of absolute self-presence, be it that of God or of the I-subject. Heidegger now poses the fundamental question: What is the background of this being-ness as such?

For Heidegger, this necessary, implicit background of reality is, of course, nothing else than what he calls Being (*Sein* or, more consistently with the archaic orthography, *Seyn*)—Being not in the traditional sense of the being-ness of beings or of the objectivity of objects, but instead in the radical and archaic post- or pre-metaphysical sense. The question of the ground of being-ness as such is, fundamentally, the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*). What Heidegger’s post-metaphysical thinking calls into question is Being as the implicit background which allows the being-ness or presence of beings as the explicit foreground. Even though, in *Being and Time*, the discovery of Being is referred to as “transcendental truth,”³² for the later Heidegger it becomes more and more evident that this kind of new foundational thinking cannot properly be called “transcendental,” for it no longer seeks an ideal, universal being-ness that would “transcend” individual beings in the sense of being “superior” to them in a metaphysically determined ontological hierarchy.³³ Nor is it, strictly speaking, “foundational” thinking, for the ground of being-ness cannot be a foundation in the traditional sense of a point of reference that is more real than immediate reality itself. What is sought in this other questioning of grounds is a ground that is other to and different from being-ness, presence or reality—

and, in that sense, un-being, un-present, un-real—and lets being-ness occupy the foreground precisely in differing from it as its other.

Being in this other, different sense is precisely the nothing (*Nichts*), nothing-ness as such.³⁴ This no-thing-ness should not be thought of as some self-contained “entity”, separate from some-thing-ness. Instead, Being as the nothing “is” precisely the “ontological difference” itself—not as the metaphysical distinction between beings and their being-ness, but in the radical sense as the event of differentiation and relative otherness which allows and “carries out” (*austragen*) the relative identity and stability of things.³⁵ As Heidegger emphasizes in his 1949 foreword to “On the Essence of Ground,” while the ontological difference and the nothing are not mutually “equivalent” (*einerlei*), they nevertheless belong together as the self-same issue (*das Selbe*) for thinking—as Being.³⁶

In the 1929 essay “On the Essence of Reason,” Heidegger presents a threefold articulation of Being as the ground of beings. It is evident that this articulation is intimately connected to the analysis of the temporality of Dasein in *Being and Time*, as well as to the analyses of significance and world. The point of departure is here the transcendence of Dasein. Dasein is itself precisely in transcending its immediate present.³⁷ This transcendence is also called “freedom,” for in “overcoming” the immediately given toward its transcendental context, Dasein is also “free” from the given.³⁸ However, freedom is not the arbitrary absence of grounds. On the contrary, freedom as transcendence is the original relationship to Being as the back-ground of

beings. “All the same, freedom as transcendence is not just a particular ‘kind’ of ground; it is the *origin of ground in general. Freedom is freedom to ground.*”³⁹ It is precisely through its freedom that Dasein is able to encounter a meaningful reality where given beings are placed into a meaningful context, into a background, and thus “grounded” or “founded” (*gründen*) in Being. Freedom “gives” and “takes” ground. This event of grounding has three aspects:

1. Transcendent freedom “establishes” (*stiften*) or “projects” (*entwerfen*) background in the sense of a “for-the-sake-of-what” (*Umwillen*)—a purpose or end which bestows a sense of purposefulness to the being at hand. For example, when a hammer is given to us in the primary mode of handiness (*Zuhandenheit*), we immediately transcend the hammer as a material object towards a futural dimension of purpose, a “for-which” or an “in-order-to.” The context of purpose, such as hammering a nail, building a house, having a place to dwell etc., makes the object meaningful to us in a practical context.⁴⁰
2. Transcendent freedom “takes ground” (*bodennehmen*) in its factual and historical background, in the situation in which it already finds itself entangled (*Befindlichkeit*). In other words, Dasein is always already “taken in” (*eingenommen*) by its factual circumstances. In projecting its goals, Dasein is itself already “thrown” or “ejected” (*geworfen*) into a certain factual situation which delimits in beforehand its possible goals in imposing on Dasein a given preliminary articulation and interpretation of reality. Because of the facticity, of the “already-going-

on” character (*Gewesenheit*) of Dasein, some possibilities are always already withdrawn (*entzogen*) from it. This limitation of proper possibilities constitutes the essential finitude of Dasein’s freedom.⁴¹

3. In their initial unity, these two dimensions of temporal transcendence allow an intentional relationship to the present as meaningful and well-founded. Transcendence thus “justifies” (*begründen*) the present. It makes it possible in the first place to seek reasons in asking the question “why” or “how come”: how come precisely this and not something else?⁴²

This threefold division is the original essence of ground. The essence of ground is thus the temporality of Dasein: the temporal unity of open futural possibilities and the factual, already-given historical background which, in their mutual interaction, allow the constitution of a meaningful present. Hence Heidegger’s compact and challenging summary:

*The essence of ground is the transcendently off-springing threefold scattering of grounding into projection of world, having-been-taken-in among beings and ontological justification of beings.*⁴³

The temporal freedom of transcendent Dasein is thus the origin of the principle of ground or reason that has haunted Western philosophy ever since Plato and Aristotle. “Freedom is the ground of ground. . . . However, as *this* ground freedom is the *void* [*Ab-grund*] of Dasein.”⁴⁴ And as Heidegger puts it in the late 1930s, “As *void* [*Ab-grund*], Being ‘is’ at once the nothing [*das Nichts*] as well as

the ground.”⁴⁵ Being is the “void” (*Ab-grund*), the absent foundation, the background which itself withdraws and only thus allows beings to occupy the foreground. In other words, Being is the relative absentiality which allows meaningful presence – “presence-by-absence” or “pres-ab-sence,” as Thomas Sheehan famously puts it.⁴⁶

It must be noted, however, that whereas this formulation of the essence of ground in terms of the transcendence and the freedom of Dasein clearly indicates the fundamental orientation of Heidegger’s thought, it is far from being his final word on the matter. From the 1930s onwards he subjected the entire concept of “transcendence” to an immanent critique as potentially misleading and metaphysically determined.⁴⁷ First of all, it could be taken as a subjectively free, ground-constituting activity of Dasein as subjectivity, whereas in the end Heidegger wants to show that it is the background itself that “gives beingness,” lets presence take place in the receptive open place, in the *Da*, of Dasein. Secondly, the concept of transcendence seems to imply that there is at first some immanent self that is then transcended, whereas Heidegger’s point is precisely that the “self” of Dasein, which forms the place in which the taking-place (*Ereignis*) of presence is possible, is generated through its prior “already being beyond itself.” In his 1955–56 lectures on *The Principle of Reason* Heidegger therefore attempts to reformulate his radicalization of the question of ground using entirely different expressions. Here he also notes that in 1929 he did not listen attentively enough to the wording of Leibniz’s principle.⁴⁸ To say that nothing is without reason or ground is assuredly a metaphysical

statement, but if instead we emphasize the word nothing (*nihil*), we get: *nothing* is *without* ground. Being as the *no-thing-ness* is the ground, more precisely, the absent ground, which itself has no ground.

In the end, Leibniz's grand principle, "Nothing is without reason," has thus been reinterpreted to say, in a free formulation, "No being can be meaningfully present in the foreground of being-ness without the temporal event of Being that forms its relatively absent, differing, and withdrawing background." There is something rather than nothing precisely because nothing-ness forms the background that lets presence as such occupy the foreground. Heidegger emphasizes that this background of presence is an *Abgrund*, a void, a bottom-less-ness, an *absence* or *lack* of foundation—but only from the point of view of traditional metaphysics.⁴⁹ Considered in a positive manner, the *Abgrund* is not a "privation"—it is simply *not* the kind of positive foundation that metaphysics has been looking for. The ultimate foundation of reality and meaning in difference or absentiality does not imply the ultimate nihilistic collapse of all meaningfulness and rationality into nothingness—a superficial accusation that is often brought up against the thought of Derrida, in particular. The differential and absential character of the foundation only means that what rationality as such is based on is not itself rational, not a positive *ratio*.

By now, we have perhaps gained an initial understanding of the Heideggerian radicalization of the principle of reason or ground, and we begin to see its implications. Heidegger ends his 1929 meditation on the essence of

ground by arguing that the great shortcoming in Aristotle's profound analysis of the four kinds of reason is its lack of unity.⁵⁰ Aristotle is content with claiming that it is "evident" that there are exactly these four kinds, without really explaining why this is so and what constitutes the unity of the four.⁵¹ Heidegger is, in fact, indirectly proposing that he himself has found this lacking unity and common ground in his present analysis of the threefold temporal structure of groundedness.

Starting from the fragments for *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* in the late 1930s, Heidegger increasingly refers to the unity of four dimensions of sense which he names "gods" (*die Götter*) or the "divine ones" (*die Göttlichen*), "human beings" (*die Menschen*) or "mortals" (*die Sterblichen*), "world" (*die Welt*) or "heaven" (*der Himmel*), and "earth" (*die Erde*). In his famous essay on "The Thing" (1950), Heidegger rather opaquely describes how these four dimensions are to be found in unity, as a "unity of four" or "fourfold" (*Geviert*), within a simple thing, a Greek pitcher; pouring wine from the pitcher supposedly refers back to the gods, the mortals, heaven, and earth.⁵² In a recent work, the French Heidegger scholar Jean-François Mattéi has argued that this baffling account is to be understood precisely as a reinterpretation and reworking of the four Aristotelian grounds.⁵³ Fully in agreement with Mattéi's insight, I will try to elaborate this suggestion by trying to show in what sense it could be true, and to develop it further by suggesting the fourfold to be a rethought version of the threefold division of Dasein's transcendence to grounds in "On the Essence of Ground."⁵⁴

In Heidegger's later work, "gods" name the futural sense-bestowing dimension of ultimate goals, aims and purposes—we are tempted to say "values," although Heidegger despises this modern subjectivist concept—in short, the Aristotelian "final cause." The "divine ones" are what is most high and holy for a given historical world; the "eschatologically" final, ultimate and unattainable character of this divine dimension is further emphasized by the highly demanding discussion of the "ultimate God" (*der letzte Gott*) in the sixth part or "joining" (*Fuge*) of the *Contributions to Philosophy*. "Mortals" are the historical and finite community of human beings as receivers, interpreters, and re-shapers of meaningfulness—the Aristotelian "efficient cause"—whose activities always remain determined by what is *beyond* human action, by the divine. These are the two temporal dimensions of transcendence—the historical and social background and the future realm of possible meaningful ends—whose dynamic mutual conflict (*Kampf*) creates the context where presence can take place.

Presence is itself a two-dimensional event of internal conflict, consisting of the basic dimensions of "earth" and "world." "Earth" names the opaque dimension of inchoate and implicit potentiality-to-be, the solid ground for the material and sensuous presence of things in their particularity—the Aristotelian "material cause." "World" or "heaven" is the dimension of light and visibility, of significant, discursive articulation which grants relative permanence and generality to particular things—the Aristotelian "formal cause." The dispute or discord (*Streit*) between world and earth, which itself

ENDNOTES

¹ G. W. Leibniz [1697] in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, VII, ed. C. J. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Olm, 1965), 289; “A Résumé of Metaphysics,” in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G. H. R. Parkinson, trans. M. Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson, new, revised ed. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1973), 145 (translation modified).

² See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, [1936–39/1961] 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1998), 64–65, hereafter, *N I*; *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. D. F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991), 67–68.

³ See Aristotle, *Categories (Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione)*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 5.2a11; *Metaphysics (Aristotle’s Metaphysics I–II)*, ed. W. Ross, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.8.1017b23–24. An outstanding study of the basic tension in the *Metaphysics* between the two main determinations of being-ness—fundamentality and essentiality—is Rudolf Boehm, *Das Grundlegende und das Wesentliche: Zu Aristoteles’ Abhandlung “Über das Sein und das Seiende” (Metaphysik Z)* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965).

⁴ For these determinations, see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, vol. 2: *Existence and Nature of God*, trans. T. McDermott (London: Blackfriars, 1964), Ia.2.3, Ia.3.3–7, Ia.4.1–3.

⁵ See, e.g., Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche II* [1939–46/1961], 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1998), 130–80, 262–82, hereafter, *N II*; *Nietzsche*, vol. 4: *Nihilism*, trans. F. A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991), 102–49; and *Nietzsche*, vol. 3: *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, trans. J. Stambaugh, D. F. Krell, F. A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991), 216–34.

⁶ See Heidegger, *N I*, 64–65; *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, 67–68. Cf. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie* [1930], *Gesamtausgabe*, 31

(Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982), 113–38; *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. T. Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), 79–95, as well as *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [1936–38], *Gesamtausgabe*, 65 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), 232–35, hereafter GA 65; *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 164–66.

⁷ See Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, “Principes de la nature et de la grâce fondés en raison” [1714], in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, IV*, ed. C. J. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Olm, 1960), 602; “Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason,” in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. R. Ariew and D. Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 210.

⁸ See Heidegger, *N I*, 64–65, 401–23, 425–32; *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, 67–68, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2: *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. D. F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991), 184–208; *Nietzsche*, vol. 3: *The Will to Power as Knowledge*, 3–9, as well as *N II*, 177–80; *Nietzsche*, vol. 4: *Nihilism*, 147–49.

⁹ An outstandingly careful and profound study of Heidegger’s reading of Leibniz’s principle of reason is Renato Cristin, *Heidegger and Leibniz: Reason and the Path* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998).

¹⁰ Heidegger on causality in modern science, see Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik” [1953], in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 7th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1994), 9–16, hereafter, VA; “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 3–12. See also “Wissenschaft und Besinnung” [1953], in VA, 41–66; “Science and Reflection,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 155–82.

¹¹ Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik,” 24–27; “The Question Concerning Technology,” 20–23.

¹² Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik,” 16–18, 38; “The Question Concerning Technology,” 12–14, 34.

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- ¹³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. L. Bywater, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1890), 6.4.1140a1–23; cf. *Metaphysics* 1.1.980a27–981b13.
- ¹⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.3.1139b14–36; cf. *Metaphysics* 1.1.981b13–982a3.
- ¹⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 6.1; cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7 and 10.7.
- ¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [1st ed., 1781; 2nd ed., 1787], ed. J. Timmermann (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998); *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B 25 (translation modified), cf. A 11–12.
- ¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* [1955–56], 7th ed. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1992), 137, hereafter, *SG*; *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 80. See also Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 95.
- ¹⁸ Heidegger, *SG*, 133–35; *The Principle of Reason*, 77–79.
- ¹⁹ Heidegger, *SG*, 131–32; *The Principle of Reason*, 76–77.
- ²⁰ Heidegger, *SG*, 131; *The Principle of Reason*, 76.
- ²¹ Heidegger, *SG*, 112; *The Principle of Reason*, 64.
- ²² Aristotle, *Physics* (*Aristotle's Physics*, ed. W. Ross, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.1.184a10–14, 16–18. Translation J. B.
- ²³ See Heidegger, *SG*, 110–13; *The Principle of Reason*, 62–65.
- ²⁴ Aristotle, *Physics* 2.3; cf. *Metaphysics* 5.2.
- ²⁵ Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik,” 12–13; “The Question Concerning Technology,” 7–8.
- ²⁶ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes” [1929/1949], in *Wegmarken*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 124–25, hereafter *WM*; “On the Essence of Ground,” trans. W. McNeill, in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98–99. See also “Die Frage nach der Technik,” in *VA*, 12–16; “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 7–12.
- ²⁷ Aristotle, *Physics* 2.3.194b18–19.

²⁸ Cf. Daniel Panis, “De l’être et du fondement en Métaph. Z, 3: sur une interprétation ‘heideggerienne,’” *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 4 (1986): 87–105.

²⁹ Cf. Alejandro G. Vigo, “Archeologie und aletheiologie: Zu Heideggers Transformation der aristotelischen Ontologie-Auffassung,” *Existentialia* 12 (2002): 63–86.

³⁰ Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie* [1936], *Husserliana*, VI (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954); *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), § 26.

³¹ Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* [1927], *Gesamtausgabe*, 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975), 29; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, revised ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 21 (translation modified).

³² Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [1927], 18th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 38; *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 62.

³³ An excellent critical study of how Heidegger purports to abandon his initial “transcendental” project and to what extent this really happens is Daniel Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Transcendentalism” (forthcoming in *Research in Phenomenology*). I thank Prof. Dahlstrom for the opportunity to read this unpublished article.

³⁴ See, e.g., Heidegger, *Besinnung* [1938–39], *Gesamtausgabe*, 66 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), 99, 101; hereafter, *GA* 66.

³⁵ See Heidegger, *GA* 65, 465–69, 474–75; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 327–30, 334; “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik” [1957], in *Identität und Differenz*, 12th ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002), 53–64, henceforth *ID*; “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 62–74.

³⁶ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 123; “On the Essence of Ground,” 97.

³⁷ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 163; “On the Essence of Ground,” 126.

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- ³⁸ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 163–64; “On the Essence of Ground,” 126. Cf. *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* [1928], *Gesamtausgabe*, 26 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 276–77; hereafter, *GA* 26; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 213–14.
- ³⁹ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 165; “On the Essence of Ground,” 127 (translation modified).
- ⁴⁰ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 165–66; “On the Essence of Ground,” 127–28. Cf. *GA* 26, 273–80; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 211–16.
- ⁴¹ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 166–67; “On the Essence of Ground,” 127–29.
- ⁴² Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 168–69; “On the Essence of Ground,” 129–30.
- ⁴³ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 171; “On the Essence of Ground,” 132 (translation modified).
- ⁴⁴ Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 174; “On the Essence of Ground,” 134 (translation modified).
- ⁴⁵ Heidegger, *GA* 66, 99.
- ⁴⁶ See, e.g., Thomas Sheehan, “Heidegger’s Topic: Excess, Recess, Access,” *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 41 (1979): 629; “Heidegger’s Philosophy of Mind,” in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, vol. 4: *Philosophy of Mind*, ed. G. Fløistad (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 307; “On the Way to *Ereignis*: Heidegger’s Interpretation of *Physis*,” in *Continental Philosophy in America*, ed. H. J. Silverman, J. Sallis, and T. M. Seebohm (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), 149; “Time and Being, 1925–7,” in *Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, vol. 1: *Philosophy*, ed. C. Macann (London: Routledge, 1992), 30–31.
- ⁴⁷ See Heidegger, *GA* 65, 322; *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 226.
- ⁴⁸ See Heidegger, *SG*, 84–90; *The Principle of Reason*, 45–49.
- ⁴⁹ See Martin Heidegger, “Der Satz der Identität” [1957], in *ID*, 20; “The Principle of Identity,” in *Identity and Difference*, 32.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Heidegger, “Vom Wesen des Grundes,” 124–25, 170–71; “On the Essence of Ground,” 98–99, 131–32.

⁵¹ See Aristotle, *Physics* 2.7.198a21.

⁵² Martin Heidegger, “Das Ding,” [1950] in *VA*, 164–66, 170–75; “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 172–74, 177–82. The fourfold also features in the essays “Bauen Wohnen Denken” [1951], in *VA*, 139–56; “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 143–61; “Die Sprache” [1950] and “Das Wesen der Sprache,” [1958], in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 13th ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2003), 9–33 and 157–216; “Language,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 187–210; “On the Nature of Language,” in *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz (Harper & Row: New York, 1971), 57–108; and in “Hölderlins Erde und Himmel” [1959], in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, 6th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 152–81; “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven,” in *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, trans. K. Hoeller (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 175–207.

⁵³ See Jean-François Mattéi, “Le quadruple fondement de la métaphysique: Heidegger, Aristote, Platon et Hésiode,” in *La métaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*, ed. J.-M. Narbonne and L. Langlois (Paris: J. Vrin – Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1999), 203–28; *Heidegger et Hölderlin: le quadriparti* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), 31–85; “Le quadruple énigme de l’être,” in *Heidegger: l’énigme de l’être*, ed. J.-F. Mattéi (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 131–57.

⁵⁴ A somewhat different, yet fascinating interpretation of the unity of the fourfold has been given by Karsten Harries in “‘Das Ding’, ‘Bauen Wohnen Denken’, ‘. . . dichterisch wohnt der Mensch . . .’ und andere Texte aus dem Umfeld: Unterwegs zum Geviert,” in *Heidegger-Handbuch: Leben–Werk–Wirkung*, ed. D. Thomä (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2003), 290–302.

⁵⁵ See Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” [1935/1936/1956] in *Holzwege*, 8th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2003), 19, 28–42; “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 33–34, 42–55.

⁵⁶ See Heidegger, *GA 65*, 310; *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 218.

⁵⁷ See Heidegger, *GA 65*, 310–11; *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 218–19; as well as *GA 66*, 117, 309–11.