THE FORGETTING OF ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE IN THE FIRST GREEK BEGINNING: HEIDEGGER AND THE DESTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE OF ONTOTHEOLOGY

O ESQUECIMENTO DA DIFERENÇA ONTOLÓGICA NO PRIMEIRO INÍCIO GREGO: HEIDEGGER E A CRÍTICA DESTRUTIVA À ONTOTEOLOGIA

Nathalia Claro MOREIRA
Graduated in Philosophy from the Catholic University
Dom Bosco (UCDB). Doctorate student in Philosophy in
the Postgraduate Program in Philosophy at the State
University of Rio de Janeiro (PPGFIL-UERJ).
E-mail: nath.arierom@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

The article analyzes Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's bipartite approach to being and entities in the genesis of Western metaphysics. Heidegger challenges Aristotle's analysis, arguing that the integration of entities as a whole and particular entities in *physis* led to a disregard for ontological difference. The German philosopher proposed that the bifurcation of being resulted in the metaphysical tradition becoming an "ontotheology." In contrast, Heidegger, through phenomenological hermeneutics, reintroduced the question of being, emphasizing the understanding of beings through the pre-logical way *Dasein* exists in the world, without relying on an eternal and immutable foundation.

KEYWORDS:
Ontotheology, Heidegger, Metaphysics, Aristotle, *Destruktion*.

RESUMO:

O artigo analisa a crítica de Heidegger à abordagem bipartida de Aristóteles sobre o ente e o ser na gênese da metafísica ocidental. Heidegger contesta a análise aristotélica, argumentando que a integração do ente como um todo e dos entes particulares na *Physis* resultou no desprezo pela diferença ontológica. O filósofo alemão sugeriu que a bifurcação do ser levou à tradição metafísica tornar-se uma "Ontoteologia". Em contraste, Heidegger, através da hermenêutica fenomenológica, reintroduziu a questão do ser, enfatizando a compreensão dos seres pela maneira pré-lógica como o *Dasein* existe no mundo, sem depender de um fundamento eterno e imóvel.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:
Ontoteologia, Heidegger, Metafísica, Aristóteles, *Destruktion*.

INTRODUCTION

"Destruction" is a foundational element in many creation myths (Eliade, 2001). This is no different in the history of philosophical thought: after all, the potential for the advancement of thought only occurs in the confrontation and ordering of the previous. Thus, the destruction of Western tradition became a *sine qua non* condition for the ontological program of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Transitioning from Aristotelian metaphysics to Cartesian, his destruction was not a cataclysm *per se*, but a challenge to tradition, or in more contemporary terms, a deconstruction.

As highlighted by Leosir Santin Massarollo (2019), Heidegger's proposal aimed not to reduce the history of ontology to ruins but to reclaim a long-forgotten conception: the question of being (*Seinsfrage*). For this purpose, Heidegger returned to the primordial concept of truth: truth as unveiling (*Aletheia*), associating it with a growing movement in his time, phenomenology. With the phenomenological destruction, as noted by Otto Pöggeler (2001), Heidegger questioned how phenomena could be thought of as a unity, analyzing the ontic and ontological structures that mobilize human existence in coordination with the structures of being-in-the-world, *Dasein,* launched into a world of possibilities and facticity, available for the wandering of affects and articulated by its ontological finitude.

Until 1927, Heidegger's challenge was to erect a fundamental ontology, describing the set of structures of the being that exists from the perspective of time. For this, the philosopher used the being of man, *Dasein*, as a gateway to being through our original characteristic, understanding (*Verstehen*) - which characterized hermeneutics as an existential mode of being-human. Heidegger, however, avoided falling into philosophical anthropology or the well-known existentialism of his time. His question, he asserted, was not about man, but about being, which had been forgotten by metaphysics due to three fundamental prejudices: that "being" is the most "universal" concept; 2- the concept of "being" is undefinable; 3 - "being" is a self-evident concept (Heidegger, 2009, p. 28-29. Translated by the author).

To correct the prejudices of tradition, Heidegger revisited the question of being, indicating that the questioning of being is a radicalization of the human tendency to understand oneself beforehand. As elucidated by Gunter Figal (2005), *Dasein* is not an object but a model of descriptive reflection that

Kalágatos
Revista de Filosofia

INVERNO
2024

V.19, N.1.
e-ISSN: 1984-9206

2

Heidegger used to reflect on the ontological difference, seeking a domain over the openness in which it is possible to access the meaning of being and its truth, which are realized in the mundanity of the world.

Access to the meaning of being, however, required more than conventional analytics of human existence from Heidegger: it was necessary to verify the network of references with which *Dasein* occupies itself, seeking the transcendental character of these relations. Although the questioning of being demanded from Heidegger the development of a thought that was perfected and radicalized throughout his philosophical life, the final step of *Seinsfrage* began with the diagnosis of the inadequacy of the question of being in Western metaphysical tradition, a fact that led to the first major task of his ontology: *destruktion*. After all, it was from the radical criticism of what Heidegger called the forgetting of being that the philosopher sought a way to access being in general, without adhering to the peculiarities or ontic regions of the problem.

According to Pöggeler (2001), the task of a *destruktion* of concepts in the history of Western metaphysics consisted of a program to redirect philosophical thought, from the terms of tradition, which were until then permeated by Latin and scholastic concepts, back to the Greek language. In other words, in the quest to deconstruct the prevailing ontological conceptualization, Heidegger turned to the primordial sense and the hidden wisdom of language, seeking to access the Greek experience of the world.

Under this purpose, in the pursuit of deconstructing the obvious, phenomenology, a method propagated by the German psychologist and philosopher Edmund Husserl, was Heidegger's artifice for the possibility of discovering the situation of being, from the period of fundamental ontology to the topology of being. In Heidegger's work, however, phenomenology was radicalized and became more than a suspension of judgment for encountering the givenness of the object but showed itself as a way to understand the "how." In his terms: "(...) it is not restricted to a thematic field, if that is understood as a philosophical 'stream' concerned with the 'what' of objects, that is, the quantitative content of entities, but it aims at 'how' the investigated objects are (Heidegger, 2009, p. 56. Translated by the author).

Throughout his theoretical work, the treatment of being, as well as phenomenology itself, underwent modulations: if up to "*Being and Time*", phenomenology was a method of analyzing *Dasein*, after the turn, as he wrote in "*Contributions to Philosophy*" Heidegger established phenomenology as a transitional path to the foundation of a "metaphysics of *Dasein*." Before delving into Heidegger's approach and his critique of ontotheology, therefore, it is necessary to understand the role of phenomenology and its developments in the project of destroying traditional metaphysics.

1. Phenomenology as Destruction and Unveiling: Heidegger's Phenomenological Radicalization

Although phenomenology features as a methodology in Heidegger's major works, the philosopher only discovered the conjectural relationship of phenomena in the late 1920s. Marco Casanova (2015) emphasizes that the early movements of young Heidegger were tied to his theological experience. In his youth, Heidegger sought to articulate the factual concreteness of philosophy, exploring the possibility of an original science that could articulate the singular experiences of beings with the possibility of knowledge – and still, discovering in lived experience a transcendental truth. In this perspective, God was, for Heidegger, then a theology student, "[...] the foundation for the plurality of manifestation of beings in general and as the point of unification of their most proper essence" (Casanova, 2015, p. 23. Translated by the author).

However, in the course of the 1920s, already close to Edmund Husserl and studies on intentional consciousness, a new philosophical orientation emerged in Heidegger, seeking to interweave the spirit of historicity into philosophical thought. Through readings of Wilhelm Dilthey's work on historicity in the construction of a philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*), Heidegger aimed for an understanding of logic and facticity in the production of philosophical knowledge. From the nexus of these studies, Heidegger appropriated Husserl's phenomenological project, giving it his own existential framework. In the winter *lecture* of 1923/24, "*Introduction to Phenomenological Research*" (*Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*), Heidegger wrote: "The fundamental phenomenological stance, insofar as we understand it in the broadest sense as a descriptive analysis of psychologically unperceived phenomena of consciousness (...) is not sufficient until it is itself originally explicated in a genuinely philosophical manner" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 17. Translated by the author).

In this sense, in his mature phase, Heidegger turned to the ultimate sense relationships of phenomena to indicate the original connection of *Dasein* with the happening of its world. Not surprisingly, in "*Being and Time*" Heidegger emphasized that phenomenology is indispensable for ontology (Heidegger, 2009, p. 57. Translated by the author): "The term phenomenology has the primary significance of a method-concept. It characterizes not the content-of-thing, of the objects of philosophical research, but their how." Through phenomenology, Heidegger proposed the development

of a fundamental ontology, debated in 1927, an ontology that would serve as the basis for any ontological investigation whose core is the ontic-ontological marked.

From phenomenology, Heidegger sought to access the sense of being in general, using as a path the analysis of the being of man, *Dasein*, which is the privileged being in nature due to its unique ability to expose itself beforehand to being, that is, to question its own existence, by its possibility of being able to ask. According to Heidegger (2009), the determinacy of the being of *Dasein* is its understanding of its own being, that is, as stated in paragraph §5 of "*Being and Time*": "the ontic marked-being of *Dasein* lies in that it is ontological." The corollary of the analysis of *Dasein* developed by the author was, therefore, to demonstrate the essential structures that persist in each mode of *Dasein*'s being as determinants of being.

Heidegger's phenomenological analysis revealed that the essential structures of *Dasein* are modes of temporality, thus factual. The philosopher from the Black Forest emphasized that the being of entities is not dissociated from temporality, with time being the horizon of all understanding of being and all interpretation of being. Time, according to the philosopher, has a marked ontic-ontological function that distinguishes the various regions of entities. Thus, "[...] being must be conceived in time, and the various modes and derivatives of being must be understood in fact from the perspective of time [...]" (Heidegger, 2009, p. 44. Translated by the author). The determination of historicity is the temporal mode of being of *Dasein*, with historicity being the constitution-of-being of *Dasein*'s "gestating" itself. In this sense, *Dasein* is, in its factual being, its own past in the mode of its being that is constantly gestating from its future. According to this premise, the past always precedes *Dasein*, regulating its possibilities of being able to be. Therefore, asking about the meaning of being is asking about the historicity of this being, having eyes to see its essential historicity. In other words, the question of being leads to an investigation of our past, our tradition, understanding how this tradition opens to our existence, what it transmits, and how it transmits.

In this context, Heidegger considered phenomenology not only as a philosophical method but, significantly, as a way of understanding being that already belongs to *Dasein* and is alive in every interaction with it (Heidegger, 2009). In order to demonstrate the existential scope of phenomenology, Heidegger delved into the etymological composition of the word, formed by the terms "*phenomenon*" and "*logos*" The phenomenon is what shows itself, the being-showing, the manifest. In paragraph §7a, he argues: "As the meaning of the word phenomenon, one must firmly retain what shows itself in itself, the manifest" (Heidegger, 2009, p. 58. Translated by the author).

The phenomenon relates to what the Greeks identified as "being" (*ta onta*). This showing of the phenomenon was termed by Heidegger as "appearing to be" (*scheinen*). Thus, Heidegger connected the

two meanings "what shows itself" and what "appears to be" in the meaning of "phenomenon." However, the phenomenon does not show itself, but is, according to Heidegger, the announcement of something that does not show itself by something that shows itself. The phenomenon signs its appearance, much like a disease shows itself, manifests itself through symptoms in the body. In this sense, the phenomenon signifies a marked mode of coming forth.

Regarding *logos*, Heidegger (2009) highlighted that its essence is a structure-of-synthesis of apophantic discourse, or, in his own terms, *logos* consists of making manifest what is discoursed in speech. Contrary to the common deduction about *logos*, that it manifests the truth of what is said, Heidegger points out that *logos* is a making-see that is not necessarily the primary place of truth but can both harbor truth-being and false-being. In the first case, *logos* can manifest as an unveiling of the being, that is, taking the being of which one speaks out of its concealment, making it see as uncovered. On the other hand, *logos* can be false, in the sense of covering up the being, presenting it as something it is not. The function of *logos* consists, therefore, in making perceive the being in its relational character.

Ultimately, according to Heidegger's perspective, phenomenology has a specific focus: being, which is fundamentally different from entities. "Entity" refers to individual and specific objects, while "Being" encompasses the totality of existence and encompasses the conflict between the various modes of manifestation of entities, namely: their emergence from concealment (*Verborgenheit*), their unveiling (*Unverborgenheit*), and their appearance (*Erscheinen*) under a certain appearance (*Schein*). All these modalities - concealment, unveiling, appearance - belong to the conflictual essence or, in Heidegger's terms, to the "playground" of the truth of being that underlies the Greek term *Aletheia*. In other words, Heidegger considered that what determines the existence of a being is its manifestation. This means that a being exists always, whether when it ceases to be veiled or when it reveals itself, appearing in one way or another. All these modes of manifestation are part of the essence of *Aletheia*. In a late essay, commenting on fragment 16 attributed to Heraclitus, Heidegger emphasized that the "gathering unity" of *Aletheia*, its veiling and unveiling of the truth of being, is constant in human everyday life:

> Mortals deal incessantly with the gathering unity, which discovers and conceals. They deal incessantly with the gathering unity that clarifies in its presence everything that prevails. They turn away, however, from the clearing, turning only to the prevailing, turning only to what they find immediately, in the daily dealings with everything and everyone. Mortals consider that this dealing with the prevailing confers, as it were, the appropriate familiarity by itself. The prevailing, however, remains strange to them. For they glimpse nothing of what they are familiar with: they glimpse nothing of the prevailing that clarifies and makes appear each time the prevailing. The Λόγος, under

Kalagatos
Revista de Filosofia

INVERNO
2024

V.19, N.1.
e-ISSN: 1984-9206

6

whose light they come and go, remains hidden from them, is forgotten by them" (Heidegger, 2002, p. 248. Translated by the author).

According to João Bosco Batista (2005), with the concept of *Aletheia,* Heidegger clarified a possible misunderstanding associated with the understanding of being: that of confusing *Dasein*'s openness (*Geschlossenheit*) as the determining element for understanding the truth of being (*Aletheia*). Responding to this question, Heidegger highlighted that truth does not belong to *Dasein* but to being itself because *Dasein* does not play the role of a "transcendental subject" with the power to decide what is true or false. On the contrary, he states that "human beings only exist insofar as they remain open to being." To understand this more deeply, it is necessary to explore the ontological meaning of the term *Aletheia.*

The Greek notion of *Aletheia* is closely related to the understanding of being as presenting itself (*to einai*) and concerns the dynamic and fundamental trait of the very presentation that is determined by continuous veiling and unveiling. In this sense, for Heidegger (2002), exploring the meaning of *Aletheia* is to question the essence of being itself. Asking about the essence of being is, in this sense, seeking its intrinsic truth. Speaking of *Aletheia* is speaking of the truth of being, for "*in einai*, in the presentation, *Aletheia* speaks properly, the unveiling". However, far from there being a "pure essence," for Heidegger, the visualization of being is only possible when the concealments of the phenomenon are recognized as such. Thus, phenomenology, in Heidegger's sense, does not seek to find an "essence" behind the phenomenon but seeks to understand the various forms of showing of the phenomenon in the world.

According to Gunter Figal (2005), Heidegger's phenomenological perspective on being shares, in this sense, a theme similar to the ontological debate in Plato's dialogue "*The Sophist*" (*Σοφιστής*). After all, just as Plato questioned the ability of the sophists to appear knowledgeable before their students and the need to determine whether they really possess knowledge, Heidegger argued that it was crucial to question what is behind what manifests as evident in order to recover the ontological difference.

2. Heidegger against Aristotle: Metaphysics and the Disregard for Ontological Difference

In the development of his destructive phenomenology, Heidegger encountered the core issue of the Western philosophical tradition: the inadequacy of the approach to being. According to Heidegger, the bifurcated nature of being, manifested since the assumption of Aristotle's work "*Metaphysics*"

(*Μεταφυσική*), turned the ontological approach into onto-theology. Although the concept of "onto-theology" in Heidegger emerged after the "turn" (*Kehre*) in his lectures on Hegel, the foundations of this debate began to take shape earlier, in the lectures on Leibniz (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*) from 1928 and in the discussions of the course titled *"The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics"* (*Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*) from 1929. While not explicitly labeled as a critique, the theme of onto-theology emerged much earlier, at the heart of Heidegger's diagnosis of a fundamental division in Aristotle's philosophy between questioning being as being (ontology) and questioning being in its totality (theology), an initial separation in metaphysics (Rodrigues, 2012).

In general, the ontological difference is at the core of Martin Heidegger's philosophical thought, and it is not by chance. Reflection on the meaning of original difference remained underlying the formulation of the fundamental question of philosophy. As Federica Biscardi (2021) wrote, the beginning of philosophy implied the question of difference. This is due to a seemingly simple question: the first questioning of metaphysics arose from the experiential givenness that something exists - "(...) what is this? *Ti estin* in Greek" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 30. Translated by the author).

This thought, attesting to the presence of something, does not merely seek to question what something is, or the conditions of the possibility of its phenomenality, or the truth value of what is experienced and reflected upon. It also implies an examination of what is present in its entirety. In other words, when examining an object, it is not examined solely in its particularity, but its status is questioned: does this object coincide with totality? (Do all birds fly? Is the entire sky blue?). Thus, the simple question about the status of what is given transcends what is experienced and thought because, from the fundamental question about beings, immediately emerges the question about the sense of their being. The term "ontological difference" is attributed to the ontic determinations, whereby each thing is itself to the extent that it is different from what the other is.

At the dawn of Greek philosophy, the ontological difference moved the first philosophers, commonly called "pre-Socratics," in their philosophical propositions seeking to reduce their physical experiences to a unifying principle. Even attributing the unifying trait of the multiplicity of beings to a principle of material nature, such as water, air, fire, or ether, the attempt arose at the heart of the fundamental problem of differing and, at the same time, unifying multiple beings.

> Water (or air, or fire) is that by which many things - all the many things! - are one, and this unity is precisely conceived as water. Now, since things are many insofar as they differ from each other and, therefore, besides being water, are also other things different from water (air, fire, earth,

animals, plants, stars, and all the countless determinations that the world contains), to say that water is the unity of things has meaning only if we consider that water is the matter of things, that from which they are made; so that these things, being many and different, are nothing but modifications or different modes of being of the one that is water (Biscardi, 2021, p. 05. Translated by the author).

Indeed, in "*Plato Sophistes*", Heidegger (2012) noted that the original questioning of philosophy, from the first philosophers who investigated the elements of beings, should not be understood only in relation to a specific domain of being, i.e., in relation to ontic questioning. Instead, it should be an attempt to access the being of the being. In this sense, Heidegger considered the first questioning of philosophy, although not fully developed and complete in form, to be an ontological questioning. Reflecting on Aristotle's philosophy, Heidegger (2012) wrote:

> The ancients, when they asked about the στοιχεῖα, the elements of beings, and gave various answers: water, air, earth - with this question, they did not intend to address a specific domain of being, nor did they intend to report what aspect being had in itself (in its content), but were guided by the interest in determining the being of being. However, they had not yet reached the level of observation where it is understood that being as being cannot be explained from a specific domain of being but only from being itself" (Heidegger, 2012, p. 238. Translated by the author).

In other words, the question of ontological difference has been debated since the early days of Western philosophy, although not entirely explicitly and still connected to an exclusively physical interpretation of reality as a problem of understanding the unifying trait of multiple reality. For Biscardi (2021), the realization of an ontic difference between the different essential determinations of beings founded the problem of ontological difference. After all, the essential determinations of a phenomenon have a common trait that somehow unifies them in the same experiential horizon and makes them evident to thought. Therefore, understanding the meaning of this relational unity, which is not mere identity and implies a distinction between the unitary trait and the differentiation of beings, is the great question of ontological difference. Moreover, the way each philosophical questioning is constituted, questioning the status of objects and the conditions of the possibility of encountering these objects, whether in experience or mere thought, underlies the question of ontological difference.

According to Heidegger (2012), this question was especially outlined in books *Gamma* and *Ypsilon* of Aristotle's "*Metaphysics*" It is in these books that Aristotle proposed to create a science of being as being, responsible for identifying the first principles and causes to which all particular beings, as well as

the sciences that deal with them, are subject. Based on the idea that being can be expressed in various ways, Aristotle developed an ontological semantics to establish distinctions and concepts intrinsically connected, primarily in defense of the principle of non-contradiction.

Let us recall the efforts of Greek philosophy to seek the development of an explanatory-causal model for the universe. As seen, it is true that such an effort did not begin with Aristotle but existed since his predecessors, the so-called pre-Socratics. It was indeed an attempt to understand the fundamental origin and nature of the universe by identifying a basic and fundamental principle or substance from which all things could be explained. This particular being or particular genus of beings, debated by the pre-Socratics under the philosophical term *arché* – an original, basic, and fundamental principle – served as the source or origin of all things. In this sense, the pre-Socratics were interested in finding the *arché,* the underlying basis of all reality, which, according to Heidegger (2012), should meet three criteria: being first and fundamental, exerting a causal power, and being exemplary in relation to other beings. This search for the *arché* was rooted in the idea that understanding the primordial substance would lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of the universe and all things. Different pre-Socratics proposed various answers to the *arché,* such as water, air, fire, atoms, etc., each representing an effort to find this fundamental origin that would explain reality.

However, this large group of philosophers sought to define the ultimate reality of the universe by breaking down sensible things until reaching a kind of substrate – as an example, Thales believed that water was the *arché*, the foundation of all existence. In turn, Plato, Aristotle's teacher, avoided the limitations of *physis* and reached the theory of forms. Aristotle did not evade physis but did not confine himself to it. His studies were divided between *Physics* and what was conceptually designated, afterward, as *Metaphysics*. In "*Physics*" (*Physikè*), Aristotle dealt with sensible beings, highlighting three properties in them: substrate (*hypokeimenon*), matter (*hylé*), and form (*eidos*). Regarding the substrate, according to Aristotle, it is what serves as the base or foundation for the existence of something. It is the "where" of an object or being, the underlying reality that allows changes and qualities to occur. It can be seen as the essence or support that enables a sensible being to exist and change over time. Concerning matter, Aristotle considered it one of the main components of a sensible being. It is the prime substance, the physical substance that constitutes objects. Matter does not have definite characteristics in itself; it is capable of assuming different forms and qualities, being shaped by the form that acts on it. Finally, the form would be the specific essence or nature of a sensible being. It would determine the particular characteristics of an object, its distinctive qualities. The form is what makes an object recognizable and differentiates it from other objects with the same matter. For Aristotle, form is inseparable from matter;

together, they compose the complete substance of a being. The relationship between matter and form is fundamental in Aristotelian philosophy. For him, form is what gives meaning to matter, conferring purpose and direction, while matter provides the base for the manifestation of form in the sensible world. These concepts are a central part of his philosophy, especially in his analysis of change, causality, and the development of reality.

However, there was an unresolved issue in Aristotle's "*Physics*", which was the following: what would be the first cause of reality, form, or matter? "But if it is the form or the underlying that is the essence, it is not clear" (Physics, VII, 191a 12). In this regard, Aristotle undertook a particular quest that exceeded the reality of beings on the physical plane. It is in this sense that the first books of Aristotle's "*Metaphysics*", a science until then unknown and unnamed by the Stagirite, emerged.

Because it was not properly named, although debated, the approach presents in book IV of Aristotle's "*Metaphysics*" implied a series of contradictions, as identified by Heidegger as an internal ambivalence. This was, according to Heidegger, because Aristotle was not concise in establishing a definition of First Philosophy and suggested, throughout the text, that this should be Theology. Let us see what Aristotle wrote:

> There is a science that studies being, qua being (to on hêi on), and what belongs in itself to this. This is not the same as the ones that we call particular sciences; for none of these other sciences universally deal with being, qua being, but they cut off some part of being and study the attribute about it, e.g. as the mathematical sciences do. Since we are searching for the principles, i.e. the highest explanations (aitias), clearly it is necessary for them to be from a nature in itself. If then those who searched for the components of beings also searched for these principles, it is also necessary that the components of being are not by accident but qua being; that is why we must also grasp the primary explanations of being, qua being" (Metaphysics, IV, I, 1003a 21-23. Translated by the author).

It is timely for us to break down the passage, analyzing it meticulously: "There is a science that studies being, qua being (to on hêi on), and what belongs in itself to this". At this point, Aristotle introduces the existence of a science aimed at examining the "being," that is, everything that has existence, contemplating it in its intrinsic essence while investigating the attributes that naturally accompany it. "This discipline is not to be confused with any of the so-called particular sciences." In other words, the mentioned science is not equivalent to any of the so-called "particular sciences" since it is not restricted to a specific domain of study, such as the natural, social, or mathematical sciences. "Indeed, no other investigates comprehensively being as being," In reality, no other science explores comprehensively and

universally the "being" in its fundamental nature, considering it intrinsically as being in itself. "(...) but, by segmenting a portion of it, they focus on studying the consequences that emanate from it, as is the case with mathematical sciences." Other disciplines, such as mathematical sciences, typically focus on specific parts of the "being" (a fraction of reality), dedicating themselves to the analysis of the implications resulting from this cut. "Since we are seeking the supreme causes and principles, it is evident that these elements must be intrinsically linked to nature considered in its totality." Since our investigation aims to understand the fundamental causes and principles, it is clear that these causes and principles must be part of the nature considered in its essential totality. However, the question turns to the nature of the higher principles, inquiring to what or to whom they refer. "Therefore, if those who investigated the constituent elements of beings also sought these principles, it is imperative that these elements are not linked to being only concomitantly but as it is being." If the researchers who devoted themselves to the formative elements of beings also sought these fundamental principles, then these elements are not only related to "being" coincidentally but as intrinsic components of "being" itself. "Therefore, we must also grasp the primordial causes of being as being." In this context, it is imperative that, following this reasoning, we also comprehend the primary causes of "being," considering it in its nature as "being" itself.

Let's return to the "elevated principles" that constitute metaphysical science. Aristotle distinguishes metaphysics as an exalted science that deals with what is highest, the first principles, and first causes. It is worth noting, however, that despite attempting to avoid a theological interpretation of this passage, there is a strong impression that Aristotle here evokes the divine or gods – consequently, metaphysics, as it appears in Aristotle, receives an implication from the science that has God as its object, that is, theology. Thus, we could interpret that the "meta" of metaphysics is to account for what is highest, beyond everything: God. The most exalted of sciences deals with what is purest, that is, in Aristotelian language, suprasensible substance. And in this sense, it sought to be entirely distinct from other sciences dealing with sensible substances.

Regarding this, Heidegger (2012) wrote in "*Plato Sophiste*" referring to Aristotle: "Philosophy as first philosophy thus has a bifurcated character. It is the science of being and the science of the superpowerful. To this bifurcated character corresponds the bifurcation existence/being-thrown" (Heidegger, 2012, p. 16. Translated by the author). From the analysis of this supposed bifurcation, Heidegger highlighted a fundamental division in metaphysical inquiry that established two lines of investigation that persisted for centuries. The first addressed the problem of "being as such," i.e., questions related to the universals of being (ontology). The second dealt with "being as a whole," exploring the question of the ultimate and unifying foundation of everything that exists (theology).

Beyond a mere epistemological question, Heidegger (2012) emphasized that this division, anchored in the essence of philosophy, has existential roots.

In "*The Return to the Fundamentals of Metaphysics*" (*Der Rückgang in den Grund der Metaphysik*), from 1949, Heidegger inquired: "(...) on what ground do the roots of the tree of philosophy find support?" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 77. Translated by the author). Later, the thinker pondered that metaphysics, the tree of philosophy, rests and moves in being as such in the light of being. In other words, metaphysics does not think being; it only contemplates it to seek a cause for itself. "Metaphysical thought asks about ontic origins and a cause of light" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 77). Consequently, the essence of being remains veiled, and philosophy does not retreat to its foundation.

According to Heidegger (1996), the ontological difference is the core of a wound in which Western tradition structured the entire theory of knowledge. For Heidegger (1996), the confusion about what is being and what is being has manifested in making philosophy a theological speculation. In the same essay, the philosopher used Hegel as an example of his criticism: "The object of Hegel's thought is thus the thought that thinks itself as being that circulates in itself. Inverted, not only rightly but necessarily, the speculative principle about the beginning is formulated: the result is the beginning" (Heidegger, 1996. Translated by the author). This beginning, according to Heidegger, is nothing less than God, in this case, the Whole. However, it is not a private question of Hegelian philosophy but a present element in the entire Western metaphysical tradition, which, since Aristotle, treated the study of being, ontology, as "the study of being as such and as a whole." The "whole" implied in the sentence is what Heidegger calls the producing foundation. In Identity and Difference, he wrote: "(...) metaphysics is, therefore, determined as the question of being as such and in the whole. The omnitude of this whole is the unity of being that unifies as a producing foundation. For one who knows how to read, it means: metaphysics is onto-theology" (Heidegger, 2005, p. 392. Translated by the author).

Heidegger's question, however, was not to advocate for a supposed atheism. It is essential to highlight that what the philosopher sought was to denote that while ontotheology, metaphysics could not think its essence because it clung to "ultimate causes." "This essence of metaphysics remains, however, for thinking still always the most worthy of being thought" (Heidegger, 1979, p. 393. Translated by the author). So much so that in his later phase, Heidegger sought not only to destroy metaphysics but also to establish a "metaphysics of *Dasein*." This was because Heidegger understood the ontotheology present in metaphysics not just as a discipline of philosophical knowledge but as a fundamental event.

What characterized this event is, according to Heidegger, the bifurcated interpretation undertaken by Aristotle, who stipulated metaphysics as an analysis of being in its entirety, as *physis,* and particular entities. According to Heidegger (1979), Aristotle explicitly brought together the two lines of questioning contained in the unified meaning of *physis.* Instead of separating these two disciplines, Aristotle defined inquiries into being as a whole and into the essence or nature of the being as *próte philosophía,* as first philosophy. This type of questioning constituted the essence of philosophizing in its primordial form, considered true philosophizing.

In this sense, authentic philosophizing, according to Aristotle, would be rooted in the simultaneous pursuit of the totality of being (theology) and being itself (ontology). Although treated as part of a science called *prôte-philosophía,* Aristotle did not explore in detail how these two questions related. In this approach, Aristotle conceived being as theoretically determined presence; that is, the being of beings was related to their present manifestation, and God, understood as the first mover, was considered a cause or explanatory principle of motion in sensible beings (*ousía*). God was necessary as a foundation for the presence and operation of the world as a whole.

In Aristotelian metaphysics, according to Heidegger's appreciation, God is itself a form of substance (*ousía*). The being of beings is defined as a constant presence that endures during the eternal cycle of birth and destruction of beings, as well as in the higher being that ensures the continuity of this cycle. The common characteristic of all beings would be their ability to manifest: they are here and will remain here eternally, at least to the extent that they are understood according to their universal nature.

In Heidegger's view (2012), however, Aristotle did not explore the connection between the presence of beings and God as a unifier of all beings. God is not responsible for the mere existence of beings (He is not a creator or an efficient force) but for the continuity of the presence of beings, a characteristic that he shares as being. The meaning of God in Aristotle's metaphysics would be linked, according to Heidegger, to the notion of physis discussed by the Stagirite. In "*The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, and Solitude*" Heidegger (2006) identified two questions that arise separately concerning the meanings of physis and particularly explored the meaning of "*tà metà tà phusiká*" concerning Aristotle, as this phrase emerged in this context. First, there would be the sense of "*physis ónta*" in contrast to "*téchne-ónta*"; here, *physis* refers to something that has no beginning or end, something that is always present, unlike things created by humans. In this sense, *physis* means "that which endures." "*Tà physiká*" are beings considered as a whole, with the "first mover" (*theîon*) that endures eternally, acting as the ultimate factor governing all beings.

The second sense of *physis* is the deeper essence of things, that which determines what remains as being. This is comparable to when we use the expression "the nature of things," that is, *ousía*, the very essence of beings, the "essentiality" of beings. Philosophizing in the context of Aristotle's first philosophy, according to Heidegger (2006), would, therefore, involve questioning both senses: regarding beings as a whole and about the universal community present in beings.

In Aristotle and throughout Western tradition, Heidegger diagnosed the disharmony between these two different questions. He noticed that concepts such as equality, opposition, and difference, which are linked to the being of beings, are strictly different from the question about the ultimate foundation of beings. Heidegger (2006) identified this disharmony by highlighting that Aristotle separates the question of "what something is" from the question of "why something is." According to Heidegger, Aristotle united these two questions in the etiological investigation of first philosophy as a search for foundations. Contrary to this perspective, Heidegger sought to emphasize that the emphasis of philosophy should not be on the theoretical search for foundations but on human poetic involvement in the revelation of what is.

As elucidated by Catriona Hanley (2000), in criticizing Aristotle, Heidegger argued that the real question of Aristotelian metaphysics shifted to the search for the "ultimate foundations" of being "as a whole." Thus, the conception of God as "the ultimate and explanatory foundation," in Heidegger's view, did not allow the Western tradition to access original thinking about being, that is, to think being in the revelation of the meaning of being. Furthermore, Heidegger related this bipartition of ontotheology not only to an intellectual movement in the West but as an existential form of *Dasein*. In the lecture on logic in Leibniz, Heidegger (1978, p. 23. Translated by the author) wrote that "(...) to this bifurcated character corresponds the bifurcation existence/being-thrown." In this regard, the philosopher from the Black Forest argued that the unity of Aristotelian questions, that is, the relationship between ontology and theology, is grounded in something ungrounded: the transcendence of *Dasein*. It should be noted that transcendence refers to *Dasein*'s ability to go beyond itself and relate to the world, understanding being through its existence and experience.

In this context, Heidegger sought to integrate Aristotle's two questions about being and the whole through what he termed phenomenological hermeneutics. The philosopher from the Black Forest argued that understanding how all beings are interconnected as a whole is not further elucidated by the idea of a God providing explanations, but rather by the pre-logical manner in which *Dasein* exists in the world. Therefore, in "*The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*" (Heidegger, 2006), Heidegger explored the meaning

Kalagatos
Revista de Filosofia

INVERNO
2024

V.19, N.1.
e-ISSN: 1984-9206

15

of the word "*logos*" which can be translated as "word," "discourse," or "reason." Heidegger uses the term to address the essence of nature (*physis*), highlighting how *logos* unveils physis from its concealment. In other words, *logos* enables us to comprehend the nature of things, revealing beings in their capacity to express true or false statements based on the structure of how things are interconnected or divided.

From *logos*, that is, from the unveiling of the essence of *physis*, one can understand the world in which *Dasein* exists, leading us to access the question of ontological difference, which is the distinction between being and entities. According to Heidegger (2006), this distinction occurs whenever *Dasein* relates to entities because to understand how being truly is, we need to understand what these entities are. This involves not only recognizing what is apparent but also discovering what is hidden and revealed by the activity of bringing to light. Thus, according to the German philosopher, there is a distinction between the manifestation of entities (*òn hos ón*), which is ontic truth, and the being of beings (*òn he ón*), which is ontological truth. The difference between our behavior towards entities and the openness to being is called "ontological difference," a difference that *Dasein* already comprehends when acting towards entities.

In Catriona Hanley's assessment (2000), Heidegger united the two questions he considered distinct in Aristotle: the question of how entities share an appearance, to which Aristotle responds with the idea of form, and the question of how entities are united as a whole, to which Aristotle responds with the foundation of God. For Heidegger (2006), however, we already understand what it means to be "as a whole" because when we comprehend something, we automatically relate it to our world. We are not additional components to the "as a whole," but we are already related to entities; after all, grasping the world involves not only adding up entities. Catriona Hanley (2000) provides the example of a tree in the forest: grasping the world is "like seeing a forest, where we don't need to observe each tree separately to understand that it is a forest" (Hanley, 2000, p. 17).

Therefore, the foundation of *Dasein*, for Heidegger, is not "God" but its transcendence. In Heidegger's context, transcendence refers to *Dasein*'s movement in its references to the world, constituting a network of meanings that reveal themselves to the human being as they move through concrete things. *Dasein* walks towards the possibilities it sees in these things - possibilities related to its own existence. When *Dasein* transcends, it not only observes what is present but goes beyond that, towards the deeper meaning of things. The world here, therefore, is not just the planet Earth or a physical landscape, but the complex network of meanings that reveal themselves as *Dasein* moves through

KALóGATOS
Revista de Filosofia

INVERNO
2024

V.19, N.1.
e-ISSN: 1984-9206

16

concrete things. In other words, *Dasein* does not exist only for the world; it exists for itself. As Heidegger wrote in the lecture on Leibniz, despite *Dasein* and the world being deeply connected, *Dasein* is free to choose how it commits to becoming itself: "(...) the ontological individuality of *Dasein* as free to commit to becoming itself" (Heidegger, 1978, p. 28. Translated by the author).

This implies that, for Heidegger, unlike Aristotle, the origin of why things are is not in a constant presence, that is, in an unmoved mover explaining the existence of beings, but rather in the constitution of *Dasein* as always engaged in the project of understanding what is in relation to itself. The angst experienced by *Dasein* is the real overwhelming component that reveals the finitude of being.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the heart of destructive phenomenology lies Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's bipartite approach to being. According to Heidegger, Aristotelian metaphysics outlined the analysis of the being as a whole and particular entities as two distinct orientations of inquiry, incorporated in the unified significance of *physis*. Instead of separating these disciplines, Aristotle amalgamated them in *prôte philosophía*, interweaving inquiries about the being with the essence of the being of the entities and attributing a theological character to the foundation of being. In his destruction of tradition, Heidegger identified the disharmony between these questions, noting that Aristotle did not adequately explore them, leading to the neglect of ontological difference.

Ultimately, with his critique of the first inception of metaphysics, Heidegger opposed Aristotle's argument that the overwhelming feeling is the eternal divinity of the foundation of being as being. Through *destruktion*, Heidegger showed that the overwhelming aspect of the question of being is the gift of the factual self of *Dasein* as being without a foundation in finite freedom. Consequently, if for Aristotle, the presence of the being is what causes awe and leads to God as the overwhelming foundation, for Heidegger, it is the absence of foundations, the abyss at the core of *Dasein*'s understanding that is itself the overwhelming foundation of awe that unveils being.

REFERENCES

ARISTOTELES. **Metafísica,** livros VII e VIII. Tradução de Lucas Angioni. Col. Clássicos da Filosofia: Cadernos de Tradução nº. 9, Campinas: Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas/ Unicamp, 2007.

Kalógatos
Revista de Filosofia

INVERNO
2024

V.19, N.1.
e-ISSN: 1984-9206

17

BATISTA, João Bosco. A verdade do ser como aletheia e errância. **Existência e Arte Revista Eletrônica do Grupo PET** - Ciências Humanas, Estética e Artes da Universidade Federal de São João Del-Rei - Ano I - Número I – janeiro a dezembro de 2005.

BISCARDI, Federica. **L'essere e l'ente. La differenza ontologica a partire dalla lettura heideggeriana della "ontoteologia.** Master's Degree Thesis, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia. 2021.

ELIADE, Mircea. **O Sagrado e o Profano.** São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2001.

FIGAL, Gunter. **Martin Heidegger:** fenomenologia da liberdade. Tradução de Marco Antônio Casanova. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2005.

HANLEY, Catriona. **Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger:** The Role of Method in Thinking the Infinite. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

HEIDEGGER, Martin, Identidade e diferença. *in*: HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Conferências e escritos filosóficos**, tradução de Ernildo Stein, São Paulo: Nova Cultural, 2005.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. Alétheia: Heráclito, fragmento 16. *In:* HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Ensaios e conferências.** Trad. Emmanuel Carneiro Leão, Gilvan Fogel e Márcia de Sá Cavalcante Schuback. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Introducción a la investigación fenomenológica**. Trad.Juan José García Norro. Madrid: Sínteses, 2006.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz.** GA 26. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Os Conceitos Fundamentais da Metafísica:** Mundo, Finitude e Solidão. Trad.: Marco Antônio Casanova. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2006.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Platão:** O sofista. Trad. Marco Antônio Casanova. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2012.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. **Que é isto –** a filosofia? Trad. Ernildo Stein. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1971.

MASSAROLLO, Leosir S. O estar-lançado, a angústia e o mundo no pensamento de Martin Heidegger: uma relação originária. **Controvérsia**, São Leopoldo, v. 15, n. 1, p. 117-134, jan.-abr. 2019.

PÖGGELER, Otto. **A Via do pensamento de Heidegger.** Tradução de Jorge Telles de Menezes. Coleção Pensamento e Filosofia. São Paulo: Instituto Piaget, 2001.

RODRIGUES, F. Heidegger face à metafísica como ontoteologia: origens de um diagnóstico crítico (1927-1930). **Princípios: Revista de Filosofia (UFRN)**, *[S. l.]*, v. 18, n. 30, p. 233–252, 2012.