
Sergiu SAVA*

Back to Basics: Being and Being Thought in the Phenomenology of Givenness

Abstract: Metaphysics is a controversial figure in the philosophy of the past century. We see it attacked from the perspective of both analytical philosophy and continental philosophy. On a closer observation, however, it can be noticed that analytic philosophy has never been fully involved in challenging metaphysics (see Simons 2013). Things are no different with continental philosophy. Martin Heidegger himself gives up, at one point, his decades-long explicit attempt to overcome metaphysics under its various instantiations, such as onto-theology or metaphysics of presence (Heidegger 2007). However, the struggle against metaphysics continued in the continental philosophy. One need only think of Jacques Derrida and deconstruction. In fact, the struggle against metaphysics continues even today, beyond deconstruction. Through his writings pertaining to the history of philosophy, theology, or phenomenology, Jean-Luc Marion is a representative of today's struggle against metaphysics. He even proposes a philosophy free of metaphysics, namely the phenomenology of givenness.

Despite all the controversies surrounding metaphysics, it has not always been clear what is to be understood by metaphysics in general or by its various instantiations. Usually, not even in Marion's writings or, even less, in the writings about Marion's writings does metaphysics have a well-defined meaning. The consequences of this state of affairs are several: it cannot be clearly understood what Marion is struggling against; the struggle as such cannot be understood; nor can the alternative to metaphysics be fully understood. The task of my text is therefore self-evident. I will contribute to elucidating the meaning that metaphysics has within the framework of the attempt to construct a phenomenology of donation. I do this by considering three hypostases of metaphysics and the relationship between them. Beyond the metaphysics of presence and onto-theology, I will consider idolatry

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1. Metaphysics as metaphysics of presence

In *Reduction and Givenness*, Marion brings up metaphysics with the purpose of overcoming it by way of constructing a new phenomenology, the phenomenology of givenness. The task of metaphysics, he says, is to interpret the Being of beings as presence. To be is to be present.

* PhD, Faculty of Philosophy and Social and Political Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi; e-mail: sergiu_sava@yahoo.com

Metaphysics is thus determined as the *metaphysics of presence*. Its proper work consists in specifying the conditions of presence – the conditions every thing must fulfil in order to be rightfully considered as being – and, consequently, in determining the space of beings. From this perspective, the history of metaphysics can be seen as a succession of different ways of specifying the conditions of presence. Thus, if this history has, as Marion believes, a progressive character, the conditions of presence becoming more and more permissive, then metaphysics must be understood as an attempt to subsume the totality of things to the horizon of presence (Marion 1989, 7-8).¹

Following this line of thought, it is still difficult to determine the concrete features of metaphysics and how it could be overcome. Although the phrase *metaphysics of presence* is often encountered in contemporary philosophy, especially in the context of Heidegger's phenomenology or in the context of the Derrida's deconstruction, it is rarely made explicit as such, thus tending to lose its trace in the ambiguity of what seems to be self-understood. Things look no different in *Reduction and Givenness*. Since metaphysics is defined as an attempt to subsume the totality of things to the horizon of presence, it would have only been natural for Marion, in order to outline how metaphysics could be overcome, to circumscribe rigorously and precisely what is to be understood by *presence*. Thus it might have seemed reasonable, and possibly feasible, to attempt to delineate a space outside the metaphysics of presence. Such a way of posing the question of the possibility of an overcoming of metaphysics is, moreover, not at all foreign to Marion's thought. In a different place, where he speaks, following Heidegger's example, of the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics, he shares exactly the same perspective: only a rigorous and precise definition of metaphysics, and therefore a more precise delimitation of its space, allows us to think of another horizon, external to it (Marion 2005, 79-80). However, in *Reduction and Givenness*, apart from the nominal description of metaphysics as metaphysics of presence, one does not find any attempt to establish clearly the limits of the concept of *presence*, so that the attempt of going beyond the metaphysics of presence can become at least conceivable.

But is this way of approaching the problem of circumscribing the metaphysics of presence and overcoming it the only one possible? Moreover, is it really viable? Derrida himself saw the task of defining the meaning of the concept of *presence* as extremely difficult and laborious. The main problem one encounters with such an approach is that the meaning of *presence* is plural, subsuming not only the experience of the Latin world, instantiated in the term *praesentia*, but also the experience that underlies terms such as *Vorhandenheit*, *Gegenwärtigkeit*, *Anwesenheit* or *Anwesen*, *ousia* or *parousia*, as well as the interpretation these terms receive in Heidegger's

investigations into the understanding of being as presence. (Derrida 1972, 34-38 and Sallis 1984, 594-601) From this perspective, the possibility of demarcating, by analysing the concept of *presence*, the space of metaphysics risks becoming inaccessible.

If this is indeed the case, if the attempt to circumscribe the concept of *presence* seems rather doomed to failure, so that such a path is almost impossible to follow in the context of the investigations in *Reduction and Givenness*, then it would behove Marion to offer another way of encompassing the whole metaphysics of presence and thus of showing how phenomenology could go beyond it. In other words, Marion should still – even if he has to give up the task of listing the various forms presence can take – provide a functional concept of the metaphysics of presence. Only in this way does the conceiving of a space outside metaphysics and, subsequently, the indication of how phenomenology might occupy this space become possible. Such a task, however, is not easily achievable.² The reader has indeed to wait a good few pages before Marion indirectly, in an alternative approach, comes to specify the contours of the metaphysics of presence. It is only at the end of the first chapter of *Reduction and Givenness* that one learns that the metaphysics of presence is overcome when Being is freed from the limits imposed on it by the human faculties. It is only at this point one can understand that the metaphysics of presence, for Marion, is identified with the domination of human faculties over Being (Marion 1989, 60-61). This indirect definition can nonetheless serve as a firm starting point for my attempt to reconstruct the general features of the concept of *metaphysics*. What one is dealing with here is not an inventory of the different meanings of presence, but an appeal to the principle generating the metaphysics of presence. Delineating the space of the metaphysics of presence is thus identical with delineating the boundaries of the efficacy of the principle generating it. This means that, for the overcoming of metaphysics to be conceivable, it must be approached from the perspective of the source of the meaning of presence, that is, from the perspective of the relation between the human faculties and Being.

Understanding Being by appealing to its relationship with another is by no means something new. In the history of philosophy, Being has been understood in terms of its relation to *becoming*, *seeming*, or *the ought*. In the specific case Marion describes and is concerned with, that of the metaphysics of presence, Being is understood in relation to the human faculties. This relation leads to the interpretation of Being as presence. To be is to be present, and to be present is to be situated in relation to the human faculties. The indeterminate meaning of the middle term of this reasoning thus becomes negligible. To be is to be situated in relation to human faculties. The metaphysics of presence can thus be investigated and circumscribed without direct appeal to presence.

I believe this way of understanding Being becomes much clearer if one brings in discussion the investigation Heidegger pursues in *Introduction to Metaphysics*.³ We learn from this lecture that the determination of Being in relation to the human faculties – Heidegger uses the generic name *thinking* for them – originates in the ancient Greek world. Thinking, however, is not an equal term in its relation to Being, but the primary term, the one providing the perspective from which Being is understood:

“Thinking sets itself against Being in such a way that Being is re-presented to thinking, and consequently stands against thinking like an object *«Gegen-stand, that which stands against»*. (...) Consequently, thinking is no longer just the opposing member in some new distinction but becomes the basis on which one decides about what stands against it, so much so that Being in general gets interpreted on the basis of thinking.”⁴ (Heidegger 2000, 124)

Being is interpreted from the perspective of thinking as its object. To be is to be the object of thinking, and to be the object of thinking, Heidegger seems to say, is to be under the control of thinking. In this configuration of the relation to thinking, Being comes to be interpreted as *permanent presence* (Heidegger 2000, 201-203). Being designates that which is always available to thought. What does not satisfy this criterion – the rest, in its various forms, be it *seeming*, *becoming*, or *the ought* – is expelled outside Being. Nonetheless, even if to be is to be an object of thinking, and the object is understood as permanent presence, this interpretation of Being in relation to thinking becomes, in the course of history, no longer itself an object of Western thinking, much less a permanent presence for the latter:

“Our immersion [not to say lostness] in the prior view and insight that sustains and guides all our understanding of Being is all the more powerful, and at the same time all the more concealed, because the Greeks themselves no longer shed light on this prior line of sight as such.”⁵ (Heidegger 2000, 124).

This understanding of Being in relation to thinking generates and identifies itself with Western metaphysics interpreted as metaphysics of presence. The understanding of Being as presence thus becomes a fundamental trait of Western thinking in general. Every orientation of this thinking – whether we speak of rationalism or empiricism, idealism or materialism – has at its foundation the understanding of Being as presence. At the same time, the fundamental character of the understanding of Being as presence makes it almost unnoticeable for us today. And such a fact enhances its historical efficacy:

“This determinateness of Being is not accidental. It grows out of the determination under which our historical Dasein stands by virtue of its great inception among the Greeks. The determinateness of Being is not a matter of delimiting a mere meaning of a word. It is the power that today still sustains and dominates all our relations to beings as a whole, to becoming, to seeming, to thinking, and to the ought.”⁶ (Heidegger 2000, 216-217).

The interpretation of metaphysics as metaphysics of presence cannot be conceived as simply assigning a meaning to metaphysics, one among others, but must be understood in its historical dimension. The metaphysics of presence is responsible for a certain unfolding of the history of Western thought, if not for the unfolding of Western history in general.

It would thus seem natural, given the analysis above, to conclude that the approach on metaphysics in *Reduction and Givenness*, though more implicit, is much broader than those to be found in some of Marion's earlier texts. However, this understanding can only be strengthened to the extent that the alternative definitions of metaphysics can be made explicit, in terms of their fundamental data, with the metaphysics of presence as a reference point. I will thus pay attention to the relationship between the obtained concept of the metaphysics of presence and two other interpretations of metaphysics found in Marion's texts: onto-theology and idolatry.

2. Metaphysics of presence and onto-theology

Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics as onto-theology is adopted by Marion as a premise in most of his texts dealing with the history of philosophy. The reason for this predominance consists in the fact that onto-theology is understood – like the metaphysics of presence – as a structure that runs through the entire history of Western philosophy. In order to explain what onto-theology consists in and why it can be understood as a structure of Western philosophy, it must first of all be pointed out that metaphysics, which underlies the history of philosophy, has as its function, according to Heidegger, the investigation of the ground of all that is, the investigation of the Being of beings:

“The Being of beings is thus thought of in advance as the grounding ground. Therefore all metaphysics is at bottom, and from the ground up, what grounds, what gives account of the ground, what is called to account by the ground, and finally what calls the ground to account.”⁷ (Heidegger 1969, 58).

The investigation of Being as the ground of all beings is carried out in two directions: (1) the ontological one, which deals with what characterizes

beings in general, more precisely what all beings have in common; (2) the theological one, which deals with the supreme being, on two levels: (2.1) that of the identity of the supreme being and (2.2) that of the supreme character of the supreme being, of the meaning of the supreme being. Metaphysics, encompassing both directions of the investigation of the Being of beings, asserts itself as onto-theology:

“But if we recall once again the history of Occidental-European thought, then we see that the question about Being, taken as a question about the Being of beings, is double in form. It asks on the one hand: What are beings, in general, as beings? Considerations within the province of this question come, in the course of the history of philosophy, under the heading of ontology. The question "What are beings?" includes also the question "Which being is the highest and in what way is it?" The question is about the divine and God. The province of this question is called theology. The duality of the question about the Being of beings can be brought together in the title "onto-theo-logy.”⁸ (Heidegger 1998, 340).

The same idea is found in Heidegger’s “The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics”:

“Metaphysics thinks of beings as such, as a whole. Metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of the all that accounts for the ground, that is, of the All-Highest. The Being of beings is thus thought of in advance as the grounding ground.”⁹ (Heidegger 1969, 58).

In order to check whether the perspective of *Reduction and Givenness* on metaphysics is broader than those to be found in Marion's earlier texts, the question to be raised at this point concerns the origin of the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics: What made it possible for the Being of beings to be thought onto-theologically? Heidegger's answer to this question is, according to Iain Thomson, phenomenological in nature. (Thomson 2000) It is the very manifestation of Being that is the condition of possibility of the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics:

“Obviously, the twofold quality of the question about beings must result from the way the Being of beings manifests itself. Being manifests itself in the character of that which we call ground. Beings in general are the ground in the sense of the foundation upon which any further consideration of beings takes place. That which is the highest being is the ground in the sense of that which allows all beings to come into being.”¹⁰ (Heidegger 1998, 340).

Metaphysics can unfold as onto-theology because, first of all, Being manifests itself as ground. The very fate of metaphysics is at stake in this original moment of Being's manifestation. In keeping with the phenomenological approach to this situation, it should be pointed out that manifestation involves always a receiver, a subject in the dative – in this case, man. Thus, at the beginning of metaphysics we encounter a relationship, that between Being and man. The situation seems similar to the one addressed by Heidegger in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. From his perspective there, the subject, although in the dative, is not a passive receiver, but puts its mark on the manifestation of Being. Therefore, the fact that the Being manifests itself as ground should rather be understood as an interpretation of Being as ground. The manifestation of Being is fulfilled from the perspective and according to the receiver.

This explanation of the initial moment of metaphysics is defended further by Thomson, who distinguishes between the dynamic manifestation of Being and its interpretation, due to some sort of "phenomenological numbness," as presence. It is only after such an interpretation that Being can be understood as a ground, thus making its onto-theological approach possible. The direction of this explanation is corroborated by Heidegger himself, a further argument being provided by the fact that the manifestation of Being has not only been interpreted as presence, but also as emergence (*physis*) or disclosure (*aletheia*):

“In the beginning of its history, Being opens itself out as emerging (*physis*) and unconcealment (*aletheia*). From there it reaches the formulation of presence and permanence in the sense of enduring (*ousia*). Metaphysics proper begins with this.”¹¹ (Heidegger 2003, 4).

At the same time, it should be pointed out that, precisely because Being has manifested itself and been interpreted as something other than ground or presence, Being can and must manifest itself again and be interpreted as something other than ground or presence. The metaphysics of presence can and, for a freer relation to things in general, must be overcome. In order to emphasize the prevalence of the metaphysics of presence over onto-theology I will appeal to an excerpt from a lecture given by Heidegger at Marburg in the winter semester, 1924-1925. In that specific passage – contained in a sub-paragraph entitled “First Philosophy as Ontology and Theology: Explaining Duality on the Basis of the Greek Understanding of Being (as Presence)” – he states explicitly that theology and ontology, as fundamental directions of metaphysics, have as their foundation the understanding of Being as presence:

“Why did Greek science and philosophy arrive at these two basic sciences? In Plato they are still wholly intermingled; he leaves them even more unclarified than Aristotle does. But in fact he already moves in both these dimensions. It can be made understandable only on the basis of the meaning of Being for Greeks. Being is what is present in the proper sense. Theology considers beings according to what they are already in advance, i.e., according to what constituted, in the most proper and highest sense, the presence of the world. The most proper and highest presence of beings is the theme of theology. The theme of ontology is beings insofar as they are present in all their determinations, not tailored to a definite region, not only the unmoved mover and the heavens, but also what is under the heavens, everything there is, mathematical beings as well as physical. Thus the theme of theology is the highest and most proper present, and the theme of ontology is that which constitutes presence as such in general.”¹² (Heidegger 2003, 153-154).

Before being onto-theology, metaphysics is thus metaphysics of presence. The double investigation pertaining to onto-theology is carried out according to the parameters of presence. I can therefore state not only that onto-theology can be better explained, in terms of its fundamental data, if we take the metaphysics of presence as our point of reference, but even that onto-theology is a derived form of the metaphysics of presence. The perspective in *Reduction and Givenness* on metaphysics is therefore broader than that in Marion's writings on the history of philosophy.

3. Metaphysics of presence and idolatry

The other meaning of metaphysics, used by Marion mainly in his theological writings, is idolatry. It consists in philosophy's attempt to account for God, or more precisely to subsume him to human thinking, to ascribe him to a concept. Consequently, idolatry is subordinated to onto-theology and, by implication, to the metaphysics of presence.¹³ Regardless of what concept is attributed to divinity by philosophy throughout its history – *First Mover* or *One, causa sui* or *ens realissimum*, or even the dead god of *The Gay Science* – we are only dealing with a human construct, like a sculpted or a painted idol, an instance that is completely subject to the power of human thinking:

“The concept consigns to a sign what at first the mind grasps with it (*concipere, capere*); but such a grasp is measured not so much by the amplitude of the divine as by the scope of a *capacitas*, which can fix the divine in a specific concept only at the moment when a conception of the divine fills it, hence appeases, stops, and freezes it. When a philosophical thought expresses a concept of what it then

names “God,” this concept functions exactly as an idol.”¹⁴ (Marion 1991, 15).

The specificity of idolatry lies in the one-sided nature of the relationship to the divine, in the absence of any openness to its otherness. Idolatry forbids a living relationship with the transcendence of God and positions us in the immanence of man's limited ability to conceive of the divine. I thus think we would not be wrong to say that idolatry is responsible for a pseudo-referentiality – the idol's authentic relation is not to God, but to the highest degree of human creativity. The idol is not the measure of God the creator, but of the human ability of manifesting itself in a creative manner.

But if the idolatrous attitude of philosophy is in no way generated by its reference, then it is not necessary for it to be manifested only in relationship to God. According to Derek Morrow, an idolatrous attitude is also found in Descartes, in relation to things in general. The argument for such a conception is pretty straightforward. In Cartesian philosophy, things are no longer defined according to a supposed order of things as such, but according to the order of human knowledge. The order of knowledge pre-circumscribes the space in which things can manifest themselves. Things themselves are thus reduced to the status of objects, according to the limits of human faculties (Marrow 2005, 30-36). However, even if the human cognitive attitude is idolatrous, that does not mean that every known thing is turned into an idol. Only those things that reach the limits of cognition become idols, because the idol in general always instantiates a maximum of the capacity of human faculties, whether we are talking about a particular creation of the human faculties or about the reception of a thing by the human faculties. This maximum of creativity or reception is the basis on which we can speak of idols in fields other than religion or philosophy. Marion himself speaks of the idol in the field of fine arts (Marion 2001, 65-98).

I believe one can go even a step further by observing the idolatrous attitude as active at the very initial moment of the relationship between Being and thinking, which is at the base of the metaphysics of presence and, implicitly, at the base of onto-theology. As I have already shown, the main role in this relation is played by thinking. The manifestation of Being unfolds proportionally to thinking, and the paradigm imposing itself in this way is that of the object.¹⁵ It is the idolatrous attitude that is responsible for the thinking's inability to receive the full manifestation of Being, for interpreting it as presence, and thus for turning it into an idol. The idolatrous attitude is thus identified with the very principle to which Marion appeals when circumscribing the metaphysics of presence – the domination of human faculties over Being.

Taking into account all these considerations, I notice that the relationship between metaphysics understood as idolatry and the metaphysics of presence cannot be clearly defined, indicating the priority of one over the other. The reason for this is that the relationship between the two versions of metaphysics takes place in two different time intervals. In the first interval, the metaphysics of presence is the result of the idolatrous attitude of thinking towards the manifestation of Being. From this perspective, metaphysics understood as idolatry cannot be better explained, in terms of its fundamental data, with the help of the metaphysics of presence as a reference point, but can only be exemplified by means of it. The direction of explanation is, in this case, the reverse one – from idolatry to the metaphysics of presence. In the second interval, the metaphysics of presence, once established, comes to structure the Western thought. Thus, the way in which the idolatrous attitude itself is configured becomes a consequence of the metaphysics of presence.

On the one hand, considering the first interval, I note that the appeal in *Reduction and Givenness* to the limitations that human faculties impose on being, made with the aim of circumscribing the space of the metaphysics of presence, allows Marion to distance himself from any kind of investigation, even from those carried out by Heidegger, insofar as they involve an idolatrous coordinate. On the other hand, considering now the second interval, the metaphysics of presence preserves its breadth and even its historical dimension.

Final remarks

It does not follow from my analysis that Marion is opposed to metaphysics in general. If we conceive it as an attempt to understand what it is that brings together all of the things we encounter, or may encounter, in our journey through life, then metaphysics is perfectly compatible with Marion's phenomenology of givenness. It is just that this metaphysics must not perpetuate the restrictions of its instantiations described above, that is, of the metaphysics of presence, onto-theology, or idolatry. In other words, the metaphysics that is compatible with the phenomenology of givenness – even entailed by the phenomenology of givenness – must not impose a priori conditions of possibility on our experience of things (Marion 2012, 108-110) or determine the possibility of our experience of things by means of an impossibility (Marion 1992).

Notes

¹ The determination of metaphysics through the prism of its attempts to define and redefine the conditions of presence, thus through the prism of its transformations, is emphasized by Marion in „La science toujours recherchée et toujours maquante”. If we understand metaphysics from the perspective of the ‘meta’ prefix, then metaphysics should never be identified with any of its particular historical configurations, because metaphysics is always more than it is at any given moment. Metaphysics is never merely an instantiation of the transgression of the *physis*, but always, equally, a transgression of itself. Metaphysics is thus affirmed as metaphysics of metaphysics. (Marion 1999, 33-35)

² In a discussion at the University of Bonn, Marion notes that neither Heidegger nor Derrida were successful in providing a clear outline of the space of the metaphysics of presence: „Ich muss Ihnen sagen, dass Derrida niemals eine genauere Umschreibung dessen vorgelegt hat, was er unter der sog. "Metaphysik der Präsenz" versteht. Niemals! Dabei ist doch der Ausdruck "Metaphysik der Gegenwart" in "Die Stimme und das Phänomen" sehr wichtig. Aber er wird weder bei Heidegger noch bei Derrida wirklich geklärt.” (Marion and Wohlmuth 2000, 57)

³ Marion himself states that the attempt to determine metaphysics by means of the priority of presence requires an appeal to Heidegger's thought: „Déterminer la métaphysique par le primat en elle de la présence et prétendre identifier la métaphysique comme figure unificatrice de toute la philosophie renvoie à la pensée de Heidegger, sans laquelle ces notions fussent restées impraticables; donc tout usage de ces notions implique une prise de position à l'égard de leur initiateur.” (Marion 1989, 34)

⁴ Heidegger 1983, 124: “Das Denken setzt sich dem Sein dergestalt gegenüber, daß dieses ihm vor-gestellt wird und demzufolge wie ein Gegen-stand entgegensteht. [...] So kommt es denn, daß das Denken nicht allein das Gegenglied einer irgendwie andersgearteten Unterscheidung bleibt, sondern zum Boden und Fußpunkt wird, von wo aus über das Entgegenstehende entschieden wird und zwar so weitgehend, daß das Sein überhaupt vom Denken her seine Deutung empfängt.”

⁵ Heidegger 1983, 125: “Die Versunkenheit [um nicht zu sagen Verlorenheit] in den Vor- und Durchblick, der all unser Verstehen von Sein trägt und leitet, ist um so mächtiger und zugleich verborgener, als auch die Griechen diese Vorblickbahn als solche nicht mehr ans Licht stellten und aus Wesensgründen (nicht aus einem Versagen) heraus nicht stellen konnten.”

⁶ Heidegger 1983, 211: “Diese Bestimmtheit des Seins ist nicht zufällig. Sie erwächst der Bestimmung, unter der unser geschichtliches Dasein durch seinen großen Anfang bei den Griechen steht. Die Bestimmtheit des Seins ist keine Sache der Umgrenzung einer bloßen Wortbedeutung. Sie ist die Macht, die heute noch alle unsere Bezüge zum Seienden im Ganzen, zum Werden, zum Schein, zum Denken und Sollen trägt und beherrscht.”

⁷ Heidegger 2006, 65-66: “So wird das Sein des Seienden als der gründende Grund vorausgedacht. Daher ist alle Metaphysik im Grunde vom Grund aus das Gründen, das vom Grund die Rechenschaft gibt, ihm Rede steht und ihn schließlich zur Rede stellt.”

⁸ Heidegger 1976, 449: “Erinnern wir indes noch einmal an die Geschichte des abendländisch-europäischen Denkens, dann erfahren wir: Die Frage nach dem Sein ist als Frage nach dem Sein des Seienden zwiegestaltig. Sie fragt einmal: Was ist das Seiende im allgemeinen als Seiendes? Die Betrachtungen im Umkreis dieser Frage gelangen im Verlauf der Geschichte der Philosophie unter den Titel Ontologie. Die Frage: «Was ist das Seiende?» fragt zugleich: Welches ist und wie ist das Seiende im Sinne des höchsten Seienden? Es ist die Frage nach dem Göttlichen und dem Gott. Der Umkreis dieser Frage heißt Theologie. Das Zwiegestaltige der Frage nach dem Sein des Seienden läßt sich in den Titel Onto-Theo-Logie zusammenfassen.”

⁹ Heidegger 2006, 65-66: “Die Metaphysik denkt das Seiende als solches, d. h. im Allgemeinen. Die Metaphysik denkt das Seiende als solches, d. h. im Ganzen. Die Metaphysik denkt das Sein des Seienden sowohl in der ergründenden Einheit des Allgemeinen, d. h. des überall Gleich-Gültigen, als auch in der begründenden Einheit der Allheit, d. h. des Höchsten über allem. So wird das Sein des Seienden als der gründende Grund vorausgedacht.”

¹⁰ Heidegger 1976, 449-450: “Das Zwiefältige der Frage nach dem Seienden muß offenbar daran liegen, wie das Sein des Seienden sich zeigt. Sein zeigt sich im Charakter dessen, was wir Grund nennen. Das Seiende im allgemeinen ist der Grund im Sinne des Bodens, auf dem sich jede weitere Betrachtung des Seienden bewegt. Das Seiende als das höchste Seiende ist der Grund im Sinne dessen, was alles Seiende ins Sein entspringen läßt.” See also Thomson 2000, 316.

¹¹ Heidegger 1998, 403: “Im Anfang seiner Geschichte lichtet sich Sein als Aufgang (φῶς) und Entbergung (ἀλλήθεια). Von dort her gelangt es in das Gepräge von Anwesenheit und Beständigkeit im Sinne des Verweilens (οὐσία). Damit beginnt die eigentliche Metaphysik.” See also Thomson 2000, 317-320.

¹² Heidegger 1992, 222-223: “Warum kam die griechische Wissenschaft und Philosophie auf diese beiden Grundwissenschaften? Bei Plato sind sie noch ganz promiscue; sie sind bei ihm noch viel ungeklärter als bei Aristoteles; aber faktisch bewegt er sich schon in diesen beiden Dimensionen. Das ist nur verständlich zu machen aus dem Sinn, den Sein für die Griechen hatte. Das Seiende ist das, was im eigentlichen Sinne anwesend ist. Die Theologie betrachtet das Seiende in dem, was es im vorhinein schon ist, was im eigentlichsten und höchsten Sinn die Anwesenheit der Welt ausmacht. Die eigentlichste und höchste Anwesenheit des Seienden ist Thema der Theologie. Thema der Ontologie ist das Seiende, sofern es anwesend ist in allen seinen Bestimmungen, nicht zugeschnitten auf ein bestimmtes Gebiet, nicht nur der unbewegte Bewegter und der Himmel, sondern auch, was unter dem Himmel ist, alles, was da ist, das mathematische Sein ebenso wie das physikalische. Für die Theologie also ist Thema die höchste und eigentlichste Anwesenheit, für die Ontologie das, was Anwesenheit als solche überhaupt ausmacht.” See also Courtine 1999, 150-151.

¹³ Marion himself expresses this idea already in Marion 1977: “La production d'un concept qui prétend à l'équivalence avec Dieu ressortit en effet proprement à la métaphysique.” For more details, see also pp 27-38, as well as Gschwandtner 2007, 39-58.

¹⁴ Marion 1982, 26: “Le concept consigne dans un signe ce que d'abord l'esprit avec lui saisit (*concipere, capere*); mais pareille saisie ne se mesure pas tant à l'ampleur du divin, qu'à la portée d'une *capacitas*, qui ne fixe le divin en un concept, tel ou tel, qu'au moment où une conception du divin la comble, donc l'apaise, l'arrête, la fige. Quand une pensée philosophique énonce, de ce qu'elle nomme alors «Dieu», un concept, ce concept fonctionne exactement comme une idole.”

¹⁵ When discussing the opposition between being and thinking, Heidegger mentions that the maximum potential of this relationship is reached with the beginning of modernity (Heidegger 1983, 102).

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